

The official daily guide to the

Edinburgh Festivals

The Guardian

Saturday August 21

Fringe

Duel

*Assembly Rooms,
until Aug 29*

Music and silent film: two languages that transcend national barriers come together in *Duel*, a perfect little piece of dramatic comedy for those who fancy their laughter with a little culture thrown in. Going back to the days of the multi-instrumentalist clown Glock, classical music and clowning have gone hand in hand. The scene in which Harpo Marx plays piano on the deck in *A Night at the Opera* is perhaps the most famous moment of it in cinematic history. (Although obviously Les Dawson is king of piano clowning on the small screen.) Pianist Paul Staicu and cellist Laurent Cirade are the latest acts to work in this long and rich tradition of dicking about with musical instruments. The

clowning is not as fast and as furious as those of their illustrious forbears. Some jokes, such as Staicu's medley of the *The Rites of Spring* and *La Vie en Rose*, are cleverly contextual rather than universally silly. There is, however, plenty of daftness with Cirade's cello variously becoming a roast pig and a frightened animal. This is a technically adroit production for the child in every Classic FM fan.