

Playback emotions

Actors
enacting
a scene



YOU thought theatre was for entertainment? Well, this one promises to be much more than that. Sterling Playback Theatre is all set to give the city a performance that is a kind of therapy to its audience. Wondering how? Read on.

Playback theatre is an innovative form of playacting where the actors perform impromptu on stories narrated by a member of the audience. The form was first developed in 1957 by Jonathan Fox in the USA and is brought to Chennai by Cyril Alexander.

Interaction with the audience is the essence of the play and it falls upon the conductor to act as a bridge between the actors and the audience.

The main story follows where someone from audience narrates an incident, which is gener-

ally a real life story. The conductor questions "the teller" and tries to get a perspective to the story. This is where the actors step in and perform on the basis of what they have heard. "This form scores a point over other dramatic techniques because it gives the audience an opportunity to see their own story staged," says Cyril Alexander, the director of the play.

Sterling Group has been using this form as a therapy where they provide a platform to people to voice what concerns them most. They have performed in juvenile homes and slums and have heard heart rending stories from the audience. Their performance on March 16 at the ICSA is open to all and entry is free.

— Tuhina Anand

Chennai

Saturday, March 15, 2003