

The UK comedy guide

# Chortle

## List Operators For Kids Do Computers; Melbourne 2011

Live Review



Hey parents, don't give your kids sugary, fizzy drinks packed with additives – send them to the List Operators instead; the effect is very much the same, but without the tooth decay.

Rich Higgins and Matt Kelly have produced another stupidly energetic show sure to cannon any under-tens out into the street buzzing with excitable hyperactivity. And although the knockabout Wig-i-pedia doesn't transcend the kids' genre quite like the duo's Barry-nominated offering of last year, it squarely hits the spot for its target audience.

That the tile contains the word 'poo' is the level of the humour, which is exactly what youngsters – and quite a lot of adults – find funny. The show is, unsurprisingly, based around technology, and an inventive stage set creates a computer desktop full of icons for each of the slapstick sections. The only other time I've seen anything like this was a high-concept show from England's weird and arty Perrier-winner Will Adamsdale, although the styles couldn't be more different.

This is dynamic, all-hands-to-the-pump reckless enthusiasm, with groansome puns, physical comedy and mischievous pranks all jostling for position. Their pandering to the kids is shameless, gently humiliating the parents and cheekily encouraging them to act up at home and at school. In the double-act dynamic, Rich is the nominal 'grown-up', whose serious talk about computers the childlike Matt tries to disrupt – so no guessing who the audience most relate to.

Kids are mad-keen to be involved, and the auditorium is often a sea of hands strained in eager desperation into the air – even when there's no request for audience participation. Perhaps there should be more, as it always goes down well, whether in the demonstration of their version of the iPod – a bucket that can reveal what tune you are thinking of – or in the brilliantly anarchic alien attack, a reprisal of last year's best moment. In truth, this worked better in the intimate confines of the Bosco tent as opposed to the sizeable Lower Town Hall, but the no-holds-barred fun is still there.

Amid the boisterousness, there are a few nods to the adult audience, such as the remake of Abbot and Costello's classic Who's On First Base? routine, here based around passwords and user names, and a nod to Laurel and Hardy. And buried in all the terrible puns, I loved the arena-based one; though I think I may have been alone.

However, there will be something for everyone but the sternest grouch in this rambunctious hour, a must-see for the school holidays.

**Date of live review:** Monday 1st Aug, '11

*Review by Steve Bennett*