

Ginna offers a glimmer of festive hope to singles



DATE NIGHT: Ginna Hoben at the Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham.

AS GINNA Hoben's one-woman show, *The Twelve Dates of Christmas*, crosses the pond for the first time, it shows that love and dating during the festive period is an international problem.

The play follows Mary, who has dumped her fiancé after seeing him kissing someone else on national TV, and spends the next year being set up, hooked up, and fed up as she navigates life 'alone'.

"Most of the material the play is based on is something that happened in real life, either to me, or to someone close to me," said Hoben. "Then, of course,

I embellished the real-life experiences for dramatic and comic purposes.

"Mary has personal policies that I share about not dating anyone "ten years older or younger" than oneself, not giving out one's phone number on public transportation, and not sleeping with anyone whose 'ass' is smaller than one's own. In the course of the play Mary breaks all three of these 'policies.' And I'm pretty sure I have, too..."

The hit off-Broadway show has its UK premiere at The Old Joint Stock in Birmingham this week, and Hoben believes that its themes; dating, romance and love, transcend country boundaries.

"I think that as countries, we have more in common when it comes to searching for love than we have differences. I think we all live in a generation that is consumed with communicating by phone, text, Skype, e-mail, instant-message, Facebook, etc. rather than connecting in person.

"We all face the challenge to

get out from behind our devices and make ourselves available, and even vulnerable, to have a chance at truly connecting with another human being."

Hoben was hopeful the show would give singles a glimmer of hope during the often emotionally fraught Christmas period.

"I think the holidays are a particularly difficult time for singles. At no other time was it so clear to me that I had no one to spend time with than at Christmas.

"And then there are all these decorations and songs that really seem to suffocate when one is not in the mood.

"I hope, hope, hope, that audience members laugh a lot during *The Twelve Dates of Christmas*, but I also hope the play makes them feel a little better about navigating the stressful aspects of the holidays, too."

The Twelve Dates of Christmas, performed by Sarah Gain, is at The Old Joint Stock until tomorrow (Saturday).