

*Sunday Nation 6/1/63*  
**'See how they run'**

**T**HIS presentation by the Nairobi City Players, directed by Leonard Pierrepont, opened at the Kenya National Theatre last Friday.

With all the well-known City Players appearing, it was hardly surprising to see so many wives there — Mary Epsom, smart in black, watching for Bryan, "The Bishop of Lax"; Joan White with her daughters, there to wait for the appearance of Bill as "The Reverend Athur Humphrey"; and Mrs. Bob Cheetham, perhaps better known by her Listeners as Shirley Veal, there to see Bob appear as Lance-Corporal Clive Winton.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Bull of course were present — Alice Bull in a frock of white, with a lovely fur stole — their daughter Pamela in the play as "Ida". Mr. Frank Price came with his attractive wife Agnes and daughter Janet (you do of course remember the Diary of Anne Frank?) — Janet now in her third year at Drama School. Mrs. Day, of Baring Biscuits wended her way circle-wards; and escorted by the Messrs. Franz and Fritz Wolf, was Mrs. Ellen Dorman. Mr. Bill Emmerson talked about the opening of "The Can-Can"; and Mr. and Mrs. Sbish Trezbinski chatted to Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wright



# ENTERTAINMENT

## "SEE HOW THEY RUN"

Silly play well done

It is difficult to write an accurate review of "See How They Run" while at the same time giving due credit to the Nairobi City Players for their extremely good performance, the play being so silly and the company so talented and hard-working.

Few things date so quickly as farces and this is no exception. The situations, the slapstick, the dialogue belong to another period, and although the antics of the characters provoke guffaws, it is the laughter of ridicule rather than appreciation.

Philip King's play is of war-time

into a sort of music hall clowning.

**Extravagant behaviour.** Two of the players lose this contact with reality and are, at times, guilty of gross overplaying, the end product suffering as a result. On the opening night in the opening scenes Rosemary Gardner was very good, but once the romps started her behaviour and responses became far too extravagant to be in character, or anything like it, while Bill White's deliberate guying in the last act had no connection whatever with the author's intentions.

Nancy Roe played the leading lady with ease, but with not quite enough life, Edward Scott was pleasantly pompous as the vicar, and Bryan Epsom made a competent bishop, and Robert Cheetham was the best of the bunch, having that little bit extra in the way of timing, punch and expression which kept the story moving at the right pace.

The only really badly-acted incident was one of the most important — when the vicar's wife sloshes Miss Prim in the face. The slosh was about as vicious as a tap with a dry sponge. No actress worth her salt is going to object to a smack in the face in the cause of art, so let there be genuine smacks in future — smacks which can be heard at the back of the auditorium.

One of the reasons for the choice of "See How They Run" was, of course, that it is very good box office. It seems that until Kenya's new African middle-classes can really be persuaded to take up the theatre-going habit the enthusiasts will just have to resign themselves to a light diet, with something more substantial only occasionally.



SCENE FROM "SEE HOW THEY RUN"  
Dated farce — but good box office

vintage and was very amusing in the 1940's. But now it is as stale as last year's bread, the sense of humour of the 1960's needing much more tickling than the sight of a lot of clerical gentlemen chasing each other round and round the stage while an inebriated Miss Prim pops in and out of a cupboard like a jack-in-the-box.

Leonard Pierrepoint's production at the Kenya National Theatre is very slick, and the players do their utmost to make an evening spent there entertaining. Their teamwork is by far the best thing in the show, and their timing, so vital in a romp of this kind, is as pat as can be.

Many playgoers hold that the essence of good farce is normal, sane people in ridiculous situations, and that the introduction of caricature merely transforms it