

THE
PHILANTHROPIST
2000

MENT

TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB

A surprising evening



Ben Davies, Mike Waters, Edward Jeffroy, Sophie Vickers, Anneke Sando, Steven Peters and Charlotte Bishop in *The Philanthropist*.

CHRISTOPHER Hampton says: "Imagine the theatre as real". "Imagine everything you've ever known is a lie" says director Bill Compton. Either way, remember that Christopher Hampton also said that reality would always yield more in the way of unexpected twists than the most extravagant fiction.

You have been warned. You too must prepare yourself for an evening of surprising 'twists', misunderstandings and revelations when you come to see Teddington Theatre Club's production of Christopher Hampton's witty conundrum.

The Philanthropist which holds the record for the Royal Court's longest-running straight play, is a brilliant comedy. It concerns a university lecturer in an

Oxford detached from the rest of the country. His besetting vice is, in fact, not hypocrisy, or lust or avarice, or any other of the deadly sins, but simply his compulsive amiability.

"My trouble is, I am a man of no convictions. At least I think I am."

We can't tell you any more, in case we spoil it!

This is Bill Compton's debut as a director, although he has previously performed in 18 productions at the Teddington Theatre Club and the Youth Action Theatre. Still in his twenties, he is full of fresh ideas, and directs an equally young cast including Mike Waters, Ben Davies, Sophie Vickers, Anneke Sando, Edward Jeffroy, Steven Peters and Charlotte Bishop - several of whom have also appeared in YAT.

Derek West

ENTERTAINMENT

TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB

A celebration of theatricality

THE Teddington Theatre Club's production of Christopher Hampton's *The Philanthropist*, as the programme note of one of the actors Sophie Vickers states, is both a celebration and a critique of the world of the theatre and its theatricality.

The play, set in a university, begins with dons Philip and Donald being harangued by a would-be playwright who blows his brains out before our very eyes.

Hampton read French at Oxford before his days at the Royal Court and his special subject was Molière.

The protagonist of this piece, Philip, the

Philanthropist, is the reverse of Alceste, the Misanthrope of Molière's play but is, nevertheless, just as infuriating to those who surround him.

His problem is that he refuses to see the wrong in people no matter how they may deceive or insult him.

The part was played most sympathetically by Mike Waters.

He sustained the long speeches which the character has been given very well.

Ben Davies as Donald gave a good performance, if somewhat hesitant in the longer speeches.

Edward Jeffroy was excellent as the acerbic novelist Braham who hates

Philip for his mastery of the anagram and he manipulated the witty yet poisonous lines of this part with aplomb.

Anneke Sando was a very good Araminta, who derives pleasure from sexual conquests, especially if her victims are engaged, as is the case with the unwilling Philip, who does not refuse her offer since he never wishes to offend.

Sophie Vickers as Liz, the cheated but cheating fiancée of the Philanthropist, was especially good in her angry scenes.

The props, set, lighting and incidental music were all excellent.

George Hillier.