

appeals to the thrifty mind—into such theatres and I look forward to seeing these contrived theatres used by some of our more enterprising schools for spectacular productions which I know them to be quite capable of producing.

We all give the Studio Company our heartfelt admiration and good wishes while they struggle on a shoe-string budget to gain enthusiastic acceptance of the idea of theatre in the round. They have stirred us to new ideas and earned our gratitude. Can we not do better than that? They offer something which is a serious suggestion for enlarging the scope of theatre in our time. I suggest that we must be awake to these new possibilities and not too ready to let the difficulties swamp any urge which is expressed by some of our more *avant-garde* members. Theatre in the round is at least as old as the Greeks. Maybe it has something for Southampton's tomorrows.

Strindberg's "Miss Julia"

Joy Steele

My first reaction to "Theatre in the Round" presentation was that here is a medium which makes very exacting demands on the actors. The audience is so close to them, almost on the set with them, that any possibility of a prompt is quite out of the question. The actor is not permitted even that split-second blank look when the next line momentarily eludes him. This audience awareness works both ways, of course. If a muffing of lines is not lost upon the audience, then neither are any subtleties of facial expression—the gleam in an eye, tears on Miss Julia's lovely, almost Oriental face, Jean's calculating stare. Also, an ordinary conversational tone can be used which gives an atmosphere of intimacy and participation.

For the audience, "Theatre in the Round" is comparable to "smellies" in the cinema. We were able to smell Jean's kidney supper which Kristin had saved for him; we caught a whiff of Julia's cigarettes.

I realised why seats in the front row were cheaper than all the others when a very large table was placed right in front of me! My reaction, when Julia knelt on the floor to examine the dead bird, was to bend down and look under the table to see what was happening. In spite of this disadvantage, I was glad I was in the front row, because I was able to see minute details of well-kept finger nails, smooth skin and a twitching muscle at the corner of a mouth which might have been missed in the more expensive seats. It was like watching someone asleep in a railway carriage when one is able to observe the smallest detail of dress and features and see the almost imperceptible quivering of the nostrils with each breath.

On the whole I found "Theatre in the Round" a fascinating experience and, though it has limitations, it has great possibilities.