

## Hope in Heartbreak House

#### Michael Billington at the Lyric Studio

HE arrival of Stewart
Parker's Pentecost at the
Lyric Studio is both a sad
and exhilarating occasion. Sad
because it reminds us just what
a fine dramatist was lost when
Parker died two months ago at
the control of the control of the control
Chilarating because it addresses the subject of Northern
Ireland not in a spirit of sectarian bitterness and hatred but in
one of hope and affirmation.
It takes place in Belfast in
1974 in a working-class house
that is, as one character puts it,
"eloquent with the history of
this city." Caught bang-lap in
that in all one between Protect
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currently has four living occupants. There is Marian, a former antiques-dealer, who initially wishes to preserve the
house as a monument to the
past; her estranged husband
Lenny who has long abandoned
the law for the trombone; his
friend Peter, now a Birmingthe superior of the control
with the short of the house's
recently-deceased owner,
sorbed littleness; and Marian's
old chum, Ruth, who has been
beaten up by her psychopathic
policeman husband.
Without a trace of self-consciousness, Parker also shows
Catholle Marian communing
with the ghost of the house's
recently-deceased owner,
and an administration of the
past has clearly written a
Belfast Hearthreak House: a
play in which a home acquires
a national symbolism. As in
Shaw's fantasia, there is more
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Shaw's fantasia, there is more
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haw's. Mere Shaw's English
drifters welcome the Zeppelins
that will destroy their meaningless existence, Mr Parker's
Blay and
Bara in finally

felt and moving plea for spiritual regeneration and for the need to recognise the Christithat is in all of us.

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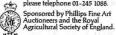
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### Billington on Parker Pentecost

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