

The World of Spencer Brown

Until 27th August (not 21st)

Pleasance Cellar, 60 The Pleasance, Edinburgh, Venue 33, 8.10pm

£9.00 to £10.00, £8.00 to £9.00 concs.

Tel:0131 556 6650

www.spencerbrown.net

3 stars

Looking a little like Ten Pole Tudor and, indeed, acting like him, Spencer has certainly passed the wacky exam at comedy school. But he must have fallen asleep in the subtlety class. His show is a mish mash of standup, physical comedy, music and magic. He likes his props does Spencer and there's a whiff of seventies 'Look at me, I'm mad I am' about him. After a little ersatz meditation, he quotes the old maxim that we only use 10% of our brains and announces that tonight he's going to use the other 80%. Hmm. It's all sooooh derivative. He's captured the mid-Atlantic disingenuousness of Dennis Pennis and mixed it with a little Rik Mayall, not to mention a thousand other comedians. But his exuberance is often too forced and never really natural. Not a personality you can really warm to, you laugh at him like you might laugh at the office clown or a little kid who's just read the Puffin Book of Magic and is overeager to impress anyone who'll listen. He's certainly got some funny skits, but also a lot of damp squibs too and as a whole, the show never really gels. You know a comedian's struggling when he has to tell the audience when to clap. Still, he's a bloody good bongo player and manages to generate plenty audience participation. Overall, you get the feeling that inside this desperate mixture of different comics' acts there just may be an individual waiting to get out.

Tommy Mackay