

...the most challenging and original piece of youth theatre to have appeared in the past five years.

TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

NTY
Northern Theatre Youth

LOVE KEVIN

By RICHARD F. GREEN. THOM STRID
Musical Score by JONATHAN HOLTBY



The Making of the Musical...

Even before "LOVE KEVIN" was first performed, local figures and national media alike broadcasted "This is not something we want to see in this city... it might lead young people into paths of despair." A shock musical about rent boys in graphic horror. Even the local fire department found cause to say, must go on. And so it did.

With the small NTC Studio 2 Theatre reconstructions on 26th, 1990, and it was instantly hailed as "an independent."

From then on success has followed success for fourteen years for the National Student Drama Festival. It then won a coveted place in the Lloyds National Theatre on the Olivier Stage.

The Times Educational Supplement was moved to youth theatre to have appeared in the past five years.

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival '90 gave the young people their craft in a highly competitive environment. Spring Street Theatre was the next venue to win.

It was, however, at Edinburgh that the Chelsea Theatre Centre was the first to bring "LOVE KEVIN" to move south.

Here is a show about the homeless young people. In coming to London "KEVIN" also brings a universal story of young people's lives. Anywhere.



THE MEDIA

SAMMY

ed what can only be termed 'a storm' of interest. reely without having seen the show or read a script. cillor. e unnatural physical development" – Bishop Snelgrove. -Daily Mirror. eatre three days before curtain up. But the show, as they e club the public saw "KEVIN" for the first time on January at never loses impact" and "emotionally charged" – The l the production. "LOVE KEVIN" was selected as one of to packed houses at Alan Ayckbourn's Stephen Joseph heatre Challenge, 1990. As a result it was performed at at "KEVIN" was: "... the most challenging and original t chance to play to a truly wide audience and to polish essed and the audiences were plentiful. Hull Truck Co's ction. : saw the show and realised a central irony. ing done by a group based in Yorkshire. It was time for It is about love and what the lack of it can do to damage

R. F. Green and T. Strid, 1991



Talent should never go unrecognised.



THE THOROUGHBRED BANK.

- 1. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. 2. Age of Chivalry Exhibition. 3. Lloyds Bank Masters. 4. Lloyds Bank Student Film Awards.
- 5. BBC Young Musician of the Year. 6. RSA Student Design Awards. 7. Lloyds Bank Theatre Challenge
- 8. Royal Philharmonic Black Horse Pops. 9. Lloyds Bank Fashion Challenge

Lloyds Bank Plc, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS.



from the beginning . . .

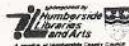
Northern Theatre Company was founded in 1975 to stage an original musical "AMY" based on the life of Hull's famous aviatrix Amy Johnson.

It was an original work penned by Richard F. Green and staged by Bryan Williams who are still the directors of NTC. What distinguished the production was that it combined local amateur talent with established professionals. Actors, writers, musicians and designers.

What has followed over the years has been a continuous policy to develop talent. From small experimental presentations to major theatrical events, creativity has been given its chance to grow for young and old alike within the company.

Several years ago the company founded its own school for dance, drama and stagecraft. Training is to accredited standards in a studio complex which contains its own small public theatre.

