

VICTORIAN PLAY, MODERN MINDS

"Pride And Prejudice"

The impact of a play of Victorian minds and manners on an audience of 1938 was interesting to observe during the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society's production of "Pride and Prejudice" at the Princess Theatre, South Brisbane, last night.

The play by Helen Jerome is based on the novel by Jane Austen. There is much shrewd wit in it, conveyed largely by shafted repartee and keen thrusts, hidden beneath exquisite grace of manner. This became ripe comedy to the sophisticated modern mentality divested of the pretensions, but fundamentally subscribing to similar sentiments and susceptible to similar reactions.

It was borne in on one more than once that periods bring diversities of modes, but human nature remains much the same. Some of this impression was due to the genius of Jane Austen in her own sphere, acutely preserved by the dramatist, and sensitively realised by the cast. Characters were much sympathetically well depicted at the skilfully written and polished Victorianisms.

PLAYERS WELL CAST

Essentially a play of types, it was most aptly cast as to almost every one of the 22 characters. Miss Barbara Sisley produced it with rare fidelity to period, and placed a succession of effective stage arrangements.

An outstanding role among a number that were among the best-taken of recent productions by the society was Miss Clare Clarke's Mrs. Bennet, the match-making "Mama," henpecking poor Mr. Bennet, and being generally futile and unpleasant in a perfectly charming and ladylike way. Miss Clarke read deeply into the character. Her passages with Lady Lucas (Miss Tighe) were delightful, and Miss Tighe was no unworthy antagonist in sweet spite.

Mr. Tom Pollard saw keenly the depths of Mr. Bennet, not to be brow-beaten when his daughters were to be

beaten when his daughters were to be rescued from maternal designs. Miss Peggy Asprey's poise revealed a young actress of great promise. The three Bennet sisters were played with distinctive insight by Misses Gwen Campbell, Maureen Sanderson, and Betty Boulton. Miss Campbell's particularly was a strongly-played part, with recognition of the gibe that "men detest clever women"—a line that got one of the loudest laughs.

Mr. Clem Christesen was the most successful of the men in type-construction, and caught especially the measured speech and rounded periods. Excellent studies were given by Miss June Saunders and Mr. Ernest Busch.