



JUNE 27, 28, 29, 30, JULY 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

# RATTLE OF A SIMPLE MAN

by Charles Dyer

### Cast:

Cyrenne . . . . . CAROLE DAVIES  
 Percy . . . . . JOHN FENNER  
 Ricard . . . . . JOHN TURNER

Directed by **DOROTHY FENNER**



## Rattle of a Simple Man



The action takes place in Cyrenne's basement flatlet somewhere in London on a winter's evening.

There will be two intervals of 15 minutes each.  
Curtain down approximately 10.00 p.m.

Set Design . . . . . David Ellis  
 Stage Manager . . . . . Eamon Pickering  
 Deputy Stage Manager . . . . . Claire Lytton  
 Assistant Stage Managers . . . . . Karen Arnold, Margaret Rees, Elizabeth Ballantine  
 Lighting Design . . . . . Dave Roberts  
 Lighting Operators . . . . . Joe Godwin, Ashley Pickles  
 Sound Engineer . . . . . Nick Welch  
 Sound Operators . . . . . Ken Rowe, Philip Macdonald  
 Wardrobe . . . . . Janet Winch  
 Photographs . . . . . Roger Harris, Martin Savage

NO SMOKING IN THE AUDITORIUM

## Reviving spirit of the Sixties

"RATTLE OF A SIMPLE MAN" Loft Theatre, Leamington, until July 7. Running time 2 1/2 hours.

### THEATRE

ALREADY there's something distinctly quaint about Charles Dyer's wry little comedy from the early Sixties.

The question that immediately springs to mind is whether it's worth doing in this enlightened full-end of the Seventies. Attitudes and hang-ups which spark off the relationship between Cyrenne, the tart with the heart, and Percy, the obtuse soccer supporter, register now as unbelievably naive.

Yet, almost as a period piece, it does have a certain magnetism. The bond of communication between Cyrenne and Percy — and perhaps more notably between Cyrenne and her brother — has an innate warmth which transcends the materialism of the world about them.

Whatever the weaknesses, the play captures this spirit, making its three characters basically acceptable if not too readily identifiable.

This revival, directed by Dorothy Fenner, tends to hesitate on a number of issues. It seems uncertain of which period to adopt and

how much leeway to allow the extrovert images of its two central figures.

Thus there are no overall guidelines to keep the production tight and it wavers about. But the performances of Carole Davies and John Fenner are strong enough in technique to ensure it remains at a watchable level.

In a sense, Miss Davies is too sophisticated in her approach to convince us over Cyrenne's sad little habit of telling tall tales. Otherwise, her cool, controlled style is good to watch and she develops the character with a fair degree of perception.

Percy, the out-of-towner, has an almost rustic simplicity which provides many a trap for an actor. He's curiously dated individual and John Fenner does well to establish a degree of credibility, though not always retaining it. John Turner contributes effectively in the delicately handled sequence involving the brother.

PETER MCGARRY.

## Rattling good yarn. . .

Any fears that "Rattle of a Simple Man", first produced almost 20 years ago with Sheila Hancock and Edward Woodward in the leading roles, would have badly dated, are currently being dispelled in the Loft Theatre's second production of the play.

The Loft themselves first presented the play about 14 years ago but director Dorothy Fenner felt that its dramatic values were still valid today. She is correct.

This tale of the meeting between the big-hearted tart and the timid chap who's never done it before has a kind of eternal truth which will always be relevant.

Percy from Manchester, up for 't'up, goes back with Cyrenne to her small Bayswater Road flat as the result of a beer-fuddled bet struck between him and one of his mates: £100 you don't do it.

It would be unfair to reveal whether or not Percy wins his bet. Enough to say that he and Cyrenne engage in a meandering minuet round the double bed which dominates the room, in the course of which they come tantalisingly near the kind of real relationship both crave.

The play is essentially a comedy and although many of the jokes are as obvious as Wigan Town Hall, they still

work provided the two principals convey the essential tenderness and warmth which comes to the surface between them more and more as the action progresses.

If Carole Davies (Cyrenne) and John Fenner (Percy) did not quite sustain this completely on opening night on Wednesday, they failed by no more than a whisker most of the time. Carole Davies, indeed, gives a fine performance. She has the essential physical attributes, including the husky, gin-and-fags voice, and she timed her gentle, making fun of Percy cracks with a deft precision.

Percy is not an easy role; he can so easily become a bore. John Fenner's performance tends to be too much on the one, flat Northern note and one's sympathy for him — essential for the play to work — began to wear thin.

But the only serious flaw in the production is in the role of the only other character who appears, Cyrenne's brother. He needs to be a volatile Italian, and her older brother, and her older brother, for the angry clash with Cyrenne over her ways of life to carry conviction. John Turner plays him as an insipid Cockney with the inevitable lead balloon effect on the scene. A strange aberration. N.B.



A nervous moment for Percy (John Fenner) as Cyrenne (Carole Davies) adjusts his tie. C/8/260/S



