Intelligent, Spirited Performance
Of 'Thieves' Carnival' at Baylor

By GYNTY QUILL

Baylor Theater's summer compeny is offering, in "Thieves' Carnival," a witty masquerade in which Jean Anouilh flits in and out of reality from one key to another, abetted by some intelligent and broadly styled direction by Paul F. Unkovic.

The contemporary French master's chief characters are, on one hand, a group of bored aristocrats of wealth and quality shut up in Vichy, and, on the other, by a series of mischances, the latter become the guests of the nabobs and have the run of an opulent house.

But his plot is only a device for the comedy in which he is more interested in playing tricks of illusion and confusion, topsy-turvy contrasts with logic turned inside-out. Additionally, there are his characteristic sights over the emptiness of life in high society and his wishy-washy over the delights of pure love.

Still, Anouilh, in this sparkling translation by Lucieene Hill, is not trying to say anything profound about the aimlessness and cynicism of life. He is simply presenting a gay, ironic exercise that is closer in spirit to a ballet or musical caprice.

THERE IS NO WASTED EMOTION in it, but it is most all-hard-headed, and it is seasoned at the end by a feeling of tenderness about a spontaneous love affair between two young people, the only two in the collection who refuse to carry out their masquerade.

Ideally, this piece should be played by some superior established repertory company. But lacking that we can be grateful for an intelligent and spirited performance by the Baylor group, for it is produced with some shrewd and with all the summery scenery by J. Larry Root and a droll musical accompaniment with Hazzard who doubles as Anouilh's pierrot to represent the masquerade mood of the comedy.

The choreography and dance direction by Alexander Emmerich is simple and slight, but what there is of it is to the point. Most of the light and airless humor is in the hands of a broadly gesturing Linda Liles as the confesdering Lady Hart of exalted station who is bored with life and professes not to be at all class-conscious.

Probably the most effective actor, though, is the versatile Carl Deese as her bumbling, old, god-damning husband who manages to crumble with a most agile hop onto the citizen.

BUT THE PRODUCTION has a number of entertaining performances in related keys of island caricature. Barbara Demond plays the king of thieves with gusto and some inventive ness, and Robert Neumann assists as his more accomplished confederate.

Miss Amsden is both amusing and pouting as the Lady Hunt's niece who has never learned to live and love, and there is some翎nal by-play by Richard Fooer and Charles Batte as, respectively, an overjoyed father and disdained son who