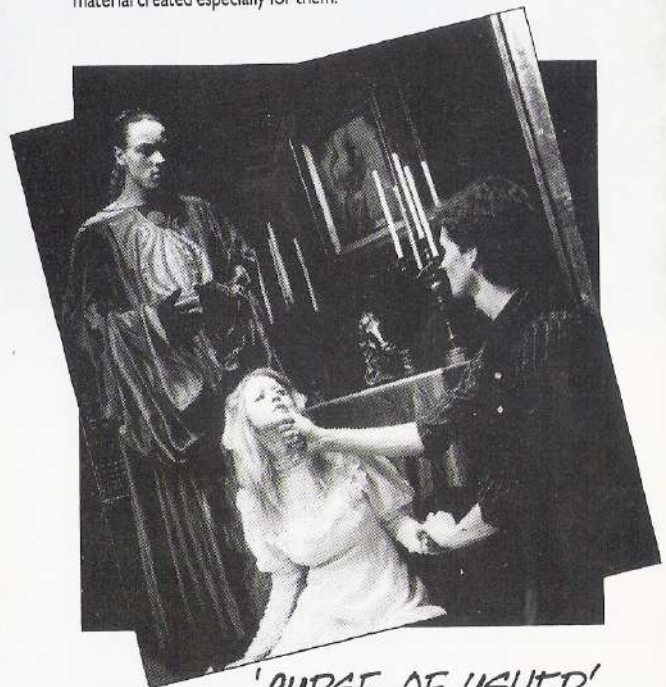
This facility allows the company to encourage its young talent in a professional environment – not just for would-be career performers but for all young people of the area who can benefit from personal development through artistic expression.



NORTHERN THEATRE — DEVELOPING

Northern Theatre Youth attract young talent from all over Humber-side to enjoy the benefits of performing challenging material in a professionally run environment.

In recent years the 'Youth' company has substantially extended its reputation both artistically and geographically as the result of original material created especially for them.



'CURSE OF USHER'

In 1989 NTC director Richard F. Green and writer Thom Strid combined to co-author a disturbing, short play for a cast of four. "Curse of Usher" was inspired by the work of early 19th Century author Edgar Allen Poe but it was removed from its Gothic setting and placed in the unsuitable artistic environment of Paris in the 1930's.

Far from the horror – tale film style, the play tackled the issue of child abuse and its longer term effects in adult obsessional behaviour.

It was the first time that NTC had entered its young theatre for outside competition. All the more gratifying it was, then, for the production to win a place at the National Student Drama Festival, 1989 at Cambridge.

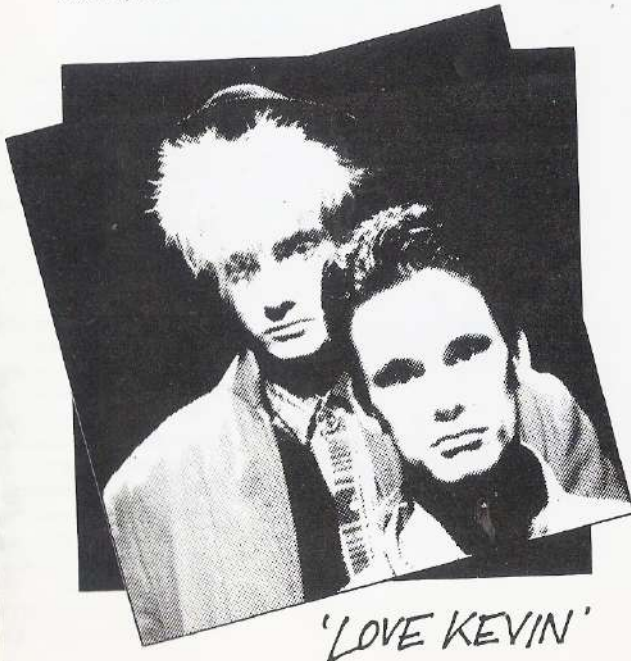
THEATRE COMPANY YOUTH PING TALENTS FOR THE FUTURE

In the following year the company presented "LOVE KEVIN" – the tale of a young lad from Nottingham who, rather than be put into care by the local authority, runs away to seek his fortune on the streets of London. It is a sad and all too common tale of how the absence of love can destroy young lives and how society allows its youth to live homeless sustained by their earnings from drugs and prostitution.

For this production writers Green and Strid combined their words with music to drive home their uncompromising messages. Young composer Jonathan Holtby created a score that ranged from hard hitting 'punk' to sad and emotive ballad. Finally designer and NTC director Bryan Williams brought the whole concept together with his versatile 'Living Street' staging.

