

THEATRE REVIEW

Splice: A Theatrical Ode To Cinema

★★★★☆

It's a long journey from Hollywood cinema to physical theatre. But it's a journey that Pants On Fire Theatre have taken in a show that condenses the history of film into 50 minutes.

An inventive use of moveable screens in the opening minutes belies the fact that there are only four players, plus a musical accompanist, seated behind her organ stage-right. But when it comes to the film excerpts, some are more successful than others.

Their Hitchcock compilation (The Birds, Psycho and Vertigo) hits just the right note of invention and humour. But Jaws, performed by shadow puppets, and a barber shop quartet version of the original Star Wars trilogy complete with bow ties that become X-Wing fighters, outstay their welcome.

This sort of show needs to be impeccable if the audience is to be pulled along. But while Pants On Fire are capable of the purest theatre, as



the performers (pictured) become Harold Lloyd or Charlie Chaplin in the blink of an eye, other sections could do with tightening and speeding up. The Matrix, as performed in that Japanese mime recognisable from the Pepsi Max kung fu advert, should raise more laughs. The will and the effort is there, but something has been lost in the edit.

Ben Sloan

*Until Jul 2, oh!art, Oxford House,
Derbyshire Street E2, Mon to Sat 8pm,
£8, £6 concs. Tel: 020 7739 9001.
Tube: Bethnal Green*