Baylor Theatre Prepares For 'Thieves' Carnival'

When Baylor Theatre presents its production of Jean Anouilh's "Thieves' Carnival," the emphasis will be on audience reaction from the moment the spectator enters the part sidewalk that serves as a studio entrance.

The theater's summer production runs July 6, 7, 8 and 10 in Weston Studio. The play is under the direction of Mrs. Pat Cook, assistant professor of oral communication.

The theater will forego use of the traditional "picture frame approach" in staging a play, and will use for the action all the spaciousness which Weston Studio offers.

"We will try to make the people in the audience feel themselves in the mood of the show and let them participate in the action. More space will be used for the action than for the audience, more mass in stage area," Larry Roof, set designer for "Thieves' Carnival," said.

The opening act of the play is set in a park in Vichy, France. The panoramic park scene is obvious to the spectator from the theater lobby entrance with its canopy and real trees and shrubs to the seating area in Weston. The park atmosphere extends with park benches and refreshment stands down to the area where the audience will sit.

The last three acts of "Thieves' Carnival" take place in the elegant chateau of the wealthy French Lady Hart, for which the stage will be elaborately decorated with dainty white furniture and white woodwork with three-dimensional gold trim.

The sophisticated brightness of the atmosphere of Lady Hart's estate will continue with a patio surrounding the area occupied by the audience.

"There is a current trend toward pushing action of a play toward the audience and out of the picture frame of a traditional stage so the theatre may feel the presence of all the people and the audience may share the emotions of the actors," Barney Hammond, publicity director for the theater, explained.