

Panache and clarity

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

IN MY truncated review of Diversion's triumphant, sold out performances at Chapter last week I had sought to direct attention to Network, another young and adventurous Cardiff performance group and its potentially fascinating presentation of H K Gruber's *Frankenstein* at St David's Hall on Friday evening.

In doing so, I was fully aware of the twin dangers involved.

These were the fact that Kelvin Thomas, performing the part of Frankenstein, was competing with the composer's own extraordinary account with which he dazzled the Edinburgh Festival a few years ago. Also that the all consuming cavernous space of St David's Hall auditorium in which all but the most expertly projected productions disappear with hardly a whimper.

In the event I need not have worried. There can be only praise for this adventurous and successful performance.

Network, conducted by Brian Noes, performed Gruber's brilliant, technically virtuosic and attractive score with

panache and clarity.

Kelvin Thomas, so successful last year in the *Seven Songs For A Mad King*, may not have projected the neurotic tension of Gruber himself in the title role, but gave what was on its own terms a performance of conviction.

The management of St David's Hall has not always been successful in presenting performances that are other than assembly line note playing of music jaded by familiarity. However, the presentation of a double bill centering on the theme of Mary Shelley's monster (the film *Nosferatu* was the other half) was an inspired stroke of programme making.