

COMEDY OF SOVIET RUSSIA

Questors In "Squaring The Circle"

"Squaring The Circle," a comedy of Soviet Russia, by Valentin Kataev, which members of The Questors presented in their theatre on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon, and of which they will give a matinee to-day, is a revelation to many, accustomed only to Chekhovian fare, that Russian playwrights can be witty without being sardonic, and have the grace even to enjoy a good laugh at themselves.

"Squaring The Circle," performed regularly by the Moscow Arts Theatre since 1927, is dramatic "sauce piquante à la Russe." It is thoroughly good entertainment, and the society has made an interesting and topical choice of play. Mr. Eric Voce, the producer, and the players are to be complimented upon their individual work, as upon the excellence of their team work, which is an important point in this play. So is Mr. Fred Robinson, who designed and arranged the setting, for he converted the stage into an arrestive picture of a snow-bound, poverty-stricken room in one of Moscow's municipalised houses.

"Squaring The Circle" might equally well be called "Circling The Square." It concerns the domestic fortunes and misfortunes of two Russian male worker-students and the two women students to whom they are respectively registered in marriage. Each room-mate weds, unknown to the other, and each chooses the wrong woman. After many amusing episodes and much heart-searching as to whether their doings are "truly ethical," all is felicitously settled between the parties by an exchange of brides.

The fun is kept going by only five players, but, thanks to their spirited acting, it never flags. Mr. Bill Bayling, as the lean and hungry Abram, whose longing for economic education is seriously impeded by a natural human desire to eat and be filled, and who appreciates domestic comforts, and Mr. Ferguson Morton, as Vassya, who detests being fussed over, made a well-contrasted pair of student-bridegrooms. Miss Joan Cowderoy, as the Spartan Tonya, and Miss M. Morton, as Ludmilla, who must molly-coddle her husband, were equally good opposites. Mr. John H. Turner played the minor role of Emelyan, the poet-cum-physical-culture-enthusiast, with the right touch of flamboyant roguery.

C.C.