Individual Standouts Fueled Successful Year at Baylor Theater

By BOY DARDEN
Tribe-Herald Staff Writer

By general consensus, it has been a successful year for the Baylor Theater. It was a year that gave us a comedy, two fantasy-comedies, a comedy-drama, a Shakespearean comedy, and but a single drama.

The plays took viewers to such exotic locales as Paris, England, Ireland, Russia, and even Texas (by way of 15th century Italy).

Just for fun, we think we'd pick some plays out for special mention. There's the Oscar, Tony, and Emmy Awards, so why not? (The only problem is that by the time an actor or actress reaches the Baylor Theater, they've got to be pretty good. So on a scale of 1 to 100, the difference between a winner and second place may be 10 to 80.)

THE BEST PLAY on the evening we saw it was The Importance of Being Earnest, directed by Mrs. Patricia Cook. It almost made it to national competition and several of its stars (Dick Hooser, Nancy Parrish and Dusty Winniford) received several other honors as well. Playboys of the Western World and Biliee Spirit both were superb, but Earnest was one of the most popular offerings of recent years.

It follows that Mrs. Cook should receive "Best Director." It is a time hon-ored practice the Academy Awards have followed for nearly three decades and still holds true here. She wins partly because they had to completely remake Earnest when they took it on tour — and the second version may have better than the first! First-rate work was also turned in by directors James Swain and Mavornenwryt.

"Best Actor" was no contest until the season's final play when Tom Simmons came on so strong in The Taming of the Shrew. But tops in this category was Dick Hooser, who added such an air of charm to The Importance of Being Earnest and Biliee Spirit. Some theater regulars claim he's one of the Theater's strongest male leads in several seasons.

THE MOST DIFFICULT category to choose a leader in was "Best Actress." In the end we settled on Peggy Pehr's riv-eting portrayal of the madwoman in The Madwoman of Chaillot. In a close second were Emily Riddle (Biliee Spirit and The Sea Gulf), Nancy Parrish (Earnest) and the always commanding Teresa Cook (The Taming of the Shrew). This was the strongest facet of a strong program.

"Best Supporting Actor" was Mark Gale for his role as Grumio in The Taming of the Shrew. His restrained work brought depth to the role of importance. They were Earnest, and Biliee Spirit. Some theater regulars claim he's one of the Theater's strongest male leads in several seasons.

The most memorable was the midget woman who right herself in the course of the after-

For "Best Supporting Actress," Teresa Cook had little competition with her widow's role in Playback of the Western World. She was alternately tragic and ro-

FINALY, UNDER THE category of "Best Set," we'll have to go with Nancy Parrish's work on the bedroom scene from The Madwoman of Chaillot. Besides being technically perfect (with debts to Bob Guthrie among others), the scene best conveyed the sense of the character as well as the time. Also memorable were the sets used in Biliee Spirit and Earnest.

These, of course, are just one person's opinion. Some of the scenes that remain burned in my memory include: the "mul-

This year's season was the Made- woman holding court with her two daisy friends... the final moments of Biliee Spirit that the impertinent play-within-

After this season's bill, I believe it.