

COLLEGE FESTIVAL

TWO STUDENT playwrights will have their new works performed at the Royal Court, then join Tom Stoppard on stage to discuss the plays with him and the audience. Meanwhile at the Young Vic, Bristol University will be giving their British première production of Gombrowicz's "The Marriage"; and at the same time Keele University perform Erik Satie's only play (another British première) at the Collegiate. Three hours later another world première, a rarely-seen Off-Broadway play, and an Ionesco favourite will be under way in three other venues. All of which signifies that the 20th National Student Drama Festival will be in town.

From this Sunday, for seven days and nights, there are over 120 performances (38 productions) including eleven world and five British premières; six Theatre-in-Education companies; two foreign companies making their British debut (one professional, from Lisbon; the other Finnish students); practical workshop; talks and discussions. That's the official Festival. Off-Festival (on the fringe) groups from Holland, the USA and other places add the excitement of unpredictability.

Tom Stoppard is not the only professional to be supporting the Festival. Claude Chagrin brings her movement expertise to a discussion on three mime productions (two of them new); Michael Kustow (National Theatre) not only leads a discussion on "The Marriage" but joins John-Peter ("Sunday Times") in a review of the week's performances. And professors of drama from Australia and the USA join many other experts in giving the Festival a review of student drama around the world, while the British Theatre Institute arranges other talks-discussions. John Broome, responsible for most of the RSC's movement in recent years (including Brook's "Dream") is among the daily practical workshop directors. David

Ponting's one-man Dylan Thomas show gives London a taste of what the USA will receive early next year.

There are three late additions to the official part of the Festival programme: "Oh! Mr Asquith," from Wall Hall College, a cafe-music hall style musical entertainment about Suffragettes; "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" from University College, London; and the Edinburgh Festival favourites Bristol Revunions. Some of the public sessions being held at useful times are: Sunday (Collegiate) 3 pm "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern," 8.30 "Waiting for Godot." Monday 1 & 8.15 (Theatre Upstairs) "It's Called the Sugar Plum" (Horovitz); 7.30 (Collegiate) "Albert's Bridge" (Stoppard); 8 (Royal Court) "People are Living There" (Fugard) — also 7.30 Weds. Tuesday 1 (Festival Barn) "The Supper." Portuguese professionals; 1 (Theatre Upstairs) "Sequel to Jeso" and 2 "Sandpaper" (new); 7.30 (Royal Court) "The Labyrinth" (Arrabal) and "Chicago" (Sam Shepard); 8 (Young Vic) "Marat-Sade." Wednesday Noon (Barn) "Gum and Goo" (Brenton); 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 & 10 (Theatre Upstairs) "Chase," design based theatre; 8.30 (Collegiate) "The Driver's Seat," Finnish students — in English. Thursday 1 (Barn) "Interview," Coopers School, Kent; 7.30 (Collegiate) "Le piege de Meduse," Erik Satie; 7.30 (Royal Court) 3 new student plays — repeated Friday 7.30; 8 (Young Vic) "The Marriage" repeated Fri. and Sat. Friday 1 (Court) and 1 (Collegiate) 3 new student plays; 8.15 & 9.15 (Upstairs) — repeated Sat. — new student play and "Sequel to Jeso"; 10 (Collegiate) "Dylan Thomas." Saturday 2 & 10.30 (Festival Workshop) "Sugar Plum"; 2.30 & 7.30 (Collegiate) "Waiting for Godot"; 4.40 (Barn Bar) "The Franklin's Tale"; 8.30 (Court) "The Labyrinth" etc; 8.45 (Barn) "The Chairs"; 10.30 (Collegiate) Bristol Revunions; Midnight "The Supper."

Anyone involved in the first nineteen Festivals is particularly welcome at the opening play, at 3 on Sunday, and the following party. The Festival Centre is open 10 to 7 daily at the Collegiate Theatre (01-387 1666) for programmes and tickets. Clive Wolfe.