

26-28 Feb

1947

WHILE THE SUN SHINES



Teddington Theatre Club
in "While the Sun Shines."

TEDDINGTON Theatre Club never put on a show that is not first class. But they surpassed themselves with their presentation of Terence Rattigan's "While the Sun Shines" at Ronayne Hall, Hampton Wick, on Wednesday. Here is a bright modern comedy of the kind that requires professional polish to come over effectively. But the Theatre Club have that polish.

I cannot remember having seen any other amateur production to equal it in slickness. Everyone was sharp on cues and everyone was in character. Frances Whitton is far and away our best amateur producer.

The only criticism I have to make are on points of detail which I should normally disregard in an amateur production. Vera Drew, for example, I found too ladylike to be called "a trollope." She needed more vulgarity. And Gwynne Edwards, superb as he was as the Duke, might have been a little more choleric.

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LESLIE Hyland, Jack Sinclair, and Donald Ewer, as the representatives of Britain, U.S.A., and France fighting for the hand of the duke's daughter, all gave admirable characterisations. The first-named, in particular, gave a well-nigh faultless performance as the sea-man-earl. Jack Sinclair assumed a most convincing American accent and kept it up throughout. Donald Ewer's French, perhaps, might have been better, but his mannerisms were superb without being overdone. Mary Sumpton was a little restrained as the duke's W.A.A.F. daughter, but she gave a very charming performance. And the dignity with which Ernest Woods bore himself as the earl's man was grand.

What is most astonishing, perhaps, is that this was but the first of three performances. It is very rare, even for professionals, to be so perfect on the first night. Well done, everybody, including those who turned the "Nicholas Snyders" set into a representation of a West End apartment!

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THEATRE CLUB'S BEST YET

FIRST CLASS ACTING

Best so far of a series of excellent performances by Teddington Theatre Club is their production at Ronayne Hall, Hampton Wick, on the last three days of this week, of Terence Rattigan's "While the Sun Shines."

This is one of the funniest comedies of recent years, and with a small cast it enables the club to be carefully selective in the choice of players. The result is generally good casting and first class entertainment.

Honours of the evening go to Mr. Jack Sinclair as Lieutenant Mulvaney, the American bombardier. His western accent would not, possibly, bear analysis by an expert, but it sounds sufficiently like the real thing to the uninitiated, and in any case his sense of comedy, his remarkable range of facial expressions and voice inflections give the part a standing in its own right.

Excellent comedy comes also from Mr. T. Gwynne Edwards, as the Duke. Against every temptation he always avoids overacting, and "arrives" because of the thoroughgoing reality of his playing. In the main role of the Earl of Harpenden, Mr. Leslie Hyland is lively and amusing, but a little overshadowed by Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Edwards.

Mr. E. F. Woods gives an exceptionally good study as the Earl's man, and Miss Vera Drew, as Mabel, plays with genuine and amusing understanding a risqué part. Not so strong are Miss Mary Sumpton, as Elizabeth, and Mr. Donald Ewer, as the Frenchman. Miss Sumpton's tendency is to underact, and Mr. Ewer's precisely the opposite.

Mrs. Frances V. Whitton produced.