

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

REVIEW Wrong Way ***

✘ by Lee Levitt

Wrong Way

Pleasance Courtyard, Edinburgh (until Aug 26)

An old, stooping, dishevelled-looking, ginger-bearded man, wearing dark glasses and a white lab coat, enters The Green tent, next to the Pleasance kidzone, and shuffles on stage. "It's the old Wrong Way set – I haven't seen that since the apocalypse," he says in a hammed-up, halting voice, before jumping into an imaginary pond and gurgling up imaginary water.

"Hi, I'm Harry Deansway, welcome to the Wrong Way," he says cheerily, throwing off the coat and glasses to reveal a colourful giant-sized bow tie and a brown corduroy jacket as the 12-strong audience clap along and whoop to his catchy tune beneath the flashing lights.

"Oh no you're not," I internalise. "You're Josh Rinkoff, scion of the famous century-old East End Rinkoff baking dynasty!"

Harry, aka Josh, who proceeded to do battle with the noisy young folk outside – "Guys, I'm doing a really serious play here", he remonstrated at one point, leaving the stage to have a word with the "philistines" – presents a madcap Edinburgh debut show, glueing together a heap of disparate subjects with an endearing sense of the absurd.

Observational comedy, the nature of acting, the economic crisis, all get a mock-serious look-in, along with many photos of Harry and the odd famous comedian. There's also two surprise cameo appearances from a spoof psychologist (who queries "Are you a fraudulent comedian?") and a mocked-up transgender prostitute.

Having trained to be a chef after school, the 32-year-old from East Finchley in north London, has been promoting comedy for the past decade, during which he has directed a couple of acts

at Edinburgh. He's also accumulated a huge debt after his well-loved (but ill-fated) comedy magazine "The Fix" folded a few years ago.

"I may be £30,000 in debt, but what I can promise you is a glittering array of talents from one of the most exciting performers on the Fringe," he jests, adding, after a pause: "Actually, that was from a performance after mine."

Could this, at last, be the right way?

