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the Night (with its immortal lines "Lord, what a word we've been called . . .") in your red hibiliona rag wild to be adopts the canonical smirk of the successful ladies' man. But there is still something vulnerable about his posturing. He is not a sex god, but a symbol of fantasies fulfilled. He is not a bare-chested skin jump suit.

Stewart still has a wonderful voice, but his frantic clowning—jumping on amplifiers, doing push ups, swinging the microphone stand—is overdone. He murders each song. His backing group attempted to reproduce the camaraderie of the Faces by grinning sycophantically and running mechanically back and forth across the stage. But there was no affection in their performance, only obvious professional embarrassment, and they are hired hands.

Toward the end there were glints of the old ely charm as he conducted the audience to their favourite songs. They adored him throughout, and during Sailing whole families stood swaying, holding banners aloft and chanting the words. The emotions were as genuine as the Cup Final or a crucial football match; but if a team played as clumsily as Rod Stewart, they'd never leave the pitch alive.

QEH

Paul Driver

Szidon/Abel

THE GERMAN violinist Jenny Abel cannot be reproached for lady-like playing, however much you may object to the *fureurs* of extraneous resonance she is apt to produce.

Abetted in her London duo debut by the pianist Roberta Salton, he his confident expansive mien, she managed to make a little life into such things as the Sonata-Fantasie No. 2 by Villa-Lobos and the third Schumann sonata, even if she positively shook it out of more than one Beethoven, like the Grieg C minor sonata.

The latter's local inflections were best on the violinist, if not on the pianist. She is defiantly a classical performer — the firm lines of her Schumann showed that — while he appears to be at home in the Romantic.

Then he was able to utter a little of the Grieg middle movement's wispy, curiously Palm Court-like serenity, even though Miss Abel's additions were scarcely wisps.

Her account of the outer movements was again too hard-edged, although she takes little care to avoid unwanted harmonics and her vibrato can be reckless of intonation. She has many musicianly gifts, but mastery is not among them.

Nonetheless poise, vigour and startling verve (on both players) in a Heroe sonatina, receiving its premiere. The work is substantially an extranslation from Heroe's new children's opera, Pulcina, which Covent Garden is mounting at the Jeanetta Cochran Theatre over Christmas.

It has three movements of an evenly gentle pace, culminating abruptly in a loud flurry of notes. Mostly the writing is spare and measured and it somehow gave the old Hindemithian blandness a glimmer of charm.

ROYAL COURT

Michael Billington

Not Quite Jerusalem

PAUL Kember's Not Quite Jerusalem is much the best new play we have seen on the Royal Court's main stage this year. It dwindles at the end into soapbox oratory and sentimental tidiness. But at least it offers us a new voice, a new setting and the long overdue spectacle of characters who simply cannot opt out of newspaper articles and history books.

It is about the cultural clash that ensues when four young English volunteers arrive in the Israeli desert. Mike is a Cambridge drop-out, Carrie an earnest neurotic and Jez-a and Pete a couple of working-class refugees who treat the place as if it were an Israeli Butlins. Representing the kibbutznik are Ami, an idealistic engineer, and Gila, who is doing her last year of military service.

The tension between the fugitive English and the committed residents comes to a head when, in the course of a show put on by the volunteers, Ami and Gila perform an obscene anti-patriotic gesture. But Mr Kember's point is that if the English have a lot to learn about hard work and collectivism, so the kibbutzniks must also compromise with the more flexible attitudes of the English dissidents.

The weakness is that Mr Kember looks the outrage of his own observations. He pinpoints exactly the English talent for whining apathy and communal wetness in a chance to exercise it, but he also makes us vividly remember being part once of an Oxford student group who fell dismally silent, exactly like the volunteers here, when confronted by an alien culture.

Leslie Udwin

And that group certainly wasn't under-privileged.

But although Mr Kember provides a rich diagnosis of a profound malaise, it is still a disturbingly promising debut. He shows us how the discipline of the kibbutz becomes a lure for misfits. He implies that the Israeli-Arab conflict is about land and security as much as religion and retaliation. And he writes throughout with a vivid, mercurial humour.

Above all, the play offers the sensation of something lived-through. And Les Waters's production not only gives a team of actors going great guns, but also ensures that we get a beautifully considerate performances from Phillip Davis as the Cambridge malcontent, from Leslie Udwin as the tough-minded Gila whom he spasmodically falls for and from Ben Kingsley as the torquately humane kibbutznik. Flawed the play may be; but at least it seems like a report from the front-line.

HAMMERSMITH

Mick Brown

Talking Heads

DESPITE having sold barely enough records in Britain in the past to cover printing costs, and despite their live performances sometimes resembling a wall - hole secret, the American group Talking Heads have quietly established themselves as one of the most original and influential of bands in contemporary rock.

Having shrugged off the

Billington on Jerulsalem

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