

STRONG LANGUAGE

UK press cuttings

Film: Preview

'Strong Language'

NFT

Talk is cheap, they say, and that's just as well for Simon Rumley's British indie, a cheeky, amusing and intriguing *faux* vox-pop which very cleverly laces together some 16 straight-to-camera interviews from a varied range of London twentysomethings. Matching various film and video stocks, black-and-white patched in with colour, paced by an increasingly urgent electronic dance beat score, this deceptively natural earful of opinion is proof positive that ideas and energy can more than fill the holes that scant resources leave gaping.

As the roll-call of lift operators, the unemployed, video directors, fetish models, astrologers and the like offer passionate views on indebtedness, cynicism, Oasis or clubbing, you initially wonder who is interviewing them and are they for

real. But soon you are pulled in by the pure variety, humour and frankness of what they have to say. Not that all the testimonies are self-aggrandising. Elements of Londoners' racism are shown up here, as, occasionally, are their self-importance, snobbery and narrow-mindedness. And who's that distant figure in the dripping cellar rabbiting on about his university days and his early love? What can this disparate group have in common?

A further, possibly inadvertent, pleasure of Rumley's film comes from considerations of 'naturalism' and performance. It's more difficult playing 'normal' than it first appears, and watching this talented group of young actors try their different approaches is instructive. It is a tribute to Rumley's writing that something real and recognisable comes across; it also teases that old conundrum about how fiction and documentary sometimes complete each other's work. *Wally Hammond*



FILM

TIME OUT
26.1 - 2.2.00