

"Death" Liveness A Party at The Princess

"Death Takes a Holiday," a play in three acts, presented by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society last night in the Princess Theatre, is rich in dramatic power and in poetic conception.

It was written by Alberto Casella and translated from the Italian by Walter Ferris. Its atmosphere and tone may be placed in the same category as the immensely successful "Outward Bound," in which the English stage and film actor, Peter Gawthorne, was featured in Australia a few years ago.

After the shadow of death has almost fallen on several members of a house party in the Duke of Catolica's castle in Italy, Death appears in person before the Duke and insists on becoming a member of the party—in human form—for three days.

In short, Death took a holiday. Not a leaf fell. The vines thrust their way through the very doorways of the castle. Even the aged Baron Cesarea, played excellently by W. A. Blake, announced "this leg ought to creak, but doesn't." He became young once more, smoked a cigar, and finally made very gallant love to the Princess of San Luca (Daphne Roemermann).

Meantime, the arrival of a charming, but somewhat eccentric, prince among the guests; the obvious anxiety of his host that this latest guest should be pleased; the strange fascination of the prince for the younger women, set a background for several stirring crises and a magnificent climax.

Fine Portrayal

Clem Christensen had by far the most exacting part to play as Death and the Prince. It was a part calling for the portrayal of a large range of emotional feeling, and for ability to mark the distinction deftly between light and shade. It was Clem Christensen's last performance with the Society before leaving for London, and it was probably his best. Seldom has such a difficult part been attempted by an amateur player, and handled so suc-

cessfully.

Betty Ross, the child-woman who lived on beauty and poetry, played Grazia, the girl who loved Death, more than life, and she played it with sympathetic understanding.

Peter Buchanan played the part of Corrado, unsuccessful lover of a girl who lived in dreams, with marked restraint. Joyce Smith, as Alda Cesarea, and Noel Chandler as Rhoda Fenton, both had exciting scenes with the Prince.

Minor Parts Good

Murray Turbayne, as the host of Death, acquitted himself creditably. Robert Kelly's good speaking voice and sturdy physique lent realism to the part of Major Whitred, soldier of fortune. Smaller parts were played by Merle Dinning, Selwyn Clayphan, Audrey Court, and Gordon Marshall.

The Society's orchestra, conducted by Erich John, played bright overtures, including one by the conductor.

"Death Takes a Holiday," which is produced by Miss Barbara Sisley, will be repeated to-night.