



Metro Times
Nov. 3-9, 1999

THROUGH NOVEMBER 20

TWO BLEAK DELIGHTS

One of the true joys of seeing plays at Detroit's Zeitgeist — aside from the adventurousness and quality of the productions — is that the theater at this performance-exhibition space is as carefully curated as the artwork. The works on stage often play wonderfully off the pieces in the gallery, the collaboratively designed sets or each other. The latter is the brilliant case with "Beckett then Pinter," the current pairing of two classic, experimental plays: Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* and Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*. Language and the facing of self-other arise as predominant themes in both of these works, with two particular scenes centering on the exact definition of a word or phrase serving as perhaps the most poignant (but by no means only) link between the two works. Zeitgeist's last pairing of two one-acts fell woefully flat, with the acting in LeRoi Jones' Dutchman proving far superior to that in Phillip Hayes Dean's *The Owl Killer*.

Delightfully (if one can use such a word when discussing perennial bleaksters Beckett and Pinter), both works in this lineup soar under the able direction of John Jakary (*Krapp's Last Tape*) and Troy Richard (*The Dumb Waiter*). Andre Latuszewsky's gloriously perturbed portrayal of Krapp (pictured) is reasonable enough to plunk down the very reasonable \$10 admission (which, as always, includes drinks before, between and after), but, be assured, Joel Mitchell and Sergio Mautone maintain the momentum with dutifully agitated readings of Pinter. One other brilliant touch: Jakary takes the liberty of updating *Krapp* from audio tape to video, employing the master techniques of local film doyenne Julie Meitz. Meitz's edgy portrayal of the title character adds an appropriately contemporary dimension to an aging egoist's tortured return to his younger self. "Beckett Then Pinter" runs Fridays and Saturdays at Zeitgeist, 2661 Michigan Ave., Detroit. Call 313-965-9192. **-Kristin Palm**