

fest

friday 23rd august 2002

# slaves of starbucks

hill street theatre, until aug 26, 19:00, £8  
(£6)  
macho vegetable entertainment \*\*\*\*

IN THE hands of amateurs, anti-American rants can go alarmingly arse over tit. Cack-handed efforts to rip it out of our flag-waving friends are always amplified because the latter's peculiarly myopic approach to the rest of the world is so easy to satirize.

So big up Peter Aterman, whose determinedly dead-pan manner, demented bank manager demeanour and endearingly wacko ideas allow him to neatly negotiate such problems. Each target is hammered with Pythonesque glee: unscrupulous Enron executives are shown relying on the market analysis of an Intern-sacrificing Aztec Priest; a crazed, Nietzsche-quoting Celine Dion is exposed as a disciple of Hitler ("He always stood up for what he believed in"); and JFK's famous "Ask not what you can do..." speech is deconstructed to reveal its hidden subtext of American domination.



This is a clever, original way of critiquing the creeping colonization of the globe by cretinous lard arses, and it's not afraid to be serious. In one sketch, ball-aching in all senses, Aterman uses Oprah-style confessional to tell the tale of a man whose metaphorical emasculation by the numbing tedium of life 'down the mall' is literalised by his actual castration by a gang of teenagers inside one. In a sea of mediocre comedic jizz, Aterman's wit, integrity and intelligence shines out. You should see him. Now.

**thrill:** A true poet of anti-globalisation.  
**spill:** Shatters the Americans/irony myth.

*George Hay*