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- Sections
 - Latest News
 - Scotland
 - North East
 - Edinburgh, East and Fife
 - Glasgow and West
 - Tayside and Central
 - Inverness and Highlands
 - South
 - UK
 - International
 - Politics
 - Sci-Tech
 - Health
 - Education
 - Transport
 - Environment
 - Arts
 - Entertainment
 - Opinion
 - Obituaries
 - Odd
 - Gaelic
 - Article Index
- Other Sections
 - Supplements
- Topics
 - Topics A-Z
- Other Sites
 - The Scotsman
 - Scotland on Sunday
 - Evening News
 - Heritage & Culture
 - Living
 - Dating
 - Announcements
 - Money
 - Scotsman Shop
 - Scotsman Hotels
 - Fantasy Golf
 - Photos Today
 - Local Pages
 - Edinburgh Festivals
 - Whisky
- Elsewhere
 - On Twitter
 - On Facebook
- What's this?

Jane Bussman - Bussman's Holiday

Published Date: 10 August 2006

By TOM MAXWELL

ASSEMBLY @ ST GEORGE'S WEST

JANE BUSSMAN doesn't shy away from difficult subjects. In 2001 she was involved in one of the most controversial programmes in the history of British television - the Brass Eye special on paedophilia.

Her writing pedigree is considerable. Among other series, she has worked on South Park, The Fast Show and Smack the Pony. She is also a well-known magazine and newspaper columnist, regularly interviewing the likes of Britney Spears and Ashton Kutcher.

"I've worked my entire adult life doing something completely useless," she says. With this in mind, she set off to war-torn Uganda in the hope of making a difference. There she discovered a horrific world of kidnap and brutality she couldn't even begin to imagine.

The question with Bussman's Holiday, her first live show, was whether someone of such obvious writing talent could cut it as a performer. The answer in Bussman's case is a resounding yes.

Like Dave Gorman, she makes excellent use of photos, videos and soundbites to illustrate her adventure.

The story is fascinating as well as funny, although at times you sense Bussman's humour will appeal more to women.

While she recounts several horrendous incidents concerning Uganda's problems with disease, poverty and murder, a sharp line is never far away.

Directed by Sally Phillips (I'm Alan Partridge, Smack the Pony), Bussman's Holiday is a well constructed and extremely watchable piece of storytelling.

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