

## Review: Once this was a poet

Written by John Eager

Thursday, 09 October 2008 13:28 - Last Updated Tuesday, 21 October 2008 13:44

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Brenda Read-Brown has written and directed an innovative and unusual play based on the last year of Pete Brown's life, which she shared as his partner.



Pete was, amongst other things, an agricultural worker (specialising in apples and pears) who found his forte as a performance poet. He founded the Guerilla Poets, a group who would arrive, usually unannounced, at pubs to deliver impromptu, self-penned poems to an unexpected, beery audience. For Pete, it was bringing folk expression as poetry back to the people, in a setting where he found himself most at home.

Read on for a review of the play, details of when you can see it and a previously unreleased recording of one of his most popular poems *The Peasant's Revolt*.

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To catch Brenda's play *Once this was a poet* get to Cheltenham Town Hall, Tuesday 14th October for 8:30pm. You might want to book your ticket first:

### [Cheltenham Literature Festival](#)

The narrative of the play is wrapped around the poems of both Pete and Brenda, as Brenda was and is a performance poet in her own right. The poetry then acts as a dialogue, often internal, between the protagonists, played by Ian Bishop (Pete) and Paula Fancini-Hooper (Angie - as Brenda has renamed herself for the sake of the play). Their performances as members of Tewkesbury Amateur Dramatic Society are superb and help take you on a rollercoaster ride of emotions. They are well supported by Joe Durrant and Pam Jell, who each perform a variety of roles.

Cheltenham's Arts Development Officer, Paul McKee has described the play as: "A stunningly wonderful theatrical experience! This play was all the things drama should be - insightful, challenging, moving and very funny. It was very beautiful and life affirming."

In the Gloucestershire Drama Association (GDA) One Act Play Festival, it won all the prizes for which it was eligible and *Once this was a poet* also won the GDA Playwriting Award, 2007-8.

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Pete Brown and John Eager in a Guerilla Poets poetry knock down contest

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