

Stage

THEATRE REVIEWS

BY PATRICK MARMION

2Graves ★★★★★

Arts Theatre

They say revenge is best served cold, but this little gem of a revenge saga is served hot, cold and garnished with sprigs of ingenious rhythm and rhyme. The tale spans multiple deaths in the seamy, fuggy underworld of darts, horse racing and HM Prisons. Our gruesomely unlucky hero-narrator is the son of a failed semi-professional darts player whose apparent suicide leaves his family saddled with debt. His solution is to pay these off by working for a hard-faced East End villain.

The genius of Paul Sellar's riveting monologue is that it turns low-life cockney melodrama into high Greek tragedy with a sense of humour that

flashes through the piece like lightning. His verse employs the elegant yet slouching rhythms of the ancient Norse poem *Beowulf* and gives the story a sense of destiny, pitching forward and unfolding according to some pre-ordained fate.

Yvonne McDevitt's production ranges vividly from 1978 to the present day with lone actor Jonathan Moore on a practically empty stage. Moore is a man-mountain built like a darts player, crowned with long, unnervingly well-groomed ginger hair. As though stuck by some gigantic arrow, he sits pinioned to a seat which itself looks more like an electric chair. Meanwhile snappy light-changes shift mood, perspective and character in an instant. Although there's also a soundtrack by Michael Nyman, which is so minimal it hardly exists, this is an evening about language. And that language is sensationally delivered by Moore whose performance is a masterly feat of concentration and gripping evocation.

