

QUESTORS PERFORM "OTHELLO"

SHAKESPEARE'S "Othello", the second production of the current Questors' Season, opened at their Mattock-lane Theatre last Saturday.

To ensure maximum use of my limited space I will assume readers are familiar with the play: any who are not have more to gain than lose by reading it. That is if they cannot see this performance, which I can readily recommend as an eminently rewarding evening, in spite of certain censures which it is my duty, as critic, to express later.

Meanwhile, let us dispense the well-earned bouquets. Frank White's Moor has nobility and tenderness, with an underlying simplicity of confidence and trust well suited to the character. Desdemona's simplicity of pure love, baffled anxiety and later pleading for her life are all nicely handled by Joyce Hornett.

William Beesley's Roderigo is a delight; and his change of mood, during the second encounter with Iago, finishing: "I am changed: I'll go sell all my lands" is very well managed. Cyril Box gives one of the finest performances in the play in the small part of Brabantio. John Howard's Cassio, Catherine Bell's Emilia and Elizabeth Wellman's Bianca all merit a mention.

More than a mention is deserved by the stage manager, George Benn, and his staff, whose invisible exports assume great import. I am still amazed at the alacrity of some of the scene-changes; not to mention the lighting and effects departments.

Having deliberately extolled the virtues of the piece must now turn reluctantly to other aspects. Wilfrid Sharp's Iago frankly puzzles me. It can only be described as a soft-pedalled melodramatic villain; which lays the performance open to the charge of villainy without a sufficient motive. I know the great G.B.S., who has an uncanny knack of being right, considers this play to be pure melodrama; but this interpretation is certainly not the basis of the present production, and somehow the Iago does not fit in quite comfortably. Wheresoever the fault may lie in this respect, there is not sufficient change between Iago's manner in soliloquy and before Othello to make the Moor's "Honest Iago" entirely acceptable.

Alfred Emmet's production is straightforward, in the most commendable sense of the word. More might be made of some comedy lines; but that is only a question of taste. The single lack, barely perceptible, is an over-ruling crescendo of tragic impact. The play's construction is almost complete and this — which is exactly what the realized would happen — everyone should see this shot any. will be disap

PAUL B

THE QUESTORS "OTHELLO"

On November 19 the Questors' Theatre Club, Ealing, presented for a week, Shakespeare's "Othello."

It is only on rare occasions that one has the privilege of witnessing an amateur company giving so good a performance of a Shakespeare play. This production is indeed masterly, missing nothing that would add to the dramatic effectiveness of the plot and using lighting, setting, and costume to enhance the meaning and value of the verse. The lines are beautifully enunciated throughout by every member of the cast, and the individual performances are striking. As Othello, Frank White gives a sensitive study of the harassed Moor. Balancing the nobility of

Othello's true character, Iago is played with a sardonic nonchalance by Wilfrid Sharp. The purity and beauty of Desdemona's character is tenderly conveyed by the restrained acting of Joyce Hornett, and Catherine Bell as Emilia is worldly wise yet passionate in defence of her mistress. John Howard as Cassio gives a fine performance, and good acting comes from the other members of the cast, including William Beesley, Cyril Box, Albert Hooper, Douglas Thomas, John Beesley, Roy Matthews, Roy Ambrose, Peter Bowen-Evans, Norman Dewhurst, and Elizabeth Wellman.