

THE TWELVE POUND  
LOCK

THE PLAYGOERS

THE BEAR

1977

## Moving, hilarious and miscast

WEEK after week re-viewing endless plays and films isn't necessarily the joy that it sounds.

But what spurs one on is the hope that next week's movies and plays will make it all worthwhile.

Certainly my first trip to see the Teddington Theatre Club at Hampton Court on Thursday made worthwhile what had started out as a boring week, arts wise.

Presented at their beautiful little theatre hidden away in the depths of Hampton were three small classics by Barrie, Pinero and Chekhov.

The evening started off so so with Barrie's **The Twelve Pound Look**, a delightful delicacy about a wife who had left her husband years before, but returns, not on purpose, as a secretary.

She finds him as pompous as ever, but remarried to a young woman who, we

discover, has that same "look" in her eye.

Charming performances by Miss Dorothy Jones, as the first wife, she was very moving. Although I couldn't always hear what she was saying because the theatre was in the round.

The evening was crowned, though, with Pinero's **The Playgoers**. This hilarious vehicle about a high society couple who try to patronise their staff by inviting them out to the theatre was done with tremendous comical skill. The acting was superb all round.

Shame, however, that the club had to finish with Chekhov's **The Bear**. Done correctly, the play is a wonderful war of words between the opposite sexes. Sadly, Robin Walters' production was badly miscast.

I'm sorry to have to say it, but for this particular Chekhov play to work at all it has to be done "proper."

Nevertheless, the three directors were all newcomers, and I would welcome the chance to see more of their work in the future.

B.B.

BECAUSE of casting difficulties Teddington Theatre Club's line-up of Studio productions at Hampton Court Theatre last week included Barrie's **The Twelve Pound Look** instead of Shaw's **How He Lied To Her Husband**, which was a pity as the Barrie piece proved but a poor substitute.

Things were not improved, nor made clearer, by the inability of one of the main characters to "throw" or project her voice.

I could not always distinguish what she said, particularly when her back was turned (the three short plays were played "in the round").

Easily the best production—and the most amusing one-acter—of the evening was Pinero's **The Playgoers** (described as a

"Domestic Episode").

Here director Robin Hope-Johnston really kept the fun going and had admirable support from his players right down to the smallest "bit" part.

In fact they were all so good they deserve to be mentioned individually: Roger Smith, Susan Bell, Anne Saunders, Kathy Watson, Ann Low, Davina Andrews, Christine Mason and David Tickner.

## Pointless

Chekhov's **The Bear** suffered from the miscasting of the two principals. Deborah Campbell, as Madame Popov, was too subdued (and looked too young) while Gregori Smironov (Brian Campbell) was too vehement... and why the Scots accent?

Incidentally the idea of printing everyone's name on the programme with the prefix Mr. or Mistress seemed to me rather pointless.

However, Mr. Hope-Johnston and his cast should surely be utilised by TTC in the very near future if the purpose of these "Studio" evenings is to find new talent. SURREY COMET

Surrey Herald