

Waiting for Godot at St Donat's

Time stops as tramps weave web of words

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

BECKETT, it has been said, is a demonstrative writer, one who shows but does not tell — and in *Waiting for Godot* he shows us two characters but does not tell why.

In a play, in which time stopped all night, the two characters weave webs of words in which meaning is less important than the effect.

Apparently Jack B Yates's painting *Two Travellers* which depicts two tinkers — ragged figures on an Irish road — inspired the characters of Estragon and Vladimir. Two tramps going nowhere.

The Not The National Theatre production, at St Donat's for three evenings, took its cue from this and presented two Irish tramps caught in time at their perpetual roadside beneath the tree.

Pip Danaghy as Estragon and Roger Gartland as Vladimir (displaying some Steptoe-like mannerisms) went for a high-energy performance in

which they attempted to imbue their characters with emotion and passion.

In a play which to some extent depends upon cool verbal pattern-making for its effect, the more violent, seemingly unmotivated outbursts tended to fragment the flow of the production rather than make for a cohesive experience.

The gain of this approach lay in the emphasis given to the humour in the text.

The other three actors Jason Watkins, Ian Marter and, especially, Ben Neuss played their part in what is after all an important dramatic experience.

From Pinter to Woody Allen's *God, Waiting for Godot* has had its influence and continues to impress with its two characters forever trapped within the picture frame, as though caught in mid-thought.