

Bilingual drama at Morriston

Brilliant in any language

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

PANDEMONIUM is from *Pan* meaning all and *Daemon* meaning demon.

Hence the home of all the demons is Pandemonium, a name coined by the poet Milton for the capital of Hell, and the title of this joint bilingual production by Brith Gof and Theatr Taliesin Wales.

The production is developed around the Senghenydd mining disaster of 1913 but through the imaginative use of three choirs, actors, soloists, words and action, *Pandemonium* creates within the marvellous architectural space of Morriston Tabernacle Chapel, Swansea, a personal and communal hell which transcends the time and the place.

For in a way the subtitle of the work, *The True Cost of Coal*, is a misnomer.

The implications of the theme are much wider, and a more accurate description would encompass the true cost of commerce or the true cost of progress; for the words of *Pandemonium* reverberate to Bhopal and Chernobyl and to the disastrous consequence of uncaring exploitation.

This is a brilliant and virtuosic production which is an utterly suc-

cessful theatre of the immediate; a powerful and multi-dimensional *tour de force* in which, among many others, Mike Pearson, Nicolas Ross and Sera Moore Williams and Nick Dowsett particularly caught my attention through the blazing intensity of their performances.

This bilingual production can be equally enjoyed by both English and Welsh audiences.

Those who fear an amateurish production in a chapel should not be put off, for this is an extraordinarily professional production.

Those who fear an *avant garde* theatre that might entail embarrassing audience participation should not be put off either, for the only discomfort is that of our own consciences.

I can recommend most strongly everyone who has any interest in the theatre, in the potential of opera and of musicals as viable contemporary experiences — and everyone who just wants £2 worth of first-rate original entertainment — to go to the Tabernacle Chapel at the corner of Woodville and Crown Streets, Morriston, at 7.30pm tonight, Friday and Saturday