

New Moon rises again

ONE of my earliest memories of recorded music of the 'thirties was the voice emanating rather tinnily from a door in our cabinet gramophone singing *Lover Come Back To Me*.

Like a good many others of my generation I'd never actually seen the show *New Moon* live although Romberg's other 'twenties successes, *Desert Song* and *Student Prince* have constantly done the rounds.

Of course, apart from the HMV reproduced sound of the scratchy 78s, other numbers from *The New Moon*, *Softly as in the Morning Sunrise*, *Wanting You*, and the chorus *Give Me Some Men* became familiar from the number of times they featured in those Palm Court type concerts and end-of-pier shows that were our staple entertainment diet before and after the war.

Maybe the plot is a bit baffling but the music is largely recognisable to the middle-aged ear.

It is thanks to the energies and courage—in the face of financial adversity — of Bournemouth Operatic Society that we are able to see this *New Moon* rise again.

They're not easy to stage convincingly these musicals of 50 years ago. So many scenes, so many exits and entrances to overcome; such an improbable plot.

That director John Crane and his hard working company do win through does them great credit. The resultant lively show — their second this year — deserves to drag folk away from that present-day opiate of the people, the TV set.

At heart, astonishingly enough, this *New Moon* is made of revolutionary stuff, not cheese as you might expect from the comedy.

When erstwhile aristocrat

Robert sings of *Stout hearted Men* it's a call to arms, the stirrings of a new life away from French colonialism in Louisiana.

Mallon but as a character is difficult to convey.

Victor Pocock as Philippe, Robert's fellow revolutionary, is absolutely the right type of heroic figure in appearance although his voice is a little light at times in *Softly as in the Morning Sunrise*.

The comedy resides mainly in the persons of Aileen Attwell, Eugene Crowe, Colin Evans and Joan Lea.

They have a delightful quartet, *Love is Quite a Simple Thing*, to cheer us up with.

Gina Starkey, for years a principal, still puts plenty into her chorus work and the cameo of a flower girl.

The heavies are threateningly done, operetta style, by Peter Nicholls and Tom Brooks.

Chorus work is a strong point of the show.

Some pert little misses from the Murielova School dance delightfully and lads from Oakmead School make a piratical contribution.

Michael Reynolds directs the Ron Armstrong Orchestra with some in the main acceptable playing of Romberg's warm American-Magyar melodies. **J.S.**

● Bournemouth and Boscombe Light Opera Company produced *New Moon* in 1962 but I missed it on that occasion.

*Last
night
at
the
theatre*

Ian Billington, who also has a pleasant voice, makes him a credible figure. The woman Robert is besotted with, Marianne, is sung commendably by Julie



JULIE MALLON



IAN BILLINGTON