Even before “LOVE KEVIN” was first performed, local figures and national media alike broached the idea of teaching young people in more effective ways. "This is not something we want to see in this country," they said. "It must lead the young people into paths of destruction." A shock musical about near-boys' graphic story, it was finally performed. The local fire department's cause was lost when it refused to help. And so it went.

With the small NTC Studio 2 Theatre recital on 26th January 1990, "LOVE KEVIN" was instantly hailed as "an inferno." Independent

From then on, success followed success. The play was nominated for the National Student Drama Fest and won a coveted place in the Lake District National Theatre on the Oliver's Stage. The Times Educational Supplement was in awe of the piece of youth theatre to have appeared in the London West End.

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival '90 gave the show a platform, allowing them to perfect their craft in a highly competitive environment. Spring Street Theatre was the next venue to welcome "LOVE KEVIN." It was, however, at Edinburgh that the Chieftains became the first band to play "KEVIN" to an audience of 10,000 people at the Hard Rock Cafe.

In coming to London, "LOVE KEVIN" also brings a unique interpretation of young people's lives. Anywhere.
read what can only be termed "a storm" of interest.

This, without having seen the show or read a script.

deborah
unnatural physical development" – Bishop Snellgrove.

Daily Mirror.

came three days before curtain up. But the show, as they
called the public saw "KEVIN" for the first time on January
at never loses impact" and "emotionally charged" – The

of the production. "LOVE KEVIN" was selected as one of

into packed houses at Alan Ayckbourn's Stephen Joseph

theatre Challenge, 1990. As a result it was performed at

"KEVIN" was: "...the most challenging and original

chance to play to a truly wide audience and to polish

pressed and the audiences were plentiful. Hull Truck Co's

eralised a central irony.

ing done by a group based in Yorkshire. It was time for

It is about love and what the lack of it can do to damage


Talent should never go unrecognised.

THE THOROUGHBRED BANK.

Lloyds Bank

Lloyds Bank (H.), 71 Lombard Stn., London EC1P 4BS.
Northern Theatre Company was founded in 1975 to stage an original musical "AMY" based on the life of Hull's famous aviatir Amy Johnson.

It was an original work penned by Richard F. Green and staged by Bryan Williams who are still the directors of NTC. What distinguished the production was that it combined local amateur talent with established professionals. Actors, writers, musicians and designers.

What has followed over the years has been a continuous policy to develop talent. From small experimental presentations to major theatrical events, creativity has been given its chance to grow for young and old alike within the company.

Several years ago the company founded its own school for dance, drama and stagecraft. Training is to accredited standards in a studio complex which contains its own small public theatre.

This facility allows the company to encourage its young talent in a professional environment - not just for would-be career performers but for all young people of the area who can benefit from personal development through artistic expression.

Northern Theatre Youth attract young talent from all over Humberside to enjoy the benefits of performing challenging material in a professionally run environment.

In recent years the Youth company has substantially extended its reputation both artistically and geographically as the result of original material created especially for them.

In 1989 NTC director Richard F. Green and writer Thom Serid combined to co-author a disturbing, short play for a cast of four. "Curse of Usher" was inspired by the work of early 19th Century author Edgar Allan Poe but it was removed from its Gothic setting and placed in the unsuitable artistic environment of Paris in the 1930's.

Far from the horror tale film style, the play tackled the issue of child abuse and its longer term effects in adult obsessive behaviour.

It was the first time that NTC had entered its young theatre for outside competition. All the more gratifying it was, then, for the production to win a place at the National Student Drama Festival, 1989 at Cambridge.
The following year the company presented "LOVE KEVIN" – the tale of a young lad from Nottingham who, rather than be put into care by the local authority, runs away to seek his fortune on the streets of London. It is a sad and all too common tale of how the absence of love can destroy young lives and how society allows its youth to live homeless sustained by their earnings from drugs and prostitution.

In this production writers Green and Stirid combined their words with music to drive home their uncompromising messages. Young composer Jonathan Holby created a score that ranged from hard-hitting 'punk' to sad and emotive ballads. Finally designer and NTC director Bryan Williams brought the whole concept together with his versatile "Living Street" staging.

The success of this showcase for NTC’s young talent has been well documented from winning a chance to perform at the National Theatre in the Lloyds Bank Challenge and its success at the Edinburgh Fringe to its arrival in London at the Chelsea Centre Theatre.

Even while "KEVIN" was enjoying such success the writing team of Green, Stirid and Holby were putting together their ideas for a completely different style of musical to challenge audiences and stretch the NTC youth.

“Out of Mind” was first staged at Hull Truck’s Spring Street Theatre in Hull on the 12th February 1991.

It is a musical which revolves around the activities of a group of young people in Skegness and Lincoln in the early 1960’s. The big difference is that it is staged inside the head of a victim of Cerebral Palsy. A boy who can’t talk or control any of his limbs. It is about failure to communicate and the central irony is that it is only the boy talking directly to the audience, who succeeds whilst others around him fail. This production is entered for the 1991 Lloyds Bank Theatre Challenge and there are plans to take it to Edinburg Fringe.

"A thought provoking musical which challenges the notion that the quality of life.‘ DAILY MAIL.

Plans are also being formulated to take “LOVE KEVIN” on national tour in the Autumn of 1991. For details of this or any other aspect of Northern Theatre Company you can contact:

NORTHERN THEATRE COMPANY
STUDIO 2, THEATRE
MADELEY STREET
HULL
TEL: (0482) 28627
Northern Theatre Youth is a company of teenage performers, based in Hull, who present us here with an original musical which has caused a furore in the more staid North. I am not surprised it has elicited strong reactions as its vigour and energy hit you from the first. This is a vibrant and talented young company, who tell us a story, melodramatic perhaps but gripping, of Kevin, a teenager from Nottingham, who experiences no love at home, is threatened with care proceedings, and makes the great escape to the streets of London where he finds a cruel kind of independence in prostitution.

*Love Kevin* has an important theme: that our society neglects, abuses, prates about children and ‘takes them into care’ - in fact does everything except care for and about them. It’s clearly intended as an *Oliver Twist* - or an *Oliver* - for the 90s, even down to its best song ‘Where can I find love?’

The direction and movement, by one of the writers (Richard F. Green), are full of vitality and the performances are immensely promising. Jody Crosier (Kevin) clearly has an acting future with a very appealing singing voice while Andy Fearom is excellent as Gary, the cheeky Artful Dodger character. Anthony Hoggard gives a fine grotesque as Sniffer the glue-addict and Kirsty Applegarth is gutsy as Kevin’s blowsy, mixed-up mum. There are also several witty vignettes of London sophisticates provided by Mark Gillyon.

Green and Thom Strid’s dialogue is vivid and, rightly, pulls no punches in its street-language. Jonathan Holby’s score is strong and variegated in styles, with some tuneful numbers, all skilfully integrated into the drama. If you were a hard-bitten old queen you might find the enthusiasm of these young people and their mentors embarrassing. But I freely admit that several times I choked back a sob. I relished this show for its emotional commitment and eagerly look forward to seeing the company again.

Laurence Brown

Gary and Kevin get close in *Love Kevin*