

Hauntingly funny story

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

FINITE Theatre is drama that plays within the conventions.

Infinite theatre is theatre which plays with conventions.

Infinite theatre plays also with our conceptions and perceptions of time, place and action and this is precisely what Gary Stevens does in *Different Ghosts*, at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff.

What if, Stevens seems to propose, different ghosts from different times were to occupy the same space at the same time.

So the actors representing five ghosts perform through each other rather than to each other and Stevens himself wanders among the action, the most expressive of inexpressive actors.

This is the theatric parallel of composer George Rochberg's musical concepts in which he states, "We are filaments of a universal mind; we dream each others dreams and those of our ancestors. Time, thus, is

not linear but radial."

In the unforgettable 1987 production, *If The Cap Fits*, Stevens used an obsession with clothes to spur the action.

In *Different Ghosts* it is an equally funny obsession with furniture which provides an often hilarious focal point.

Stevens has one of the most original minds at work in the theatre today.

Stevens's infinite theatre does not silence the audience with speech but draws it into a creative partnership through what is unsaid.

This is the silence and stillness from which thought and action are created.

Don't be put off. *Different Ghosts* is brilliant and highly entertaining, even if it has no resolution.

For what we see is that everything still remains to be seen.

Thus this funny, and wholly original, theatre work resonates in the mind, expanding within us. Long after the play is over, the game remains.