

CURTAIN UP **extra**

If you have any information on Theatre or Exhibitions in the North West email: simon@lgf.org.uk

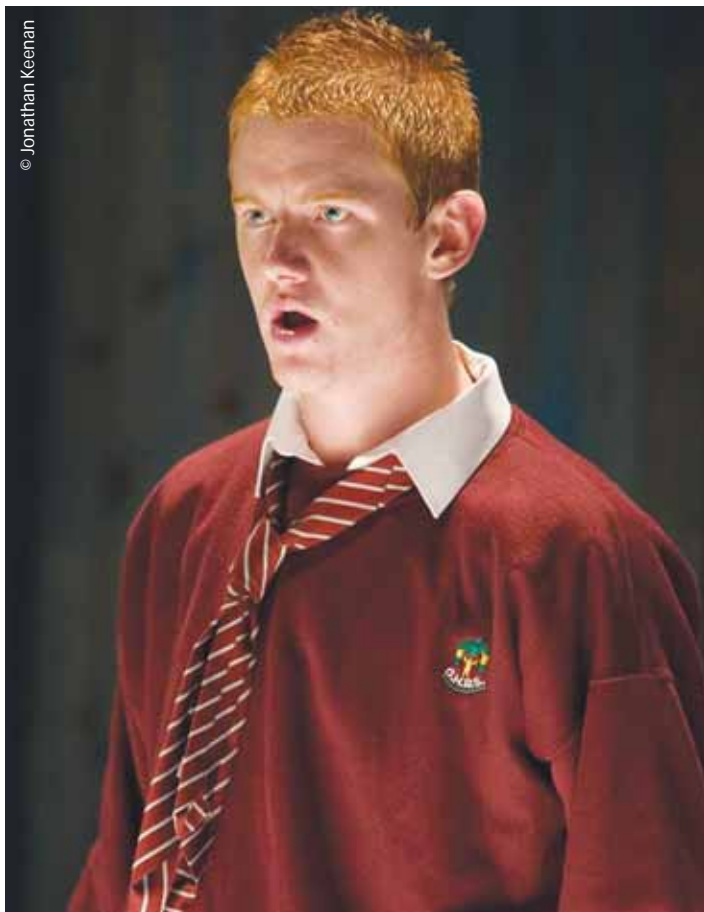
Simon Pearson and Helen Wright with the latest on Theatre and Exhibitions around the region.



MONSTER At The Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester **Review By Simon Pearson**
Showing until 7th July www.royalexchange.co.uk

WORLD PREMIERE

A MONSTER OF A PLAY



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MONSTER won second prize in the **Bruntwood Playwriting Competition for the Royal Exchange, part of the Manchester International Festival.**

It is a drama that tackles some of the most pressing issues of our time.

I was very excited about seeing this play. It was the first time I have had the opportunity to watch a performance in the studio - a very small compact and intense arena.

The one thing you sensed right from the outset about *Monster* is the sense of realism with the storyline and the characters that are in this story.

Darryl (excellently played by Mikey North), is a typical teenage 'scally' boy - excluded from school, entertains himself with 'Happy Slapping' videos on his mobile and slasher films and with no respect for the society around him let alone teachers unless of course they look like rapper 2 Pac Shakur!

Darryl more or less disowned and excluded from his school is now placed in the hands of teacher Tom (Played by Andrew French) in a desperate attempt to sort his attitude and school work out.

The big question is can Tom succeed where everyone else has failed?

We soon realise that its not just Darryl who needs saving.

Tom, like Darryl is haunted by his past and his lack of stability soon shows with how Darryl dictates the relationship with his teacher right from the outset preferring to call him 'Agency' (in reference to the number of temporary teachers he keeps having) instead of 'Sir'.

What really impresses me about the play is how realistic the situations are. For instance how Tom is constantly looked down at by the Darryl and how powerless a teacher is with such a tearaway like Darryl.

It is sometimes a hopeless situation for Tom and with so much pressure at work you often see him take his work home - even on his wedding night!

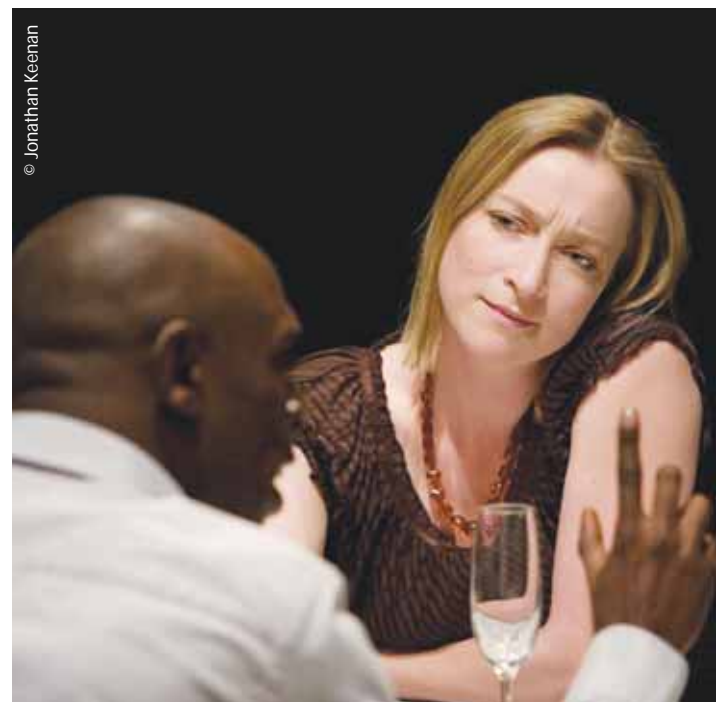
Monster deals with the relationships between teachers and pupils, from different generations and asks the

question can different people reach out to one another and get along in today's society.

There are lots of possible explanations offered in the play for Darryl's behaviour - his homelife - being allowed to watch slasher movies for example, his education - being pushed on from one temporary teacher to another - certainly doesn't help his self esteem to learn and get on at school.

It is certainly a very interesting piece of work carried off brilliantly by director Jacob Murray.

In a country scared of its younger generation and full of scallies, chavs and ASBO's this is a play that certainly pulls no punches and is very powerful, often scary and harrowing. If you get the chance to see *Monster*, jump at it!
www.royalexchange.co.uk
Showing until 7th July 2007.



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