

I CAN'T
REMEMBER
ANYTHING
1991

TEACHERS
1991

RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS



Odd bedfellows

AS the third and fourth most often performed playwrights (after Shakespeare and Ayckbourn), Arthur Miller and John Godber made odd bedfellows for last week's double bill at Hampton Court Theatre, but happily Teddington Theatre Club's audience turned out in force.

Miller wrote the fragile **I Can't Remember Anything** directed by Karim Peermohamed, in parallel with *Timebends* reflecting his own problem in giving perspective to both distant and recent memory.

Two elderly friends, Leo and Leonora, share a meal at Leo's house, their regular custom since her husband's death. Steadily tipping his bourbon, she becomes selectively forgetful about their past lives, while he endlessly reminisces. Obsessed by plans to donate his body to medical science, Leo finally reduces their existence to 'a lot of talking nitrogen'.

As the arthritic Leo, Edward Jeffroy deftly explored the relationship through gruff exchanges. Cynthia Carss, her eyes brimming with tears, touched a deep vein of sorrow concealed behind Leonora's skittish memory lapses. And they created a lovely elegiac moment, gyrating stiffly but romantically to a samba, before parting on a future of veiled question marks.

At the opposite end of the age spectrum, **Teachers** presented Jim Millard, Sarah Howe and Sarah Jane Renton (all recent school-leavers, but versatile and impressively audible) as teenage no-hopers putting on an improvised end-of-term play about school life to encourage their favourite drama teacher to stay on.

Based on Godber's own experiences, the unpatronising humour demonstrates his affection for disadvantaged kids whose potential is untapped by the educational system. But his caricatures of staff and their obscure jargon are mainly of appeal to fellow teachers.

With sharp-paced direction by Martin Thomas, the high energy trio zipped through more than twenty character studies and vivid set pieces: notably confrontations with a terrifying bully, the deputy headmaster and a bouncy games mistress.

John Thaxter