



## 'Covid for Kids' (Pleasance Courtyard, until AUG 16)

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**Editorial Rating: 5 Stars (Outstanding)**

It's impossible to fully imagine, so we're going to have to watch really carefully, the long-term impact the COVID19 pandemic is having on our young people. The disrupted schooling, the stretched social fabric, the pressures on families, the friendships put on hold, the fear, the anxiety. So it really matters that there's a show which tries to help kids (and adults) make sense of the science behind such a scary time in all our lives.

We enter to find some comfortingly large cutouts – a mouth wide open, a vaccine and needle, as well as \*boo hiss\* a colourful picture of Corry the Coronavirus herself. We will learn that it would take a thousand coronaviruses to span the width of a human hair, so Corry's cutout is quite a bit larger than its subject. Enter Professor Tom Solomon CBE, Chair of Neurology and Director of the National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Research Unit in Emerging and Zoonotic Infections at the University of Liverpool.

Tom became one of the faces on the news during the pandemic, an expert at communicating the complexities of the subject to a lay audience. The section of the show dealing with the Reproduction 'R' number, with which we all became so familiar, is unsettlingly simple and hugely effective at demonstrating why that piece of information mattered so much in the darkest days of lockdown.

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What follows is a lecture, perhaps the first lecture many in the audience have ever attended. So Tom's simple and effective language, the careful but lively pacing of his performance, the steady-as-she-goes-way the themes of his material emerge – these all produce a genuinely entertaining educational, and enlightening EdFringe event. John Reith, founder of the BBC, would no doubt approve high and mightily of this smart and sassy show coming to the land of his birth. Daughter 1.0 wrote this in her EdFringe journal, the one with Elsa on horseback on the cover:

"I went to covid for kids with my grandad because my grandad is a scientist and my Baba (Dan) When we walked in we saw a mouth board. Some medisen and a jab. I was the news presenter and I wore some funny glasses and a tie. I read out the headlines When I saw the glases simbol. We learnt that In the begining bats in china had covid but it didn't harm them one day a human came into the cave and got the covid then he or she went to a market place and spred it all over china! In the UK we were worried We woold get it. But covid spread all over the wold. We played some games like pass the covid and we put on a show in a show. I will not tell you what I was because it is a bit Gross. It was also quite funny. We learned that in the jab there is a litle bit of the virus. My favourite bit was when I was the news presenter. I loved it!"

You'll be amazed to learn that her Grandad and Baba both agree that Daughter 1.0's turn reading the news was most definitely the best bit of the show. Grandad – Professor of Evolutionary Genetics, University of Edinburgh – has spent 30 years researching HIV, the forgotten pandemic that didn't get a mention in today's performance. There was nothing else to ruffle his feathers, which is the strongest possible endorsement any science-based Fringe show can hope for. If, like me, you're not a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and have to rely on your wife's credentials to spend the night at William Harvey House when down in that there London, then 'Corona For Kids' is an essential slice of EdFringe from the smorgasbord of silly and serious that is Edinburgh in August.



