

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 REVIEW: Knowing more about Ken****

Ken

Pleasance Dome 1520 hrs

ALTHOUGH this play focuses on the life of enigmatic and eccentric writer, actor, producer, Ken Campbell, it was, firstly, a pleasure to see writer Terry Johnson on the stage.



Johnson has written many a fine script including Insignificance, which became a Nicholas Roeg film in 1985.

This is presented as an interrupted monologue as Terry Johnson tells us how he came to meet and be influenced by Ken Campbell. Campbell is played by Jeremy Stockwell and what a performance it is. The "impression" is uncanny as he not only inhabits Ken but uses the whole auditorium to perform.

The whole auditorium is bedecked with scatter cushions and eccentric seating to recreate the feel of Campbell's theatre.

The show takes you through a number of performances that Johnson was involved with and witnessed Campbell at his best (and worst).

Describing Campbell as idiosyncratic is a disservice, he had a mighty brain that broke through the fourth wall of emotional, visceral theatre.

He was able to combine a career in experimental theatre with mainstream roles. A few months ago, BBC showed his performance as a crooked lawyer in Law and Order. He was outstanding.

This was a fascinating and faithful reflection in to the life of Ken Campbell. It ends sadly as it reflects on his death in 2008 but even the funeral was described as quite a surreal affair.

This is a ninety minute play that perhaps could have been trimmed by fifteen minutes or so but then again we are talking about a man who plays sometimes lasted 24 hours!