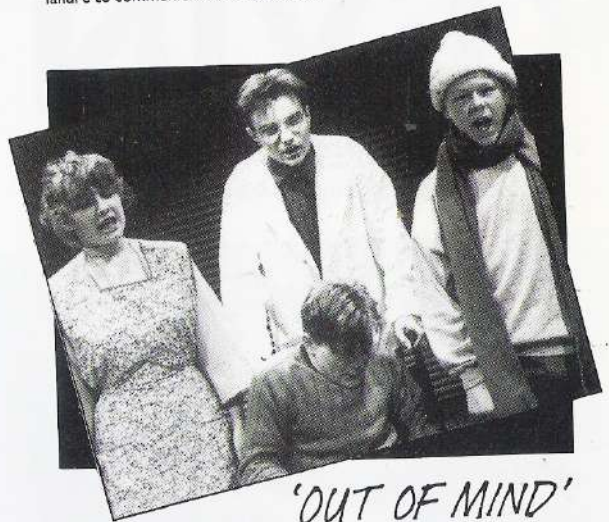
The success of this showcase for NTC's young talent has been well documented from winning a chance to perform at the National Theatre in the Lloyds Bank Challenge and its success at the Edinburgh Fringe to its arrival in London at the Chelsea Centre Theatre.

Even while "KEVIN" was enjoying such success the writing team of Green, Strid and Holtby were putting together their ideas for a completely different style of musical to challenge audiences and stretch the NTC youth.



"Out of Mind" was first staged at Hull Truck's Spring Street Theatre in Hull on the 12th February 1991.

It is a musical which revolves around the activities of a group of young people in Skegness and Lincoln in the early 1960's. The big difference is that it is staged inside the head of a victim of Cerebral Palsy. A boy who can't talk or control any of his limbs. It is about failure to communicate and the central



irony is that it is only the boy talking directly to the audience, who succeeds whilst others around him fail. This production is entered for the 1991 Lloyds Bank Theatre Challenge and there are plans to take it to Edinburgh '91 Fringe.

"A thought provoking musical which challenges our cosy concepts of the quality of life." DAILY MAIL

Plans are also being formulated to take "LOVE KEVIN" on national tour in the Autumn of 1991. For details of this or any other aspect of Northern Theatre Company you can contact:

NORTHERN THEATRE COMPANY
STUDIO 2, THEATRE
MADELEY STREET
HULL
TEL: (0482) 28627

Love Kevin, Chelsea Centre Theatre

NORTHERN Theatre Youth is a company of teenage performers, based in Hull, who present us here with an original musical which has caused a furore in the more staid North. I am not surprised it has elicited strong reactions as its vigour and energy hit you from the first. This is a vibrant and talented young

company, who tell us a story, melodramatic perhaps but gripping, of Kevin, a teenager from Nottingham, who experiences no love at home, is threatened with care proceedings, and makes the great escape to the streets of London where he finds a cruel kind of independence in prostitution.

Love Kevin has an important theme: that our society neglects, abuses, prates about children and 'takes them into care' - in fact does everything except care for and about them. It's clearly intended as an *Oliver Twist* - or an *Oliver* - for the 90s, even down to its best song 'Where can I find love?'

The direction and movement, by one of the writers (Richard F. Green), are full of vitality and the performances are immensely promising. Jody Crosier (Kevin) clearly has an acting future with

a very appealing singing voice while Andy Feetom is excellent as Gary, the cheeky Artful Dodger character. Anthony Hoggard gives a fine grotesque as Sniffer the glue-addict and Kirsty Applegarth is gutsy as Kevin's blowsy, mixed-up mum. There are also several witty vignettes of London sophisticates provided by Mark Gillyon.

Green and Thom Strid's dialogue is vivid and, rightly, pulls no punches in its street-language. Jonathan Holtby's score is strong and variegated in styles, with some tuneful numbers, all skilfully integrated into the drama. If you were a hard-bitten old queen you might find the enthusiasm of these young people and their mentors embarrassing. But I freely admit that several times I choked back a sob. I relished this show for its emotional commitment and eagerly look forward to seeing the company again.

Laurence Brown



Gary and Kevin get close in *Love Kevin*