

Wimborne Drama Club aims high—and succeeds

IN a programme note on their production of J. B. Priestley's play, "The Linden Tree," last week, Wimborne Drama Club referred to "the risk of appearing to be too ambitious."

Let me reassure them. If they can maintain the standard of Saturday's performance, they may confidently reach for the moon with tolerable certainty of grasping, at least, a sizeable planet.

This story of the domestic crisis which arises when a University professor is "sacked" is by no means easy meat for amateurs.

Yet, without exception, every player gave a character study remarkable for its penetration and sincerity; and their efforts were blended into the story by producer Leonard Mottram, with a deftness that earned my ungrudging admiration.

My only excuse for trotting out the time-worn cliché, "it would be unfair to individualise," is that, in this case, it happens to be literally true. I could not single out one player for special praise without casting undeserved reflections on the others.

Suffice it to say that the entire production was one of the finest examples of team-work I have seen on the amateur stage in nearly 40 years of playgoing.

And that word "team-work" embraces the entire stage staff and house staff, with special reference to those responsible for the setting. Professor Linden's study was the most lived-in room I have ever seen on the stage!

The cast

Cast—comprised Ethel Cornish (Mrs. Cotton); Harold Midmore (Alfred Lockhart); Katherine Purchas (Isabel Linden); John Bennett (Rex Linden); Betty Wright (Dr. Jean Linden); Thelma Dryden (Marion de Vaury); Daphne Anderson (Edith Westmore); Betty Viader (Dinah Linden); Leonard Mottram (Prof. Robert Linden); Hubert Trenchard (Bernard Fawcett).

L. H. Mottram produced; Pam Mottram and Joyce Parke were stage managers; Reginald L. Wilkinson was responsible for lighting; Charles O. Chaleel was in charge of music and effects; Elaine King prompted, and Kathleen Daniels and Joyce Miles assisted with costumes. Ronald L. Small was business manager.

On the acting side the only things one criticised were occasional hesitations and suggestions of "stiffness" or nervousness, but these were scarcely noticeable and will disappear as the players concerned gain experience and confidence.

On the production side the "curtain" to the first scene "dragged" and the drawing of the curtains in that and the following scene was much too slow. I suspect mechanical difficulties.

Mr. G. H. Watson, the club's president, appealed to local residents to become members or honorary members of the Club to ensure a firm financial footing.

I sincerely hope that appeal will meet with a good response, and that the local council will take full advantage of any statutory powers available to enable them to provide worthy accommodation for an organisation which is an acquisition not only to the town but to the County.

My heartiest congratulations to everyone concerned.