

celebrating its tenth birthday. The Tricycle Theatre of Kilburn, much missed since its fire and finally reopening in September, presents *Pentecost*, Stewart Parker's last play, at the Lyric Studio, directed by Nicolas Kent. Parker's death two months ago at a far too early age deprived us of a playwright whose sense of history and elegance of wit and feeling were unusual in British theatre. *Pentecost*, which takes place in Parker's native Belfast against a background of bombs, drumming, breaking glass and the Loyalist Whitsun strike of 1974, is full of good things. Lapsed Catholic and lapsed antique dealer Marian (Dearbhla Molloy) acquires a working-class house as a refuge from the conflict but right in the firing line. It is immediately boarded, like a raft in high seas, by her separated husband (Catholic), two friends (one Catholic, one Prod) and an aggressive widow's ghost (Prod, very). Marian's journey towards the state of grace required to survive both the city and the boarders makes up the narrative of a play which is never sentimental and often funny and sharp. Molloy leads an excellent company — Adrian Dunbar, Barbara Adair, Michelle Fairley and Sam Dale — and Polly Mitchell designs.

## Ratcliffe on Pentecost

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