

New meaning to nothing

Theatre Review – Krapp's Last Tape & other short plays by Samuel Beckett
People's Theatre, Heaton

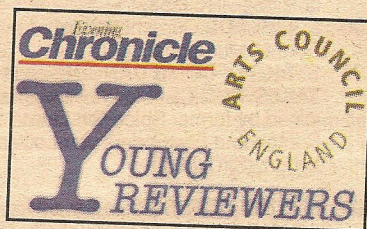
WE ALL are born mad. Some remain so." Taken from Samuel Beckett's best known novel *Waiting For Godot*, this quote illustrates what the legendary playwright was all about. Belonging to the surrealist movement within modernism, Beckett's plays mainly included characters attempting to find the meaning of nothing.

Confused? To be honest, after witnessing seven of his short plays, so was I.

However, this takes nothing away from the fine acting on display at the People's Theatre in Heaton.

I attended the opening night of *Krapp's Last Tape* and six shorter plays performed by five actors of all ages, two of which have performed the same pieces for over 20 years, under the direction of John MacDonald.

The evening began with *Not I*, in which subtle yet effective lighting on the blacked out stage provided a chilling silhouette to coincide with a flawless 15-minute monologue by



Kath Frazer. The tone and clarity of her voice was as infectiously engaging as Cate Blanchett's famous introductory monologue to the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

The mood quickly changed however, with *Krapp's Last Tape* itself, which saw Alfred Hitchcock look-alike Chris Goulding perform a show-stealing turn.

The first five minutes offered no dialogue by the actor, yet you were captivated by his ability to pull off perfectly executed facial expressions that thrilled the audience.

Unfortunately, much of the evening was spent trying to stay awake.

The passion and skill of the actors is clearly evident yet, unless you're familiar with Beckett's work, viewing his plays can be a struggle.

I did leave the theatre with a smile on my face, however, as Goulding returned in the final piece. There's nothing more amusing than seeing a funny, bald guy in a baby-grow crawling in and out of an old sack!

BEN OLIVER



EFFECTIVE – a scene from *Krapp's Last Tape*