

THE STAGEBy **John Thaxter**Published **Mon 6 November 2006 at 11:40**[Bookmark this review with del.icio.us](#)[Find blogs that mention this review](#)[Digg this review and share it with others](#)[Reviews RSS feed \(What's RSS?\)](#)

Jonathan Moore in 2Graves at the Arts Theatre, London

Photo: Tristram Kenton

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2Graves

It will not give the game away to paraphrase the closing lines of Paul Sellar's new play, drawn from the wisdom of Confucius, to remind us that "he who seeks revenge should first dig two graves, one for himself."

Sellar's fierce monodrama, a rhythmic verse ballad spoken with an East End accent, began as two separate monologues about gambling and sport. Now combined, it becomes the chilling story of a professional darts player forced to throw an international match by criminal gangs, and the son who brutally avenges his father's downfall and death in a horrifying tale of bloody retribution.

This year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe premiere so impressed composer Michael Nyman that the London transfer gains ten minutes of playing time with his resonant soundtrack, coupled with Colin Grenfell's high-definition lighting plot, to deepen the impact of Jonathan Moore's performance as he drags us through smoke-filled pubs, the stench and casual violence of prison life, improbable high jinks astride a racehorse at Aintree and a tragic equine mercy killing.

With long hair and bare, sturdy legs below black shorts, Moore plays the narrator like a bruised heavyweight wrestling champion, ensconced in what seems to be an electric chair, his grim, charmless narrative relieved only by jaunty moments of ironic humour.

The problem remains that of all the many characters in his tale, mostly among the criminal elements of the East End and the turf, each and every one (not excluding the narrator) totally lacks the compassion that could make dramatic sense of tragedy. It thus finally robs Sellar's powerful piece of its claim to theatrical wholeness.

Yvonne McDevitt's production relaunched the recently refurbished Arts Theatre.

Production information

By:	Paul Sellar
Composer:	Michael Nyman
Management:	Andy Jordan Productions
Cast:	Jonathan Moore
Director:	Yvonne McDevitt
Design:	Kimie Nakano and Matthew Deely
Sound:	Kay Basson

Production information can change over the run of the show.

Run sheet**Arts London**

November 1-December 7 2006

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