

tonight

The Critics

Tonite 1-7-81



Reviewed

by

LIZ CLARKE

Two sides of the toffee apple

Play: "WILSON'S BUG" (Communikon Theatre).
Cast: Farouk Hoosain, Afzal Deon, Ebrahim Paruk, Imram Bobat, Omar Joosab.
Director: Farouk Hoosain.

EVEN though the accent is on tongue-in-the-cheek humour, Farouk Hoosain's commentary on labour relations in South Africa comes across with a hefty swipe.

And possibly because he has not made a ponderous, sombre statement about his subject matter — striking workers at Port Elizabeth sweet factory — it has even greater impact.

With background film clip glimpses into the facets of the working people's lives, Hoosain traces the events leading up to the strike (based on an actual incident) focusing on a nucleus of workers who refuse to negotiate with a "second class institution" bent on giving them little more than cleaner lavatories.

As the catalyst in this light-hearted parable, Ebrahim Paruk

embarks on a lollipop ship of hilarity, using the colloquial idiom with delectable ease.

Also taking their point in this medley of profit and loss, unsatisfactory working conditions and trade union fighting talk, are the two sides of the toffee apple — the Democratic Workers Union with a sensitive portrayal (pity about the fluffed lines) by Afzal Deon as the vanguard for change, and the big-stick mahogany desk crew epitomised by a big-car-three-piece-suit boss, fittingly called Mr Wilson and played with no-nonsense fervour by Omar Joosab.

The inclusion of a jester — given a waspish account by the author — lends a neat touch to the tinderbox confrontation of works and management in which a variety of stabs are made at bribery, corruption, police brutality and injustice.

Despite the fact that the cast is not over-experienced on stage, craft (although for 10 days' rehearsal they have done well) sincer^{ty} makes up for a great deal of the lack of polish.

* The play will have one extra performance tonight at 8pm.