

Janet Smith at the Sherman Theatre

Dance balm for the inner child

AFTER training in the United States, Leeds-born Janet Smith founded her dance company in 1976 since when it has developed into a group of dancers as coolly elegant and highly disciplined as herself.

The programme presented by Janet Smith and Dancers at the Sherman Theatre last night consisted of three varied and stimulating works.

Still No Word From Anton used a sound track based on American radio soap operas from the 1940s and 50s. Against this background, which was itself transformed into a quasi-early Reichian sound piece, the dancers wove introspective commentaries of agile fluidity. A quirky and interesting work, it starred two moving screens used with deftness and humour.

Like the first dance, *Out Into The Night* was chor-

By IFAN PAYNE

eographed by Janet Smith herself. It combined Shostakovich's strongly characterised music (the *piano trio number two*), the alternating poignancy and grotesquerie of the dancers and a satisfying use of the space which resulted in a powerful and moving elegy to friendships gained and lost in war.

In contrast, *Fools Day* was choreographed by Robert North as a delightful diversion of sunlight and primary colours. Death came here too, in this medieval morality play, but the verve, humour and virtuosity was wonderful entertainment for the child in us all.

Janet Smith and Dancers perform again tonight and on Wednesday night. They should not be missed by those who love the dance, support the Sherman Theatre or seek balm for the burst pipe blues.