

St Stephen's Theatre Space, Cardiff

Coffee and wine with your Strauss

IT IS worth a visit to St Stephen's Theatre Space for Moving Being's production of *In These Great Times* just for the entry into the Viennese Cafe alone.

Coffee and wine are served at your table before the performance while a string quartet serenades with Strauss.

But that is only the beginning.

It is 1900 in the ambiguity that was Vienna: "An earthly paradise and a hell on earth." The city of Mozart and Hitler.

The subject of the play is the paradoxes, neuroses and complexities of modern times when lunatic maggots feed as they still do on the rot in the skull beneath the cosmetic face of civilisation.

In These Great Times (which continues until June 20) is also "an argument with the theatre," a theatrical work which explores the nature of theatre.

All this is worked out in a kaleidoscope of words, dance, pictures and music by Kraus, Freud, Klimt, Schiele, Mahler, Mozart and many others.

Once the weekly acted Freud scenes are over, World War I breaks out and the swirl of action gathers momentum sweeping inexorably forward with strong acting and vivid effects in an extraordinarily powerful and thought-provoking theatrical experience which is, finally, intensely moving.

By IFAN PAYNE

Great times? Diseased times? Dreams or hallucinations?

There may be a lack of outlet for the writings of a Krausian journalist but when the day comes to write, as someone surely will, of the richness of artistic and theatrical life in Cardiff in the 1980s, *Moving Being* will rate a prominent part.

For, as always, time past is indeed time present and this is the time and this is the place.

In these great times, says *Moving Being*, life is a banal joke.

Precisely. The joke, of course, is on us.