

**BRISTOL REVUNIONS**  
**Albert Bridge**  
**Extended**

**TOM STÖPPARD'S** new play is a major extension for the stage of his original Prix Italia winner, the radio drama "Albert's Bridge."

Written in collaboration with A. C. H. Smith, it is more than double the length of the original, has become more complex in plot, incorporates many new scenes and important new characters, the most significant being that Albert himself becomes two persons.

Bristol Revunions' Edinburgh Festival Fringe world premiere at the Transport Hall was an altogether excellent production, with a clever set and skilful scene changes, the pace sustained throughout, and the script's fascinating blend of comedy and philosophy never failing to hold the attention.

The schizoid Albert comprises the Albert who paints the bridge and becomes very possessive about doing so — "It's my bridge" — and Albert the philosophy student who becomes a top executive in his father's paint factory.

The schizophrenia becomes especially

manifest in the second half, comprising almost entirely parallel views of the life of Albert the executive complete with wife and estate-agent's dream-house, and Albert the bridge-painter, living equally happily with the maid and their child. But in the end both women leave him, because of Albert's neglect and his devotion to his work.

High above the world, all human disension becomes merely a melodious hum 'in B flat'. Paint unites the two characters of Albert — the bourgeois, activist manager, and the proletarian, dreaming painter. Stoppard exploits the contradictions of the situation, both amusing and profound, to the full. Is one man leading two lives; or is one the dream-world of the other; and which is reality and which dream?

Among some very amusing characters is Fraser, a would-be suicide, who continually climbs up the bridge to jump off, only to see society in perspective and climb down again.

Greg Doran is highly accomplished and amusing in the title role, and well supported throughout by the excellent Bristol Revunions company under Martin White's skilful direction.

Stoppard has given us another most noteworthy work. **Brian G. Cooper**