

# EDINBURGH '77

## KENNEDY'S CHILDREN

"KENNEDY'S CHILDREN" Robert Patrick's retrospective on the decade after Kennedy's death, seen through the eyes of five characters in the New York bar, was handled with effective sensitivity by University of Rhode Island Theatre in their Edinburgh Fringe production. Though physically in the same bar, the characters are essentially alone, and speak in monologue.

All look back over ten years of unfulfilled promise, wasted talent and aimless purpose: the teacher dreams of lost Camelot and heroine-worships Jackie Kennedy; the dropped-out political activist recalls the first of the marches and the last of the Flower Children; the failed sex-goddess pines the memory of Marilyn Monroe; Sparger, the gay artist of Dada cabaret, superbly played by Jay Martino, anguishes over lost underground theatre; the Vietnam conscript composes tortured letters to his mother.

Rhode Island Theatre has now established its deserved reputation as one of the best companies on the Fringe.

Brian G. Cooper

## BRISTOL CREAM

"BRISTOL CREAM," Bristol Revunions' revue, was undoubtedly one of the best late-night shows on this year's Fringe. From their opening landladies' chorus through a Mrs. Thatcher vamp number and Panorama interview with the author of a new study of Hitler, "artist and youth leader", to the side-splitting Peter Pears-style breakfast table opera "The Cornflake", the company never flagged in pace, style or quality of material.

Reports Action's newsflash of traffic jams as thousands converge to help an old lady move her tea-things is a lovely jest, while the sketch of Jesus of Nazareth signing on for the dole — "I have experience in woodwork and catering" — is a minor gem of this genre. Equal honours go to all members of this very talented and skilled cast.

Brian G. Cooper

## YORK UNIVERSITY

AT THE Hill Street Hall the York University Theatre present an excellent production of Bertolt Brecht's little seen "Fear and Misery in the Third Reich." This play, written during Brecht's exile, depicts life under the Nazis with all its repression and cruelty. It is made up of 14 separate sketches and playlets, including the well-known one act play "The Jewish Wife," interspersed with songs. As Brecht was here concerned with propaganda against the Nazis he here abandons his usual alienation effects and aims for direct emotional involvement on the part of the audience.

This production exactly captures the feeling Brecht intended and is beautifully directed by Ann Castledine. All the performances are extremely good but I must especially mention that of Liz Rothschild as the Jewish Wife and the excellent rendering of the songs by Angela Holmes.

J. R. L. Reyner

## TART 'AN TRUES

THE ANDREW Dallmeyer Scratch Company present "Tart 'An Trues," a late-night entertainment, at the Walpole Hall. I should think it is the most unusual entertainment on the Fringe this year — dour, sometimes funny but more times not, often almost deliberately missing the

point to make one think. I think the clue is in the title — for many of the sketches are very tart and some of them are very true. The author, Andrew Dallmeyer, calls it "an invitation to an invocation" but what he is invoking us to is not always clear.

Certainly the piece needs a far smaller hall as it was almost lost in this large one with its insidious echo — and the pianist should certainly be told not to play so loudly or so continuously during the sketches.

An interesting but baffling "entertainment," played anonymously.

J. R. L. Reyner

## FEIFFER'S CHILDREN

BRINGING cartoons to life on the stage is so new a genre that its intriguing potential has hardly begun to be explored. In true American pioneering spirit, the University of Rhode Island Theatre's Festival late-show, "Feiffer's Children," brings to life in amusing and poignant fashion the psychologically-dissected characters of the famous American cartoonist.

The intense dancer who dedicates her art to the Four Seasons; the bar conversationalists who repeat each others' denunciations of the loss of individualism in modern America; Bernard, obsessed with his own inadequacy. A new version of the production originally presented at the 1975 Festival, "Feiffer's Children" is very successfully staged by this highly talented young American company.

Brian G. Cooper

## IRON CLAD AGREEMENT

THE IRON Clad Agreement is an experimental and educational performance company based in the American industrial city of Pittsburgh. From this context of business and industry they have created "The Gilded Age of Invention", a unique cycle of one-hour plays on the great American inventors of the 1860-1930 epoch. The six-day series of plays encompasses Edison and Westinghouse, Ford and Barnum, Burbank and Eastman, and the wonders of electricity and engineering, automobiles and circus, farming and photography, are spread before us as treasure trove discovered through music, movement and lively lyrics. Staged at the Netherbow Theatre during the first week of Festival, Iron Clad Agreement made a distinctive contribution to this year's Fringe.

Brian G. Cooper