

## NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

I'm a sick man, a malicious man,' begins Dostoevsky's nameless, tormented antihero, and Angus Reid, in his own adaptation of the **NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND**, convinces you of it. In what the speaker professes is NOT a confession, though it sounds rather like it, he paces his room and his memory, revealing to an invisible listener the introspective agony he has nurtured from childhood 'To think too much is a disease,' he claims, and in this case the prognosis is clearly terminal.

In a sustained performance that fills the theatre with the brooding intensity of near-madness, Reid captures the tight-lipped bitterness and twisted superiority of a man who has gnawed to the bottom of his soul.

(Rosemary Goring)

• Notes from Underground.

Oxford Speakeasy Productions, Calton Studios, Calton Road.

(venue 71), 556 7066. Until 29 Aug. 12.45pm, £2.50 (£2)

# THE LIST

## GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH

### EVENTS GUIDE



THE SCOTSMAN Saturday, August 22, 1987

#### NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

##### Oxford Speakeasy Productions

ANGUS REID has written, directed and "starred" in this adaptation of Dostoyevsky's renowned work.

In his portrayal of a sick, paranoid, vindictive individual who never stops torturing himself, this actor excels. The performance is helped considerably by a simple, but explicit set consisting of a screen with silhouettes and well-manipulated lighting which marks incisively each change of scene. Supporting characters such as Apollon, the servant played by Bruce Reid, and Zverkov, a paunchy pompous associate (Simon Boothroyd), add colour and life to this fine, economic performance. The cast manages to extract as much as is theatrically possible out of Dostoyevsky's study of extreme negativity in which his protagonist claims that humiliation purifies and elevates the soul.

The main character, a 40-year-old clerk, moves through one tirade to another until we find him drunk in the presence of more successful former colleagues at a celebration dinner. After insulting them all and challenging one to a duel he lurches forth into the night ending up in the local brothel with a young prostitute whom he proceeds to moralise over, torment and finally break with his bookish hypocrisy and cant. Oxford Speakeasy succeeds beautifully in this study of the enraged iconoclast that Dostoyevsky delineated so thoroughly in his novel.

Mary Gladstone