

"FASHIONS FOR MEN"

Brilliant Play Spoiled by Poor Casting

GOOD WINE—BUT NO CRYSTAL GOBLETS

THE CAST.

Peter Juhasz LOFTUS HYDE
Adele (his wife) BERYL TELFORD
The Aristocratic Lady MARY GIBSON
Oscar GRAHAM MACDONALD
The Unassuming Lady DARLEY COOPER
Philip ROYSTON MARCUS
The Young Gentleman RALPH TAYLOR
Paula KATHLEEN MACGREGOR
Adolf GREGORY HULL
The Count TOM MacMINN
A Delivery Boy BOBBIE TELFORD
Domokos GREGORY HULL
Santha RALPH TAYLOR
Mate ANDY HIRST
The Thorough Young Lady
..... GWEN HARRISON
The Dissatisfied Lady ..WINNIE WILKINSON
The Nervous Gentleman RAY O'HARA
The Old Gentleman JUM PENDLETON
The Patient Lady CLARE CLAKE
A Cabman JACK COVER
Play Produced by JUM PENDLETON.

THERE have been occasions in the history of the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society when we have been able to forget that it is essentially amateur in its status. Unfortunately last night was not one of

Unfortunately last night was not one of them. One makes this observation fully realising that the society cannot always give all the best parts to all the best players or even all the best people. But if the society insists quite rightly in giving the less gifted members their chance it at least ought to select a play for them which is more or less plain sailing. Franz Molnar's "Fashions for Men" is not plain sailing. Firstly, it is farce, and subtle farce at that, secondly, it has, or at least ought to have, that atmosphere which is best described as continental. The programme told us that the first scene was set in Budapest. Yet the long frock coats of the gentry behind the counters of Peter Juhasz's "fashion Atelier" were the only stage accoutrements that warned us that we were not gazing at the interior of one of Queensland's country towns emporiums (?). We make allowances for stage dressing and then find that the gentleman who plays the Count has the faint aroma of our eucalyptus surrounding, like an aura, both his deportment and his speech. Even a good make up cannot waft away its persistent pungency.

Then there was Oscar, whose declarations of love had in them as much passion as the market reports and who left us at the end of the first act still wondering whether we had been laughing with him or at him, and whether the play was really brilliant farce or an attempt at real drama which had somehow come to grief. But that last point was soon cleared up in the second act, which is a brilliant piece of stage technique. Then we came to realise that Molnar's play, despite the absence of real atmosphere, and despite the superabundance of the aforesaid eucalyptus was really coming over the footlights to us.

In this second act we saw the Count in his real domain, in an office at the little Hungarian village of Gerelypuszta, made thoroughly Gerelypusztian by two huge slabs of stage cheese in one corner and on the walls some Press photographs of recent Ascot six-furlongs sprinters. But to give the Count his due he did sparkle a little here, and succeeded in appearing delightfully ludicrous when he ought to have been something approaching it.

Fortunately the pivotal character in the play was in safer hands, and Mr. Loftus

play was in safer hands, and Mr. Loftus Hyde, even though not quite looking the part of the great hearted Peter Juhasz, embroidered into the character many convincing and sympathetic touches. He made much better use of the really good lines allotted to him, especially that excellent one wherein, bereft of wife, and other worldly properties, he describes himself as a tree in a park fit only for lovers to meet beneath. He apparently loved this wife dearly, yet six months later he had fallen headlong into another entanglement. But even the best dramatists sometimes have to make their characters do this kind of thing, even though Peter in real life would probably

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object strongly to it. Beryl Treford, as this wife, played smoothly and sympathetically a part which gave her scope for good acting. Perhaps the best performance of all came from Miss Kathleen Macgregor as Paula. Her "come-hither" smiles at the Count in the first act were merely a prelude to some simple natural acting later on, although she was not as sirenesque as the first act promised. Mr. Andy Hirst's mate was also a well drawn character. He looked like an anarchist and might even have produced a bomb from his hip-pocket.

The play itself really deserved better casting. It has some brilliant dialogue shot through and through with a mordant wit which never seems to be idle. The second act is a masterpiece of compression in which the plot is beautifully interwoven. The third act suffers at the hands of this cast because business is so brisk. Nevertheless the play as a whole, despite the fact that there were more promptings and more dropped lines than usual in these productions, was refreshing.

Yet, if the Repertory Theatre Society wishes us to partake of a sparkling vintage we would prefer it served in appropriate crystal rather than in homely enamel-ware.

A.H.T.