



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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STEVE SHEEHAN: A LITTLE HORSEPLAY

Tuxedo Cat

Until 6 Mar 2011

Review by Ben Aitken

A horse walks on stage. The actor says, 'Excuse me.' The horse pays no attention. Instead, he plays the piano. There isn't a punch-line because there isn't a joke. And yet there is – it's an odd joke, surreal and delightful, and mostly on us.

Steve Sheehan, softly-spoken restaurant entertainer (or so he alleges), isn't your average comic, and this isn't your average show. To describe this forty minutes of non-conformist nonsense as incredible feels wrong. Incredible is too tired a word. What you get here is barely credible – and barely resistible as a result. Something about this show grips you, setting one into a trance-like condition of quiet glee and bafflement. Whether it is Sheehan's non-jokes, or his non-personality, or the musical animals that trot around, there is something that endears and compels.

The show is the antithesis of tired. This might seem a rather grand way of saying that it is fresh. But, the thing is, this show is beyond fresh, past fresh, bored of fresh. It has you on the edge of two conflicting opinions: that Sheehan has got it all terribly wrong, and that he has got it all terribly right. It is a very pleasant cusp to straddle. It takes a rare human quality to invest time and money and talent testing the limits and currency of an art-form. Sheehan has such a quality, and makes such an investment. You can feel the dividends amounting.

This show will divide those that see it. Some will leave bemused and annoyed and confident that they are funnier than the so-called professionals. Others will leave wishing they could have stayed forever, confident that they have seen something beautifully peculiar.

Rating: 4 stars (out of 5)