

Products of a lively mind

By IFAN PAYNE

IN recent years the barriers between theatre and ballet, opera and mime have been eroded and the separate forms have increasingly become fused together so that a performance is a theatre work rather than a play or a ballet.

Thus, opera singers do not sing, as in Michael Finnis's *Mr Punch* and ballet dancers both sing and declaim as they did in both ballets performed by Dance Wales at Chapter last night.

In addition to the vocalisation, both ballets *In Collaboration With — Part II* and *Cuts*, had in a strong, Dadaesque visual element and a group collaborative choreography. In both works also the normal convention of the hidden source of the music was also broken down by placing musicians on the stage.

In *Collaboration* opened with the striking image of a dancer sitting suspended in mid air and it closed with the same dancer now transformed into a malevolent rowing cox hectoring instruction from his celestial chair. In between, Janet Fieldsend, Brendan Keaney and Peter Wooldridge performed in a Dali landscape a work that was full of nervy images which held an underlying sinister tension of a balletic *Clockwork Orange*.

In addition to the spoken word, *Cuts* opened with a montage of well-focused sequences which gradually evolved into a more narrative form before ending with the torn shreds of the coloured experiences of Caroline Lamb as the woman.

Set in a formalised Latin American cafe of the mind, *Cuts*, as in album tracks or edited film, "The application of montage," to quote the script, consisted of short sequences like disjunctive strips of film "insinuating thoughts into the back of your mind."

There was also humour as in the vision of dark-suited, hair-slicked male couples tangoing in a prone position. Tim Scott and Peter Wooldridge were the featured male dancers and the original music was composed by the conductor Charles Barber.

To say that the theme of both ballets centred in very different ways on the nature of the relationship between men and women would be to oversimplify what were rich and rewarding theatrical experiences.

To say that there was some balletic roughness and a misjudged length of *Cuts* would be to overlook that both ballets are the products of a lively, imaginative and stimulating mind.

The production, which will be performed at Chapter each evening this week until Satukdjy, deserves to be seen by anyone interested in works for the theatre whatever the label.