

Infectious dancing

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

EVEN if you do nothing else today or Saturday you owe it to yourself to see Extemporary's infectious and joyous *Spiked Sonata* at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff.

Extemporary is a skilful and striking contemporary dance company and *Spiked Sonata* is a dance about the dance. Weaving humorous and virtuosic variations on the movements and ritual of the *Tea Dance*, the piece starts with the random sound of the dancers' bare feet on the stage, a sound that evolves into its own orchestrated music before the instrumental accompaniment joins in.

There follows a keenly-selected group of 1930's tunes climaxing with Spike Jones's *Cocktails for Two* which, in the context of this quirky, jokey dance, is sheer delight.

If you want to be pro-

voked as well as entertained, then you doubly owe it to yourself to see *Beauty, Art and the Küchen Sink*. More than a dance, this theatre-piece is a hymn to the promotion of the body beautiful.

There can be no funnier sight in Cardiff this week than Lloyd Nelson bandaging his crotch before the imaginary mirror of the audience. And across the stage from him there can be no more harrowing sight than Annelies Stoffel throwing up the angst behind the face cream in her anorexia nervosa.

The action on stage may become frenetically obvious but *Beauty, Art and the Küchen Sink* is no more frenetic than the actual commercial promotion of the illusory life of perpetual youth and

beauty which surrounds us.

In between these two works, Extemporary performs equally simulating dances that are perhaps more obviously the product of extemporised dance exercises of the mid-1970's.

Field Study, in particular, is a striking exploration of the dynamics of visual tension and of the effects of empty (negative) space.