

## Brilliant theatre of the mind and of music

**THE WIZARD of Jazz is music theatre of the highest quality.**

It follows in the tradition of Weill, Orff and, more recently, the jazz theatre works of Mike Westbrook.

This brilliant co-production of St Donat's music theatre and TNT written by Paul Steppings and Phil Smith takes place in an English barroom on the eve of the D-Day invasion.

But like all infinite theatre which plays with the conventions, this is as much a theatre of the mind as it is of music and action. It weaves the life of Al Jolson with the concept of America as an El Dorado of instant fame and fortune, with fantasy and reality, with prejudice and tolerance.

It concerns the inhumanity of humankind and the unnaturalness of nature.

Paul Steppings and Carlton Bruce (sounding like a male Hi-de-Hi Ruth Madoc) are first-rate as the main protagonists.

The musicians play and act in a way which would be difficult to bet-

**By IFAN PAYNE**

ter in a production which burns brightly with an inner force.

The sleight-of-hand, neatly-done scenic changes are precisely what Triangle's recent *Mutter Courage* should have attempted.

*The Wizard of Jazz* is touring England and Wales and can be seen at the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff, on the 21st/23rd April, Guildhall in Brecon on the 21st May, and at the Llangollen Jazz Festival on the 22nd May.

I cannot recommend too highly that you make every effort to see this funny, enchanting, thought-provoking and powerful work.

I can also only commend the St Donat's Art Centre, where I saw the production, for again unerringly selecting a work of such high quality, a work which shows the nightmare behind the dream; and which displays the playfulness of infinite theatre, yet which shows that playfulness is a deadly game.