

TWO SPANISH PLAYS

Excellent Showing By Repertory Actors

THE Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society started its 1934 season at the Theatre Royal on Thursday night with two two-act Spanish plays—"Wife to a Famous Man," by G. M. Sierra, and "Dona Clarines," by S. and J. Alvarez Quintero. These comedies, translated by Helen and Harley Granville-Barker, are to be repeated to-night, and it can be safely said that if the Repertory people continue to put on plays as clever and well produced as these two they can play seasons to full houses and not just odd nights.

"WIFE TO A FAMOUS MAN."

THE CAST.

Senora Andrea	Pearl Pollard
Carmen	Babette Ferguson
Lola	Mavis Buscho
The Baby	Celeste Guyatt
Senor Ramon	Leslie Fubbs
Marianna	Dulcie Scott
Mati	Betty Ward
Pepito	Allan Carson
A Reporter	Redmond O'Hara
Jose Maria	Leo Guyatt
Senor Julian	Robert Kelly
Julieta	Doreen Hooper

The story here is simple, the charm of the play lying in its realism, shrewd characterisation, and its verve. The scampish husband of a Spanish laundrywoman becomes an aviator, wins a big air race, and is idolised by wealthy people. The young fellow's head is so turned that even his favourite codfish stew loses its savour. The bed sheets are too coarse and the hands of the wife who has supported him for ten years are too rough. A beautiful opera singer is more to his taste and for her he leaves his wife. It is in keeping with his character that he gets back to his wife in the end by a childish ruse. The honours throughout go to the wife. She does not take the aviator's vain pranks lying down and makes no tearful appeals. She dominates every scene and adds a touch of pungency to domestic situations that leave the husband floundering. To her husband's assertion that he is master in his own home she replies, "The one who is in the right is master here." That is the keynote of the play.

Dulcie Scott as the wife gives a remarkably fine performance. She catches the spirit of it from the first and adds a touch of shrewdness that makes her laundrywife exactly what the author must have intended. This is indicated by the epilogue which draws the moral and dedicates the little play to the working women of Madrid. In her delivery of this epilogue Dulcie Scott gilds the laurels she has already won by her appreciative playing of the leading role. Leo Guyatt is the aviator husband. He looks the part and puts a lot into it, and if his playing seems a little pale at times it is only because he is out-

and if his playing seems a little pale at times it is only because he is outshone by the brilliance of Dulcie Scott. Leslie Fubbs is "on" almost throughout the play. As the lazy sycophantic father of the laundrywife chiefly concerned with peace in the home for his own comfort he adds to the reality of the play. As the lovely singer for whom the aviator leaves his wife Doreen Hooper is too stiff. Surely the author intended the aviator to suffer some disillusionment when he learns that the lovely lady is a woman of the people who has scrubbed floors and gone hungry to bed. Of the minor characters the three children of the aviator, Celeste Guyatt, Betty Ward, and Allan Carson show themselves happily devoid of any stage consciousness, while Babette Ferguson although she is not given much to say looks really Spanish and enlivens the human background with her animation and play of expression.

"DONA CLARINES."

THE CAST.

Tata	Edith Rowett
Don Basilio	Jim Pendleton
Senor Lujan	Walter Blake
Marcela	Beryl Telford
Daria	Gwen Campbell
Dona Clarines	Barbara Sisley
Miguel	Jim Felgate

This play is as slight in plot as the first one, but loses nothing because of that. Don Basilio having gambled and drunk away his own fortune is trying to have his sister declared insane so that he may get hold of her money. But Don Basilio is not a sinister figure; he writes atrocious verse and is concerned not so much with big stakes as with getting sufficient money to allow him to carry on his village tipping. Jim Pendleton is well in character throughout and in one brief scene where he reads and then explains his "poetry" to his friend, he captures the play. An excellent piece of work, this. But Miss Barbara Sisley, despite a slight uncertainty in some of her lines, carries the play. Her Donna Clarines is a regal figure, of great calmness, definite purpose, and sound commonsense. Such honesty and straightforwardness quite understandably lead those around her to say she is mad. The love interest is carried by Beryl Telford and Jim Felgate, the latter playing the part of the son of the man who earlier broke the Donna Clarines' heart. The dominant but oddly lovable old lady provides a happy ending by forgetting, although she declares she will never forgive, the injury done to her. Walter Blake has a good part as the doctor, Lujan, but why does he make the medical specialist first appear like a dull and rusty gamekeeper? This is not in keeping with the philosophy he expounds. Jim Felgate lacks elasticity as the young lover, although his rather stolid manner adds to the honesty that is part of the character. Of the minor players Edith Rowett quavers and clucks admirably as the old housekeeper, Tata, while Gwen Campbell's half-wit housemaid, Daria, is a bright spot in an excellent little play. Under the conductorship of Erich John a sizeable orchestra enlivens the intervals with well chosen and happily executed Spanish airs.

M.E.-W.