NEW THEATRE IN TOWN

Cabaret's Satire Fills Great Need

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A satirical revue entitled 'Outside at the Inn' is currently playing at Houston's newest professional theater, the Inn Theater Cabaret.

The Inn, located in an old church at Bagby and McGowen, has assembled a group of topical skits that range in subject from social parody to corny jokes.

Main targets of the satire are American life, mores, and prejudices. Racial discrimination is somewhat overworked, but the sketches on the poverty program and conformity are treated lightly enough to be effective.

The company also engages in some less serious acting. Unfortunately, an insipid group of lascivious gags weaken the show, but these interludes do break the tension produced by the satire.

A few other, less hackneyed skits keep the production from sinking to television level. One of these finds a sunny, fresh-scrubbed maiden tripping onto the stage, singing "The hills are alive..."—which, to her horror, they suddenly are.

Improvisations

The actors seem to take a long time to warm to their task, so the second half of the show easily outstrips the first. To put a final touch to the production, the cast does improvisations on topics suggested by the audience.

If 'Outside at the Inn' seems to lack polish and originality, it is at least something new. The show is not dragged out past endurance, nor does it pretend to cater to the intellectually dead businessman.

Best of all, the actors show some surprising talent, an asset that a number of local groups can hardly claim.

A theater such as this one can fill an important need in this culturally stagnated community. If it hopes to stay alive, however, it should at least consider producing avant-garde drama, and it must in any case change its shows frequently.

If the Inn chooses to accept these fundamentals, it should be enthusiastically supported. Theater IV, which recently folded, showed that the cabaret format is worthwhile. But it also demonstrated that the public will not support a constant fare of melodrama and inferior acting. The Inn Theater Cabaret should profit from this example.