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COLLEGE THEATRE

A REALLY outstanding compliment to British student drama was received last week from Poland. Robert Robertson, of Barts Hospital Medical School Drama Society, has been invited to visit Wroclaw this Autumn to assist Teatr Polski (one of the outstanding Polish professional theatres) in staging the version of "Alice Through the Looking Glass" which he co-adapted and co-directed for the "Sunday Times" National Student Drama Festival early this year. Robertson is, of course, not the first medic to make an impression on the modern stage; nor is he the only really talented product of Barts Drama in recent years. But he is the first I know of to have bridged the international gap so strikingly, and so early in his career. Incidentally, he is also a gifted comedy actor.

There will be plenty more student drama talent on parade at the Edinburgh Festival (August 18 to September 7). As usual, it will be impossible for the visitor to cover the whole fringe theatre programme; so I make no apology for listing my own prospective priorities as a possible guide. An excellent yardstick for current standards will be provided by Bradford University, who fortunately start on the 15th at Lauriston Hall with "The Quest" (the lives, loves and deaths of King Arthur and his Knights) by Richard Crane and Chris Mitchell. Chris Parr directs. Two short plays by John Waller, and the Bradford Revue "The Route of all Evil," follow from the 17th, and the company finishes on the 24th.

Oxford Theatre Group's "Father Ignatius" (15th on), and Revue (from 14th), can also be seen before the rush starts, with their other three productions in repertory throughout. York thoughtfully stage their four main attractions so that on Sundays they can all be seen in one visit from 3pm to 12.30am, and a fascinating programme it is: "Pericles," Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Fugard's "Hello and Goodbye" and Shelley's "The Cenci."

Cleveland College's "East Lynne" was a rare treat last year, so I shall not miss "Maria Marten" this time (second week only). Durham's "Puckoon," The Wheels Company's "Stationmaster," Ritual Theatre (third week only), Bristol Cream's "Asylums," and Scratch Company's "The Blind" all look particularly interesting, whilst Tapestry Theatre's main productions, "The Rivals" and "Earnest," though well known, should benefit from the inventive and strong direction of Kent's Mike Frankenburg.

Nottingham are fast becoming an interesting company, so "Tango" should be worth a visit. All the Cambridge productions are likely to yield rewarding experiences. As Bristol Revunions last year won the traditional war of the revues, their "Ginger Nuts?" must be tried. Finally, I would not miss The Mermaids (St Andrews) with "Butley" (3rd week) and all the New College productions. (Details from the Fringe Society 031-226 5257 from August 12).

Clive Wolfe