

Review

Adios Cha Cha extraordinary piece of work

By ADRIAN WINTLE

Adios Cha Cha is an extraordinary piece of theatre, tough, lyrical, uncompromising and unflinching in its corporate energy.

Performed "in the round" the show's character was unmistakeable — a tribute both to the strength of the company devised scripting and the buoyant acting style of its small cast.

Expressed simply, *Adios Cha Cha* is a dramatic poem that uses an episodic format to portray life in a Third World village. Specifically, it focuses on the muddying fusion of work, religious tradition and military presence, and how these conflicting currents affect peasantry thrust into the world political scene.

The play protests by example against profiteering in the guise of benevolence, and its leitmotif of savagery concerning military dictatorship is a bitter central theme. Yet at the same time *Adios Cha Cha* is an effervescent celebration of daily life, in which the perennial concerns of birth, marriage, grubbing a living and finally inhabiting consecrated ground up on the black mountainside are woven into a colorful theatrical fabric.

Live music of South American orientation punctuates the action and is also used as a linking device between separate episodes. Variety is achieved by the different emotional colours of these scenes, so that ugliness (the drunken soldiers molesting a village girl, or the climactic machine-gunning of *Cha Cha* and her compatriots) is contrasted with such joyous events as a community wedding celebration and a formal party scene involving the sardonic use of grotesque puppet figures.

The play's richness of incident is supported by a theme that easily transcends the imaginary location *St. Alyossa* to become a powerful statement about individual liberties at risk in any society.

Sidetrack Theatre has fashioned a play that speaks of the human condition, doing so in compelling style by virtue of brilliant ensemble response. **There is, it seems, a possibility that *Adios Cha Cha* may return. If this happens, defer all other engagements and see it.**