

THE TIME OF
YOUR LIFE

1982

Rich and colourful revue for all seasons

THE combined might of Teddington Theatre Club, Bernice Warren's Children's Theatre and Youth Action Theatre staged a very ambitious musical revue for just three nights last week at Hampton Court Theatre. It involved a company in excess of 50 strong, including three musicians, two choreographers, five ASMs and four lighting technicians.

The inspiration for all this energy and hard work was the eight stages of life (funny, I always thought it was seven) and the co-devisers Dorothy Jones and Peter Roberts chose **The Time of Your Life** as the title, which proved to be fitting in all senses.

Selecting songs and sketches for such an amorphous subject must have been a ticklish process of elimination. By and large, the top priority seems to have been entertainment value, and quite

right too. The show was nothing if not entertaining from start to finish.

It was also impressively slick, fairly rattling along under the musical direction of Peter Roberts. Considering the diversity of talent, it all knitted together remarkably well.

Most of the songs were familiar from musicals of the last 20 years — Gypsy, A Little Night Music, Billy, Lock Up Your Daughters, Company etc. — but there were one or two numbers, like *Breathers and Husbands*, that had been sadly lacking from my musical education. *Breathers* is about the rigours of pregnancy (hoots of recognition from women in the audience) and *Husbands* took the hilarious form of a chors' chorus.

Robin Hope-Johnston's plea for gay tolerance, *What Makes a Man*, was rather moving, and Patti Bottomley's fulsome version of *Ring Them Bells*

gave the show a terrific lift. Why, though, wasn't she allowed to do justice to *The Wedding* (from the marvellous Company) as the closing first half number?

Becky Jones and Maria Carmody, two of Youth Action's prettiest assets, put their all into *If Momma Was Married*, and there was a very funny version of *The Gentle Art of Seduction* from Sue Doyle and Chris Hurles.

The whole evening was brimming with good humour, but my prize for the best laugh of all goes to the versatile and irresistible Annabel Giles for removing her gum just before reaching for a high note in *Tap Your Troubles Away*. A real touch of inspiration, that.

A show as rich and colourful as this should not be allowed to disappear without trace after three performances. It could be revived (and reviewed) at regular intervals. — NS.