



In this scene from the play, "The Dictator's Slippers," Manasseh Moerane, playing the dictator's personal physician, signs a document.

With him are Peter Sefularo and Elias Mathope.

## THEATRE

# Dictator's Slippers play of idealism

Herald Theatre Critic

**T**HE Moral Re-Armament play, "The Dictator's Slippers," must be looked upon as a conscientious effort by some intelligent, idealistic people to put across simple, yet unrecognised and important truths about human nature.

As such it is admirable and impressive. As theatre it is interesting with a strong novelty appeal in the fact that it presents 11 Africans and one European in the same cast and in the strange setting of the normally "Whites-only" Opera House.

Inevitably the play itself is rather static, being a play of dialogue enacted in one set.

Africans, a naturally exuberant people whose own languages train them in vocal expression, make good actors and all of these quickly created convincing images of the characters they portrayed.

Maxwell Ntombella gave a very good portrayal of a potential dictator as the Minister of the Interior and Chief of Police in a dictatorship.

## IMPRESSIVE

As Dr Hippocrat, personal physician to the dictator, Thomas Nkwana could scarcely have been more impressive, looking and being the part of the most benign of the bunch of mutually-afraid revolutionary leaders.

Ronald Hogg, the White man acting the part of Bullbluff of Britain, and Benjamin Phatshwane, as Polyglot (who has 18 passports) are soundly cast as foils for each other in the arguments over who is to step into the shoes of Adamant the dictator.

Jerry Ngwane and Leslie Mannie, as Irasca from Africa and Destani from India, were a little less confident yet they created the correct illusion.

A short but excellent performance by Palmer Kote, as the political prisoner, was the key to the play's impact.

Without excepting heights of theatrical achievement, any theatre-goer who is not completely cynical can go to **The Dictator's Slippers** and derive satisfaction from the experience. Moral Re-Armament is trying to persuade people to make the world a better place by first changing themselves into more tolerant, more understanding and more self-understanding individuals.

We certainly need to be reminded of some of the truths expressed in this play. —R.N.