

## 'Splice'

oh! art *Fringe*

The Edinburgh preview season gets under way as *Pants on Fire* warm up this hour-long scamper through a 100 years of cinema history prior to playing at the Smirnoff Underbelly in August. Only a year old, the physical theatre company was praised by *TO* for its previous show 'Tossed', and the actors' skills are obvious here. It's a tough task they've chosen, however, to suggest over sixty films in a variety of different ways with just four actors, a pianist, and four screens. The challenge for the audience is to keep up to speed with the references. The Hitchcock trio of 'Psycho', 'Vertigo' and 'The Birds' create their own creepy atmosphere. The clicking sound of a pair of high heels builds up the tension before the ferocious flock swoops down. Sticks provide the bannisters for the actors to race panting to the top of the tower in 'Vertigo'. There's also a wonderful and improbable combination of 'Cabaret' and 'Star Wars' in which tiffers are swapped for helmets. And a pair of dummy legs is all that's needed to send one of the actors racing across roof tops – those screens again – for a hectic scene from 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon'.

Unfortunately, the level of invention doesn't always match these highs and there's much that is more obvious and mundane. Nor has enough attention been paid to varying the speed of the sketches – the pace is dictated by the length of the scene changes rather than the requirements of the material. But fans of Ennio Marchetto will surely enjoy it, and with a bit more work it could well suit the Edinburgh taste for bite-sized entertainment. All that's missing is the popcorn.

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