

Kurt words for Krause

THE fascination of Cardiff arts organisations and creators with the music of Kurt Weill continues.

In rapid succession we have had a production of *Happy End* from the St Donat's Music Theatre and three important British premieres of Weill theatre works produced by Cardiff director John Eaton.

On Friday evening it was the turn of Chapter to present a programme performed by the much heralded German interpreter of Weill, Eisler and Brecht songs, Dagmar Krause.

There are advantages and disadvantages to the attitude of the Kurt Weill Foundation — executors of that composer's music — which seek to entomb his works by withholding performing permission from singers who do not meet its requirements.

This Dagmar Krause is an "approved" singer — which means that she sings the songs in a supposedly traditional, intense, angst-ridden Germanic manner. So there is no comparison here with Teresa Stratas, for example.

But Dagmar Krause, looking like a young Edith Piaf, is a caricature of what we now tend to think of the traditional style for these songs. She is indeed an intensive singer, but is also an insensitive and unvaried one, missing far too much of the musical and lyrical content of the songs.

No true authenticity here, and no substitution of a modern or fresh look

By IFAN PAYNE

at the works.

Singing songs for male and female indiscriminately, the low point was her performance of the *Moritat* (*Mack the Knife*), an insensitive travesty of what can be heard, for example, on the 1930s Roth Band recordings.

Those who really want to hear these songs well sung must still listen to the very earliest recordings of Lotte Lenya, for Dagmar Krause's lack of insight and musical insensitivity in the performance of songs by Brecht, Weill and Eisler is all too apparent in comparison with the 1930s original cast recordings of the past — or with, for example, the performances of Gisella May of the present.