

Theater: Chileans Make an Impressive Debut Here

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

PROFESSIONAL theater from South America, an extremely rare visitor to New York, made a handsome debut last night at the Barbizon Plaza Theater.

The visitors are 21 of the 60 members of the Theater Institute of the University of Chile, known by the initials of its Spanish name, ITUCH, and they said their hello with "La Remolienda," a lusty comedy about life in the backlands of the long, narrow neighbor to the south. The title translates as "Bawdy Party," but bawdy may be overdescriptive for emancipated theatergoers of the north.

The two-act play, written by Alejandro Sieveking, a 33-year old writer, is a simple folk comedy and a happy choice to show off a company that is obviously well equipped for teamwork in a work that is purely Chilean.

It's an easy story. A peasant woman and her three grown sons set off for a village and get lost. They end up visiting a house of prostitution, where the madam turns out to be the widow's long-lost sister. There are misunderstandings, double-entendres and all of the things that typified much of the theater of years ago. Everything finally gets sorted out and everybody exit, happy.

Yet Mr. Sieveking and Augustin Sire, director of the company, have made it more than a re-do of yesteryear's

The Cast

LA REMOLIENDA ("Bawdy Party") play by Alejandro Sieveking, with music by Victor Jara. Staged by Mr. Jara; setting and costumes by Bruna Contreras; lighting by Sergio Zapata; managing director, Joanne Poffitzer. The Theater Institute of the University of Chile, presented by the Theater of Latin America. At the Barbizon Plaza Theater, 106 Central Park South.

Dona Nicolasa	Belgian Castro
Nicolas	Mario Lorca
Graciano	Tomas Vidella
Gilberto	Franklin Calcedo
Yola	Kerry Keller
Isaura	Claudia Paz
Chepa	Sonia Mena
Dona Rebecca	Carmen Bunsler
Renato Sepulveda	Teenyson Ferrada
Mitra	Maria Canepa
Mauro	Sergio Aguirre
Telmo	Ruben Sforzani
Baudilio	Jorge Boudon

thumping theatrics. They are showing a slice of life that a few know about; even the language may be difficult for a Spanish-speaker who lives a few countries away. The actors, with marvelous facility, show country-boy wonderment at electric lights. Boys and girls do an awkward country dance with a comic seriousness that must have taken hours to learn, because it looks as though it didn't.

The idea, as much as anything, is the peasant attitude — al pan-pan, vino-vino, to bread, bread and to wine, wine, in other words, that's the way things go and nothing changes.

The stage groupings are elemental and natural. When people sit around the table, the director is not afraid for some to have their backs to the audience, as long as they may be heard. He avoids the familiar Last Supper style of feeding that so often makes for false theater. The actors are obviously used to work-

ing together and show that repertory theater is not something that is the monopoly of the Northern Hemisphere.

Tomorrow, the company will do another bill, an anthology of scenes from its repertory, among them "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" "Death of a Salesman," "Threepenny Opera" and works by Lope de Vega, Eugene O'Neill, Peter Weiss and Calderon. The company will do a total of eight performances here of both shows during its week-long visit.

It was brought here by the Theater of Latin America, a group with headquarters here that has recently started to encourage such exchanges. The Chileans arrived here from California, where they

appeared in eight theaters under the sponsorship of a Chile-California cooperative program. The company was founded in 1941 but in 1960 it became part of the University of Chile, which partly subsidizes performances in the troupe's 500-seat house in downtown Santiago.

In return for its attentions, the university gets the benefit of the company's expertise on the campus. A number of the dramatic group's members teach at the school. Catholic University, also in Santiago, has a similar arrangement. It makes one wonder whether the know-how of the Alliance for Progress is always traveling in the right direction. A little feedback might be helpful.