Pair of plays explores personal relationships

Double bill at People's Theatre: After Liverpool by James Saunders and Calm Down Mother by Megan Terry; both directed by June Judson and produced by Paul Dedefo.

Are you receiving me? People talk a great deal, but how often do they listen? How often is there real communication between people rather than mere interchange of words? James Saunders' After Liverpool, a play above all about relationships, depth and with it, comedy, on the spot points of these issues. There is no "plot", but plot is pointless when relationships can make one strong an argument in them. Pairs of people wend their way through a series of situations, and naked truths are thrust upon the audience.

Take an apple. One apple. Take two people. Two people. Suppose one of them wants an apple. Can he take it without guilt? If asked if he wants it, reply his want is shown to be a function of the other person's want. Actors Adella Gauthier (the characters themselves are nameless) seductively offers the apple to James Bodge, who is guilt less about it. Of course, the apple could be split, but then there would be nothing to argue about.

Actor Robert Shea asks Donna Glick if she enjoyed "it" (we are no longer talking of apples). Yes, she answers, it was "great". Her lack of conviction drives him up the wall and elicits the other part of her answer: "but not very much."

All the cast are good, coordination and timing of the action is excellent. The other half of the double bill is Calm Down Mother by Megan Terry, another play about relationships, involving three women and another journey through a set of scenes. Pat Dodger's was the most interesting performance; her concentrated expression suggested leadership, but I'm afraid that after five minutes the play became rather too obvious; after ten minutes it was tedious. Well worth the trip to Peoples' Theatre, however, to see After Liverpool. The two plays run through March 2.

—Jonathan Richmond

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