

NIGHT
MUST
FALL, 1994

RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

Evil without histrionics

EVEN though not a drop of blood is shed on stage during Emlyn Williams' *Night Must Fall*, it has to be one of the most spine tingling murder plays ever written.

And it is played for all its worth at Hampton Court Theatre this week by a cast of Teddington Theatre Club players which, under the expert direction of Rita Smidman, exploit its potential to the hilt, so that nearly sixty years after it was written, the play can, and did, completely enthral a modern audience.

When Dan, the homicidal young Welshman, has

charmed his way into the household of elderly, self-appointed invalid, Mrs Bramson, whose maid Dora has been made pregnant by him, and there's the mysterious disappearance of a blond woman from the hotel where Dan worked, the scene is set for this psychological thriller.

David Brickwood as Dan, has that rare ability in an actor, to convey evil without histrionics. His lightening changes of expression, from simple, goodnatured boy to a man with cold-blooded murderous intent, is both chilling and thrilling to watch.

Jean Keay satisfyingly portrays the cantankerous Mrs Bramson, completely taken in by Dan. She is particularly effective in her final moments of terror when she finds herself alone in the house.

Gill Lambourn as her niece and unwilling, bored,

but financially dependent companion, Olivia Grayne, gives a perceptive interpretation of a woman who is both fascinated and repelled by Dan. Her intelligence recognises what he is, but she still finds him irresistible.

Mrs Terence, cook and housekeeper with a healthy disrespect for her employer, is given a wonderfully comic performance by Joan Scarrott.

Jack Smerdon is the dispassionate voice of British justice. Michael Norman in comfortable tweeds is convincingly tedious as Olivia's would-be suitor.

Edward Jeffroy is the not-so-bumbling as he seems, Inspector Belsize and Deborah Smidman plays the simple-minded Dora, who also manages some sharp insights into her seducer.

A set design by Lyn Randall kept the action flowing smoothly.

Jenny Scott