

# Stage version of 'reality TV' creates an intriguing

**BUTTERFLY**  
TRAMWAY, GLASGOW  
RUN ENDED  
★★★★

PERFORMED by people from three generations of a real Glasgow family – Patricia and Robert Kelly, their two daughters and three grandchildren – this piece, by Manchester-based performance company Quarantine, is much more than a theatrical attempt at so-called “reality television”.

With its wooden dance floor, mirrored disco balls, cash bar and copiously supplied buffet, it has the

avant garde's combination of fun and seriousness of purpose.

The family were the sole respondents to Quarantine's advert seeking a group of relatives for the performance (apart from the kids who tried to volunteer their unsuspecting parents). Observably tight-knit and at ease with one another, they are the antidote to Big Brother.

Although they have chosen the public spotlight, they have chosen it together and, thanks to Quarantine director Richard Gregory's safeguards, largely on their own terms.

What emerges, therefore, is



All in the family: Richard Gregory examines real relationships in an unreal setting

Photograph: Kevin Low

## insight into Scots family's life

something more complex, and interesting, than the moronic brutality of reality TV, in which only the most media-savvy survive.

Reminiscences, personal reflections and interviews, complete with an old-style furry microphone, are given a broader context by the slow-motion images borrowed from the family's home movie collection.

The piece achieves the obvious effect of leading us to ponder how this public forum is altering the family's behaviour and how the nature of the production (which includes dancing by audience members) breaks

**'It is more complex than the moronic brutality of TV'**

the barrier between performers and audience.

The video footage leads us back to the voyeurism of TV, but also to simple, human inquisitiveness. For example, Robert's reflections on his childhood, and, indeed, his accent, imply a working-class upbringing. However, the film of his grandchildren suggests that they are at private school. The apparent social mobility of Robert and Patricia's daughter Gail is never explained; rather it hangs in suspended animation as one of the production's many intriguing loose ends.