

Mutter — was the racket so vital?

REVIEWS

By IFAN PAYNE

THE INTEREST in music theatre in general — and in the collaborations of Brecht and Weill in particular — continues apace.

But Kurt Weill was not the only composer to work in the theatre in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.

Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau were but two of the better known and it was Dessau who wrote the music to the songs which punctuate and provide commentary to Brecht's *Mutter Courage*.

This modern fable of the helplessness of people amid the futility of war is being presented in the original German with projected English subtitles by the Triangle Theatre at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff.

I have, in the past, admired Carmen Jakobi and Triangle theatre's achievements (from Buchner to Berg and *en attendant* Godot come to mind as memorable theatrical experiences).

In the current production of *Mutter Courage* frenetic action all too often substitutes for more considered acting and direction.

This impression is supported by clumsy and noisy scene changes.

Triangle must be admired for providing the opportunity to experience Brecht's masterpiece and Aletta Lawson's stamina in the enormous central role is to be admired.

Stephen Grothgar also caught the eye in a variety of roles and Amanda Wolzak was appropriately saucy and handsome.

Richard Aylwin's and Denis Hudson's sets, lighting and projections looked attractive.

But, finally, all that clumping about prevented any development of Brecht's epic and also wore down any attempt at meaningful and sustained characterisation.

And, surely, the vigorous chopping of wood, which sent splinters flying in such close proximity to members of the audience without eye protection, was surely extremely dangerous.