

# MOSCOW PLAYERS ASSESS U.S. STAGE

## 4 Art Theater Visitors View Excerpts at Adler School

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

Four Soviet theater experts saw slices of United States drama last week and thought Arthur Kopit's "poor dad" was better left hanging in the closet, although they relished a scene from Arthur Miller's "Misfits."

The four are members of the Moscow Art Theater. They are visiting here to explain the Stanislavsky acting method under the auspices of the Institute of International Education with the cooperation of the American Council of Learned Societies and the State Department.

Their exposure to local drama took place on the stage of the acting-studio school of Stella Adler at 1974 Broadway. Miss Adler initiated the idea of the visit.

The visitors, sitting in a packed house of 60 persons, saw eight excerpts from, among others, Mr. Miller's work; Mr. Kopit's "Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet And I'm Feeling So Sad"; Jean Anouilh's "Becket"; Paddy Chayefsky's "The 10th Man"; Lerner and Loewe's "Brigadoon," and an adaptation of "Alice in Wonderland."

The Russians sat politely impassive through it all. The excerpts were performed, accordingly to Miss Adler, in the Stanislavsky technique, in which the artist is required to live his role. The visitors broke into applause only when Winston de Lugo played a quiet, little scene from "The Misfits," a mono-

logue in which a cowboy speaks to his mother on the telephone.

"This minor, insignificant scene was genuine, realistic art that produced a great impression," said Vasily Toporkov, an Honored People's Actor of the Soviet Union, through an interpreter.

As for much of the other material, Mrs. Angelina Stepanova, also an Honored People's Actor, said, "It did not shock me, but I don't see why such scenes should be put on the stage."

Victor Manyukov, a director and teacher, said of Mr. Kopit's work:

"I'm not against psychology; it's very important. But there are too many things that display sick psychology. It's foreign to me."

All of the visitors, including Vladimir Prokofyev, historian and theoretician, emphasized that they had no complaints about the abilities of the actors, although they did not like the scripts they performed.

Miss Adler said that the performance had served its purpose, to show the Russians how Americans were using the Stanislavsky method. As for the material, she said:

"They want optimism. They don't want the theater of the absurd or things that don't meet their ideological or artistic standards. But this is our American theater, and this is what we had to show them."

Later, the Russians joined in an informal discussion with the actors, ranging from points of technique to a lively but not hostile exchange on what ideas theater should present.

The Russians will lecture on Stanislavsky here and out of town before returning home next month.