

Proper 'Charley' at the Questors

THE revival of Brandon Thomas's "Charley's Aunt" (with additional music and lyrics by the experienced song writing team of Hutchins and McQueen) at the Questors Theatre, Ealing, does everything that can be done for the old relative. This is, one can say without fearing to sound colloquial, a proper "Charley."

George Ritchie en travesti emerges an intriguing cross between Benny Hill and a Queen Victoria slightly in need of a shave. Yet though in, he's never a drag; and we, unlike her late majesty, are very often amused.

Alan Drake and Barry Hill, playing his fellow-undergrads, also gain a double First. True, Mr. Drake may seem in danger of becoming typed the jeune premier; but as Freddy told Eliza, he does it "so awfully well" that we'd be

churlish to protest too much.

Joining the ladies, one discovers in Awen Griffiths and Dorothy Boyd-Taylor two actresses ideally fitted in looks and style to out-Zuleika Zuleika.

With Miss Boyd-Taylor it could certainly be a case of "Once in love with Amy, always in love with Amy." Nor ought I to forget Sylvia Estop as numbingly "fanciful" Delahay, and Betty Ogden as the amita ex machina Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez.

The cast is completed by Philip Wright as Mr. Drake's Indian Army dad; Paul Imbusch, in his Lawyer Cribbs incarnation; and Lister Beck, who makes Brassett a scout of whom B.-P. would have approved.

One doesn't however remember Oxford servants in one's personal time being

subjected to such cavalier treatment by their young masters. The only reassurance is that St. Olde's, after all, remains a mythical college.

Were it not so, those who mourn a decline in politeness amongst today's youth might suffer a severe shock on contemplating this piece set in the year 1892.

As it is, the peremptory shouts of "Brassett!" by the students simply serve to confirm how close are the worlds of "Charley's Aunt" and P. G. Wodehouse.

But some of the author's juvenile slang leaves even the Drones Club standing. Still strongly under the 'fluence, I conclude with a word of praise for Barbara Hutchins' production, which is a bit crisp, but a humbug pictorially.

DOUGLAS McVAY