

GOTCHA +  
BAZAAR +  
RUMMAGE  
1985

## Stepping out

A SCING-LESS version of Sue Townsend's musical play **Bazaar and Rummage** was sufficiently shortened to make the second half of a double bill at Hampton Court Theatre last week.

The plays, presented as TTC studio productions, were audition pieces for Mike Brazier, whose version of **Gotcha!** was also a directorial debut, and Paul Lawrance who comes to TTC with an extensive directing reputation with Q2 Players.

A conflict of engagements prevented me from seeing the Barrie Keefe play, but interval chatter suggested that Nick de Kerchoue had given a powerful interpretation of the explosive youth.

Mr. Lawrance had a superb cast for his feminist comedy and won some excellent performances despite the glibness of the original script.

Dorothy Jones was the do-gooding Gwenda who is happy to keep a group of agoraphobes in thrall to their ailment as a means of fulfilling her own needs to manipulate and protect. And she made good use of some funny one-liners that were out of character but added to the entertainment.

Performance of the evening belonged to Sue Bell as a raucous and foul-mouthed 'aggy' who finally overcame her morbid fear of open spaces as she sang My Way in a dress borrowed from a rummage sale reject box. The personal applause was sustained — and not just for her spirited singing.

Lorna Richardson was a house-proud widow, and Laurie Coombs a lovely Barry Manilow freak whose husband kept her indoors with tales of street violence.

Tracey Muir played a 'scruffbag' student social worker with the unlikely ability to lead the 'aggies' out on to the street like some radical Pied Piper of Acton.

Rita Smidman in the tiny role of policewoman, trembled with psychic problems that helped to round off the comedy of a very serious affliction, here seen as a symbol of female subjection.

John Thaxter

## Nervous disposition

UNDER the intriguing title of Panic Attack (Two Nervous Plays) the Teddington Theatre Club will present a double bill of Studio Productions on the 7th, 8th and 9th November at Hampton Court Theatre (behind the Green).

The nervous panic arises among the characters, however — not by stage-fright but by the dramatic situations — and hopefully will not be infectious!

The plays are in direct contrast: **Gotcha!** directed by Mike Brazier is part of a trilogy by Barrie Keefe; it takes a cynical look at a school-leaver with no apparent prospects and the mutual mistrust that arises between him and two teachers who are having an affair. It is an uneasy relationship that threatens to break out into violence. Written a few years

ago it is a powerful and gripping drama that seems particularly pertinent to-day.

**Bazaar and Rummage**, which shares the programme, is a psychological study of a different sort; it concerns a jumble sale (a natural setting for a comedy) but one organised by two amateur social workers and their agoraphobic "patients". The result is predicatably hilarious, but with sympathetic characterisation. This play was written by Sue Townsend shortly before Adrian Mole burst upon the world: the director is Paul Lawrance.

Performances commence at 7.45 pm: tickets are £1.80, available to members, and the Box Office opens on the 22nd October. (Telephone: Box Office 01-979-6396; Membership 01-943-3322).