

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*

Small Matters Productions

The Edmonton Journal

Fringe Review: For Science!

For Science! 5 stars out of 5, Stage 3, Walterdale Playhouse

DAVE BREAKENRIDGE

([HTTPS://EDMONTONJOURNAL.COM/AUTHOR/DAVEBREAKENRIDGE](https://edmontonjournal.com/author/davebreakenridge))

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How many of you can pass by a roll of bubble wrap without having to pop it? Who among you can see a cup full of Lego perilously close to the edge of a counter and resist the urge to move it back to a safer spot, or worse, send it clattering to the floor? Who can avoid the Pavlovian response of ringing a bell for a treat?

Better yet, who's willing to do all of those, and more, in front of a packed house at the Walterdale, all for science?

That is the simple, yet surprisingly entertaining, idea behind For Science!

Christine Lesiak, complete with "lab assistant" Anna Pratch, are ready to put the crowd through their paces, with nothing more than a whistle, a stopwatch a clicker and a PowerPoint. No words, but lots of action.

All in the name of science, and a good time.

As Lesiak and Pratch, who bounce clown-like across the stage in lab coats and glasses, notepads at the ready, run the crowd through increasingly complex experiments (including Nerf guns, a pencil sharpener and PVC pipe), it's fun to watch the volunteers from the crowd rush forward to take part.

But it's equally fun in the anticipation wondering WHO decides to take part.

And in the end, every participant is rewarded with a treat, like every good lab monkey.

So, in the name of science and laughs, come out and take part.

VUE MAGAZINE REVIEW

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From <http://www.edmontonfringe.ca>

For Science!

✓ REVIEW

Ever have those moments where you look around and think: "hey, deep down, we're all just a bunch of apes"? Even without a massive bong rip, For Science! will get you to there, as you listen to the only sounds around you: namely, the shrieks of laughter from your fellow playgoers that quickly begin to approximate something distinctly primate. Well outside the proscenium arch, the two leads—Christine Lesiak and Anna Pratch—make lab monkeys out of the audience in an ever-escalating set of experiments in everything from impulse control, to Nerf guns, to percussion. Being largely afraid of mimes and mortified by audience participation, I'm surprising myself by saying this was, in a word, excellent. If I managed to have fun, you definitely will. - Lynsey Grosfield

EdmontonFringe.ca 

Journal 

Gig City

Global

TOTAL SCORE 

READER RATING 
28 total ratings

OVERVIEW

Venue: [Walterdale Playhouse](#)

Genre: [Comedy](#)

Company: [Small Matters Productions](#)

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*

Small Matters Productions

For Science! – CBC Winnipeg



Audience members are a key component of this light-hearted gem of a show. All who enter Venue 12 become test subjects in a series of experiments conducted by a nameless professor and her trusty lab assistant.

Using common household items, they set up scenarios in which those in attendance demonstrate concepts such as "tactile gratification impulse," "geometric overlap fortitude" and "projectile target recognition."

The result is ridiculous good fun — made funnier by the fact neither professor nor assistant utters a single word throughout the entire show.

Fear not, those adverse to audience participation: the potential for embarrassment is low. All activities are refreshingly wholesome and relatively simple to execute. By design, making us do the work also enables some memorable unscripted moments. (The show I attended featured an absolutely villainous response to a "transgressive dilemma disposition" experiment involving Lego.)

Mind-blowing theatre this is not. However, it's a simple-yet-clever concept that's in its execution.

— Reviewed by Marlo Campbell

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/2019-winnipeg-fringe-cbc-top-picks-1.5223469?fbclid=IwAR2OrRH_wdv0Z_ihdY9F4T8QzMqvpwjgQy0SxflaHM_xkVdGHp1dZxs3P0

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*
Small Matters Productions

Fringe review: For Science!

4.5 stars out of 5, Stage 5, King Edward Elementary School

Christine Lesiak and Ian Walker say more with their bodies than most Fringe performers utilizing an entire script replete with noisy sound effects and penis jokes (the latter is, surprisingly, still quite popular).

The two actors in For Science are clowns, but there are no red noses or fuzzy wigs. It's the show's lack of dialogue and meticulous pacing that signal another universe, one characterized by a certain vulnerability on the part of the performers, and the audience, too.

The show begins as head scientist Lesiak (who doesn't so much walk as prance like a pony) and her lab assistant (Walker in hilarious, knee-high argyle socks) enter the stage with a power-point clicker that controls a slide show. Pulling props from a trolley, the two perform experiments to measure human behaviour.

They rely on audience members to conduct the experiments. This is less scary than you would imagine. The pair create a safe and welcoming bubble that has patrons clamouring to take part.

Behaviours under examination include Tactile Gratification Impulse (fun with bubble wrap) and Social Aptitude Conditioning (in which folks choose how to place a roll of toilet paper on the dispenser). The experiments are tightly monitored (Lesiak blows her whistle if subjects drift off-focus). Participants are properly rewarded for their efforts.

