

## Gripping drama exposes anarchy in the UK

### **Bad Weather The Other Place**

Robert Holman's play addresses contemporary issues of mayhem and violence among teenagers in today's urban society and it succeeds (where many TV documentaries fail) in being both perceptive and richly instructive.

The story is centrally defined by an off-stage scuffle at a Chinese restaurant in Middlesbrough. A man is badly hurt after being kicked almost to mutilation by a teenager called Luke.

But another boy – the mate – carries the can and goes to prison for it.

The burden of escaping from a situation where one is patently guilty – the Luke character – handled by Holman with a poetic sensitivity thus providing compelling dialogue which reflects perfectly urban teenage anarchy, four letter words, "attitude" and all.

From the past emerges philosophical french woman, one-time nanny to the mother of the jailed boy, Jamie. Here the play moves into a territory of regret and refusal as the action changes to France. The young hoodlum is drawn inexorably towards a question of conscience and at the same time he is attracted sexually to the french woman who is 40 years his senior. The anarchic situation which develops mirrors the anarchy shown at the start of the play. The sexual violence and social violence may well be seen as two sides of the same coin.

The play is the kind of dramatic experiment which is handled very well these days at Stratford and its seri-



Rainy days: A scene from *Bad Weather*.

ousness is to be admired along with the performances by Paul Popplewell as Luke, Susan Brown as Kay and the wonderful Susan Engel as Agnes the french woman.

But my goodness, something should be done immediately to improve the dreadful seating at The Other Place which makes a three hour stint an agonisingly painful passage of time.

Running time: 3 hours.

For the season.

**Richard Edmonds**

Edmonds Brum Post Weather



Clipped By:

ianlharris

Tue, Jul 25, 2023