

Catch 22 at the Sherman, Cardiff

An enjoyable outing into labyrinth of paradox

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

CATCH 22 is one of those Zen-like sayings which has become such an essential part of our language that it is impossible to imagine how we got along without it.

Not only does *Catch 22* describe an impossible human situation, a labyrinth-sign paradox out of which there is no escape, but it is also the name of Joseph Heller's novel.

Then of the film of the book it is now of Jason Sutton and Eric Styles's dramatic adaptation which is currently being performed at the Sherman Theatre.

Yossarian and Milo are by now folk characters and we have all met versions of Major Major, the ultimate administrator who is always out whenever anyone comes to see him in.

The youthful aspect of the Sherman's production is both its charm and its drawback in terms of stagecraft and timing.

But the script is funny — admirers of Heller will

know how serious he can be when he's side-splittingly witty — though that script is somewhat hindered on occasion by diction from the mumble school of acting.

However, among the young cast, Jon Jones as Colonel Cathcart, Simon P Law as Milo and Mark Palmer as Yossarian create strong characters.

The set and lighting, by Paul Colley is simple, functional and most effective.

Joseph Sutton's direction keeps events flowing along.

There were occasional lapses all through the opening night but as the evening progressed the performers gained in confidence.

All in all, *Catch 22*, is as enjoyable an experience as a play about the insanity of the human condition and the sheer incompetence of God can be.