Doesn't sound like much, does it? Don't be fooled. It's the most tender and engaging piece of work you will see this Fringe.

– Liane Faulder

<https://edmontonjournal.com/entertainment/local-arts/fringe-review-for-science-2>

CRITIC'S PICK ARTICLE:

<https://edmontonjournal.com/entertainment/festivals/fringe-favourites-journal-reviewers-recap-the-2019-fringe-festival-shows-performances-that-resonated>

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*

Small Matters Productions



THE BEER TENT REVIEWS Reviewing Fringe Festival Shows Since 2019

Various outcomes deliver fun, humour, and sometimes shocking resolutions.

By Jean-Paul Fournier

Following a quick video introduction, our two scientists hit centre stage, igniting gloriously enthusiastic applause. What's significant about this luminous welcome is that it's a mix of new viewers anticipating a fun show but more so repeat viewers eager to revisit a show they adore. This is due to the ingenious concept created and performed by Christine Lesiak and Ian Walker, who perform a variety of experiments testing the reaction of their subjects (the audience).

While the set-ups may be the same in each of their shows, they always generate different results. And like true science, when a result, reaction, or effect, cannot be 100-percent proven or predicted, it requires repeat study and review. And it helps that these various outcomes deliver fun, humour, and sometimes shocking resolutions. It is a rare gem of a show, suitable for all ages, that inspires, energizes, and creates such positive participation from audiences. It is a blast.

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*

Small Matters Productions

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/special/fringe/reviews/for-science-512128382.html>



The "unclassifiable" *For Science!*, by Edmonton's Christine Lesiak and Ian Walker of Small Matters Productions, calls upon the audience to help with a series of social experiments.

Laughs are big as a handful of audience members run through a series of everyday annoyances and different types of interactions set up by the professor (Lesiak) and her assistant (Walker) who, though completely silent, are fabulously funny as they put their all into every click of a stopwatch or majestic hop-run across the stage throughout the 60-minute performance.

Audience participation is completely (and purposefully) voluntary and, depending on the crowd, adds a lot to the hilarity to the already brilliant premise. I hypothesize *For Science!* will be a fringe fest favourite.

—Erin Lebar

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*

Small Matters Productions



Cincinnati Fringe Festival is feeling fantastic at [Edmonton Fringe Theatre](#).

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17 August at 11:53 · Edmonton ·

FRINGE to FRINGE

Entry #4

from Chris Wesselman

For Science! at the Edmonton Fringe Festival

Without a word spoken, [Small Matters Productions](#) takes you through a series of delightfully named and seriously silly science experiments that each involve 1 or more audience participants - including me! (I got to shoot a cup off the Lab Assistant's head with a jacked-up Nerf gun. After careful calibration I got it on my third try and earned myself a reward!) Here's a show that demonstrates the versatility and impressiveness that clowning and other physical theatre shows bring to the table. Plus it's just flat out FUN. ☆☆☆☆☆

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*

Small Matters Productions



I Don't Get It

14 hrs ·

Flash Review: FOR SCIENCE!

Venue 5: Kickpoint King Edward School [#yegfringe](#)

This show is so easy to love, so vibrant and witty and unifying, it makes you completely forget your fears of science, clowns, and that most dreaded thing: intense audience participation. It even makes you feel kinda smart, especially if you're a vocab geek. In a series of offered up lab tests with intimidating titles, the Professor ([Christine Lesiak](#)) and her Lab Assistant ([Ian Walker](#)) set-up props and wait until an audience member steps up to demonstrate. It starts out simple, sharpening pencils and popping bubble wrap. As the show builds, the volunteers have to cooperate and work with each other to pass each test, and the result is an ending that succeeds only with pure “yes, let’s” and cooperation—it’s an absolute joy to witness. For Science! is a return from its successful held-over run last year, and it’s easy to see why it’s back. I for one, cannot wait to see what Small Matters Productions comes up with next.

Press Reviews *FOR SCIENCE!*
Small Matters Productions

FOR SCIENCE 

VENUE 5: KICK POINT KING EDWARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (8530 101 ST.)

From their first jest, like a light bulb turning on, the audience immediately understands the concept, and everyone is delightfully on board for the ride. Without giving too much away, Christine Lesiak, “The Professor”, along with Ian Walker “Lab Assistant” conduct various experiments in the name of science. To perform these trials, they require assistance from the audience. Without a word spoken, Lesiak and Walker set up multiple experiments that have audience members jumping from their seats to eagerly assist. If there is any hesitation, it comes from our Canadian politeness, allowing our neighbours to play along too. With the great comic timing from Lesiak and Walker, along with a spirited audience, *For Science* is a blast from start to finish.