

# Daniel Kitson - comedy interview

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**AS DANIEL KITSON** takes to the stage, it's obvious there's something about him that marks him out from the rest of Edinburgh's hot new stand-ups - he's the only one who looks like Professor Denzil Dexter, John Thomson's hippie lecturer character from *The Fast Show*, writes Dominic Maxwell.

Kitson is quick to address the impact his flowing locks, beard, bottle-thick glasses and charity shop attire has on his audience - 'I know what you're thinking, is he a paedophile or is he an explorer?' So is he ever tempted to change his appearance?

'I don't look like this because I've got some jokes about it - I look like this because I look like this. I do that joke at the start because of the disproportionate amount of press my appearance got last year.' Indeed, there was little between some reviews of his show, *Love, Innocence And The Word Cock*, and the abuse ('Freak!' 'Austin Powers!') he jokes about getting in the street from children and drunks.

Comments on his looks weren't the only thing last year's show brought- the mix of whimsy, swearing and personal revelations was showered with praise and Kitson found himself nominated for the Perrier Award for what was his Edinburgh debut as a solo performer. In fact, he was tipped to win the Perrier months before his show was even finalised.

Given that level of expectation, was he disappointed he didn't win? 'No, I was overjoyed. I genuinely was - I got a bit freaked out by the whole thing. The focus this year isn't on the award, it's on the show and to put on a show I would like if I saw it - something that will make people laugh and move them a bit.'

Inspired to pursue a career as a comedian aged 13 after seeing Paul Merton on *Have I Got News For You?*, Kitson was in the final of the BBC Open Mic Awards five years later - since then he's tested out a wide range of styles. 'I'd done puns, chat, improvised round the audience,' he says. 'The show's quite intimate now, I realised I didn't want people walking away with their abiding memory of me being of someone saying: "What's your name, what do you do, you've got funny hair".'

Kitson's current show, *Something*, covers similar ground to his last - including more material on his fondness for swearing, reminiscences about childhood tobogganing and his thoughts on the nature of true love. 'I wanted the show to have a humanity and weight of substance to it, I'm talking about stuff that I believe in,' he says.

Kitson is unimpressed with those who just use the Festival to bag their own TV series. 'I don't see it as a tacit audition for a Channel 5 pilot,' he says.

'Too many comedians are doing comedy as a means to an end when it should be the end itself. People are doing it because they want to be presenters or actors, when they should be doing it because they want to be a comedian.' **VENUE AND DETAILS:** Until Aug 26 (except Sat, Aug 20 and 23), *The Pleasance* (V33), 60 *The Pleasance*, 21:45 to 22:45, £9 to £10, £8 to £9 concs. Tel: 0131 556 6550. [www.danielkitson.com](http://www.danielkitson.com)