



Best actress Rebecca Harbord in 'A portrait of Mrs Siddons'

take risks which paid off. *Epicoene or the Silent Woman* from Manchester University was a production of Jonson's play which unashamedly took liberties. The tale of court corruption and greed was updated and presented in the idiom of punk clothing and popular music, and it succeeded. Durham University's production of *Three Sisters* took an immensely challenging play and stumbled on its intricacies.

As James Fenton pointed out, Durham's budget for *Three Sisters* was £1,000, the same amount recently allocated to Trevor Nunn for his production of the same play. With such resources the play had every right to succeed. The company provided a



Southampton University's production of Barrie Keeffe's 'Abide with me'

visually splendid set, with a dazzling array of fine antiques and an enormous range of properties. However the effect was almost totally ruined by appalling sight-lines and direction so doggedly Naturalistic that it ignored its audience in an inaudible and often invisible performance. The extravagant settings had convinced the audience that the acting and direction would match them in brilliance, and so made errors of style the more unforgiveable. A good set does not a play make, and in James Fenton's words neither do plays act themselves. What Durham's noble failure showed was that the excitement derived from many of the plays in the Festival was precisely that of a group with limited resources facing the challenge of major plays with the right mixture of respect and aggression.

Avoiding the hazards encountered by the groups who attempted classical plays, but



'How does your Garden Grow' from Hull University with Eileen Ryan left and Bea O'Sullivan. Directed Joe Turner

NATIONAL STUDENT DRAMA FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS

BP Awards for publicity and artwork: Elisabeth Robinson (Durham).

Stage Management: Bath Technical College

Costume: Victoria Penny (Durham).

Lighting: John Churchill and Andrew Sanderson (Durham).

Incidental Music: Alex Spofforth, Mathew Price and Mark Whorton (Durham).

Best Supporting Actress: *Eileen Ryan* (Hull).

Best Supporting Actor: *Tony Johnson* (Manchester).

Design: *Joe Turner* (Hull).

Best Classic Production: *'The Silent Woman'* (Manchester).

Best Overall Acting: *'Kennedy's Children'* (Westfield College).

Outstanding Production: *'Cramp'* (a new play by John Godber of Minsthorpe High School).

Best Actor: *David Phelan* (Manchester).

Best Actress: *Rebecca Harbord* (Hull).

The Almost Free Theatre's Naftali Yavin Prize: *Minsthorpe High School* for 'Cramp'.

The Inter-Action Community Theatre Prize: *Manchester University* for 'Somewhere in Barnet'.

World Student Drama Trust Award: for the best unperformed script: *Janice Hally* (Glasgow).

The Sunday Times Playscript Award: *John Godber* for 'Cramp'.

The Sunday Times Student Drama Critic Award: *James Macdonald* (North London Poly.).

The National Theatre/BP Administration Award: *Patricia Tulip* (Hull).

Yorkshire TV Award for Outstanding Personal Achievement: *John Godber* (Minsthorpe High School), author, leading actor and director of 'Cramp'.

Background To Selection

There were 65 entries for the 1981 Festival (16 finalists), including 22 new scripts (5 selected), 4 adaptations (1), 8 group creations (1), 1 documentary (selected) and an unusually high number of classics: 12 (3). More schools than ever before, 3, entered (2 selected, 1 narrowly omitted). Unusually, only one finalist is a revival of a relatively unknown modern work, most of the 18 other entries being established moderns (4 selected). Adjudication (wherever and whenever performances are notified to the London office) can start straight after the previous Festival; but the first 1980/81 entry was actually presented for travelling selectors in October, the last on 5 March.