

Irreverence, hilarity and high energy

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

"THE dishevelment of life" could have been the sub-title of the Els Comedianes production presented by Chapter and Cardiff Laboratory Theatre at St David's Hall last night.

As it was, *Ale (Breath)* was a stunning pantomime for adults.

Els Comedianes are a high-energy Catalan mime and comedy group who, in the first 10 minutes, managed to present the cycle of life from birth to death with Lady Fate up a ladder peeling off the passing years.

On a specially-constructed circular stage, tossing fireworks into the audience, the Devil then creates the sun and the stars and the planets.

When The Big G finally finds the earth which the Devil has so beautifully created he steals it for his own and a chorus line of angels joins in a high-kicking routine of celebration.

Surprised by the life he finds, which includes the cutest of mechanical rabbits, The Big G then sets

about screwing up the whole thing.

Irreverent, hilarious, bursting with life and the innocence of unclothed bodies, you stayed with this brilliant entertainment thus far. You knew that you were part of something special everyone else was missing.

Accompanied by contemporary exotic music, the cast was brilliant even if, as a voice in the audience told her neighbour, "Well I've never seen anything like this before."

"You said you wanted something different," answered her companion, as Fate, at the end calmly tossed the slippery banana peel of human existence to the ground and ordered the bemused, yet beaming, audience out to the lobby to join the band in the continuing dance of life.

Els Comedianes repeats the performance in St David's Hall tonight at 7.30pm.