

## **The Schuman Plan**

Selected reviews

Nothing that Luscombe has produced before quite prepares us for his latest play, *The Schuman Plan*. Though it's often sharply funny, there's nothing frivolous about this piece.

Spanning 70 years, from the Thirties to the present day, the play is an intelligent and intricate attempt to explore the contradictions and shifts in our response to the European Ideal.

The thread that holds it together is the career of an invented character, Bill Bretherton, the son of a Suffolk fisherman who becomes a protégé of Captain Edward Heath while serving under him during the war.

In one of the best scenes, which shows Heath fielding a phone call from the Norwegian prime minister while dressing to conduct a concert, it becomes clear that Bill's employer is prepared secretly to surrender the rights of English fishermen rather than falter at the final hurdle of taking the country into Europe.

The play oscillates between episodes that chart Bill's disenchantment (there's a very funny sequence on a Sicilian farm in which he's forced at gunpoint to accede to gross CAP corruption) and moving scenes among the fishermen, destitute because of EU directives, in Suffolk in 1992. It's the final irony that Bill, the local boy and visionary, returns home as the jobsworth MAFF official detailed to supervise the destruction of the boats.

(Paul Taylor, *the Independent*, 09.02.06)

[*The Schuman Plan*] offers a detailed, intricate look at shifting attitudes to the European dream. It is invigorating to hear a public stage being used to debate a crucial issue. Fascinating stuff. You can't accuse Luscombe of failing to grapple with big issues.

(Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 07.02.06)

Ambition is obviously Tim Luscombe's middle name. It is exhilarating to see Hampstead on such aspirational form. *The Schuman Plan* raises the crucial question: is it possible to create a non-didactic political play if the politics do not directly involve life or death.

(Rachel Halliburton, *Time Out*, 15.02.06)

A courageous piece.

(Sam Marlowe, *The Times*, 08.02.06)

Ambitious, clever, interesting, even fun.

(Alastair Macaulay, The Financial Times, 09.02.06)

One of the most ambitious new plays I've seen in years.

(John Peter, Sunday Times, 12.02.06)