

Theatre Gets New Kick

By TE PANA

Heartening proof that there is still life and colour in the legitimate theatre here is the upsurge of the amateur drama movement in recent months. And there is no "ham" in it either.

Three groups, Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society, Twelfth Night Players, and Brisbane Amateur Theatres, are keeping alive something of the old traditions of stage productions. It is a strange anomaly of war that has brought amateur plays to a peak of popularity never known before.

Not so long ago plays were interpreted by stilted amateurs with large hands and nowhere to put them.

They played unexciting incidents in strange garb and make-up, and used the stage as a happy hunting ground from which to nod to their friends in the audience.

Amateur productions staged now play to packed and enthusiastic houses in an atmosphere of deadly seriousness. There is a vital urge in character creation in each new piece presented. Gentleness of spirit is not altogether a feature of audiences either, for occasionally "the bird" is handed across the footlights to assist the actor in wearing the right size in boots.

By pre-war standards some amateur shows now are fit to rank almost equal with professional entertainment.

Poisons and pistols have little to do with the plays chosen, and unfunny domestic pieces, weird foreign dramas, or babies left on the doorstep have been avoided.

Amateurs are certainly doing their part in assisting the theatre when its flagging fortunes need a stimulant.