

Shakespeare, homeless in his own capital, trudging towards cardboard city.

Noble says he is sure the Hands shut-down "was not designed as a political action, but

very neat of tongue and deft in diplomacy she will be much more influential than the housekeeper sound of her jobs might suggest.

Then there is Noble, the incoming boss; the air of a moon-

That just shows how Shakespeare can speak differently to every generation," he replied. Then, overcome by candour, he added: "Of course Olivier had to do some cutting to achieve that. There were no rebellious

plays to which they can bring a special vision". This does not necessarily exclude musicals, but they will turn more readily to a play with music rather than experiment with such expensive gambles.

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St John's

Tom Sutcliffe

Victoria Responsories

VICTORIA'S music for Holy Week matins, called *Tenebrae*, stretches and agonises its melodic suspensions and its paragraphs from the passion narratives as painfully as El Greco's religious vision. The stratospheric entry, "Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus" (If there be sorrow like my sorrow), is uniquely plangent in the polyphonic repertoire: George Malcolm's Westminster Cathedral choir made a classic recording 30 years ago (long since scandalously deleted). Before the 1963 Vatican Council reforms, these nocturnal matins were one of the most dramatically soulful and penitential experiences catholicism provided.

But as always with liturgical music, the concert context is difficult. The responsories were originally interspersed with readings, each group of three separated by chanted psalms. To do them straight through risks indigestion and undermines Victoria's exploitation in his composition of memorable but separated melodic and ver-

bal echoes. Performances need a serene basis and a sense of stylistic dignity.

Harry Christophers' overblown and Karajan-like conducting of *The Sixteen* imitated the sound and energy of the Malcolm recording, but without the subtle pacing and marvellous balance between tension and relaxation. Christophers has some real assets: a girl alto like a dream countertenor, her voice sounding as if it's screwed out of a bottle; a frank, brave tenor or two; a male alto with interestingly strangled tone. But the bass line is muffled and feeble, and the violence and repetitiveness of the choral attack and phony energy become wearisome.

The verse-singing got into the right vein briefly for *Caligaverunt*. Christophers then inserted, before the Holy Saturday sections, a remarkable Penalosa motet from Seville. For three parts composed with striking virility, this made a marvellous contrast and helped to purify the palate. Then, in *O vos omnes* and *Ecce quomodo*, the choir became for a time secure and relaxed enough to pearl off Victoria's extraordinary pulsing and fugitive phrases with genuine feeling before mysteriously losing concentration again. Christophers should encourage his choristers more, and wave his arms around a lot less.

Smith Jariwala Gallery

Sacha Craddock

Marilyn Hallam

ARE paintings of domestic interiors necessarily old fashioned? Marilyn Hallam's current exhibition of large works at Smith Jariwala Gallery prove that you can't judge a painting by subject alone. She paints the space around her; a hotel room in Barcelona with light and cathedral through the shutters; the more enclosed space of a familiar London room. She describes in a particularly straight forward manner by combining obvious self-faith with tenuous lines.

What she sets down stays — there is little repetition and no deviation. Having built the space with colour, piece by piece, she leaves the accumulated logic to stand alone. This may sound simple. It is. But it's an unusual way to work these days. The creation of spacial illusion usually involves a lot of play with paint, with the artist standing back to create somewhere else. These paintings are different because the artist is there. The colour is direct, not used pictorially; there is no balancing off at the end.

Hallam paints and draws at the same time, so the normal division between the two activi-

ties is demolished. The effect of this may appear naive with the awkwardness of broken lines and faltering intensity. The apparent cosiness is distinct though from the domestic vision of Vuillard and Bonnard. As the paint is laid on once and forever there are gaps which allow the work to breathe both backwards and forwards.

It would be simple to overlook this work with its traditionally female associations; it is, after all, pleasing and gives itself totally. But Hallam displays a sophisticated confidence in her strength to build structures that suitably justify her approach to painting.

● *Marilyn Hallam at Smith Jariwala Gallery, 2 Talfourd Place, London SE15 5NW until March 3.*

Soho Theatre

Helen Rose

The Real World?

AS the questioning title of Quebec writer Michel Tremblay's play suggests, this is an exploration of that osmotic line between fact and fiction. The question relates to the playwright's own craft. And his right to create an alternative reality. It is also very much concerned with deceit and betrayal. When young Claude gives his mother his first play to read, her delight turns to horror as she discovers the entire family presented exactly as it is, with the exception that Claude has exposed all their warts, skeletons and hidden truths.

Using Claude's play, Tremblay sets up a confrontation between two distinct yet overlapping realities, and asks us to consider which is more real — Claude's version with all the unspoken words, resentments and lies which have formed the silent fabric of the family's exist-

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