In Hamman Auditorium

EB's 'Annie' Is Tonight

By REED MARTIN

This year's E.B. Melodrama, a very relaxed and entertaining production, is a slightly altered presentation of "Annie Get Your Gun."

Annie is of course Annie Oakley, not the modern doll of TV fame, but a gawky backwoods girl in an early American gunny sack. She not only can't read or write but she has such a limited vocabulary that the cast has to explain things like "There's No Business Like Show Business."

She is also used to shooting all day and at night "Doin' What Comes Naturally."

Along comes Frank Butler, who is used to doing anything in skirts. He's the hero (complete with medals) of an on-the-skids road show.

Traveling under the name of Buffalo Bill, his only act is to have a clay-pigeon shoot against the best any county has to offer. In this case, the county, a small group of seemingly frustrated Ivy-league dude-ranchers, has no champion until, no surprise to the audience, Annie appears.

Hotter Than Flintlock

She falls for Frank and, hotter than her flintlock, laments that "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun." By now one should realize this show introduced quite a few outstanding students.

Following some hilarious preliminaries, Annie beats Frank because the stage-hands break more clay pigeons during the time she is shooting than when he is on. B. Bill, a charming father-image, ably acted by C. Caldwell, sees the act he needs to make the big time and grabs her.

Now the master plot for much of show biz takes over. Although Annie and Frank are falling in love ("They Say That Falling In Love is Wonderful" . . in fact they say it several times), Annie tries to speed it up by surprising him with a new shooting trick.

Without A Light

In a dramatic masterpiece we see Frank on the dark stage, trying to find the filter end of the cigarette he's lighting, his ego being crushed (it takes about four seconds) as the crowd cheers Annie.

Meanwhile Annie goes broke in Europe, comes back and immediately runs into Frank (small stage). The finale includes dancing, shooting, loving, retribution, loving, and a hilarious scene be-
Melodrama . . .

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have opportunities to steal the show and probably will. But no one can divert attention for very long from Barbara Long and Jack Hollon. They play very convincing roles although Miss Long’s gawkiness must require more acting than Hollon’s portrayal of a stud, and treat the audience to many well-delivered songs. Their duets, those delivered while not in clinch, are especially good. One duet, accompanying personal boasting before the last shoot-out, “Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better,” is probably the best song in the production.

My only disappointment in the entire show came when I realized that the cast of thousands was only about ten girls, each with more costumes than the Rice Players will ever see.