

WAGONLOAD OF MERIT IN "TREK"

FOLK TREK (Intimate Theatre) carries a wagonload of material of mixed merit.

It opens promisingly with voices in the darkness, a gleam of light on the metalwork of guitars. Then the stage lights go up to reveal a covered wagon, and out of this climb the five young folk-trekkers.

I don't know whether it was Des Lindberg who devised the show, or director Peter Prowse who had the happy thought of introducing this typical trek symbol, but it is colourful and appropriate.

As long as the cast clamber in, on or over their atmospheric prop, the show rolls quite melodiously on its way.

"Pick-A-Bale O' Cotton," that opens the second half (titled "Outspan"), is the liveliest, most inventively directed number in the production; the spiritual "Hallelujah"—with the wagon as its centrepiece—the most moving.

Unfortunately, not all the song, dance and foolery is as entertaining. Although the 37 items are short and varied, many, like the "South Africa Waits . . ." gag, misfire.

On the credit side, Des Lindberg is best in his liedjies, Dawn Silver as "Kleintjie" and in the story of how the Unicorn became extinct, Beryl Ellin's voice is always pleasing, pitched to just the right meditative note for her duos with Ian Lawrence, who strikes a distinctive note of his own in his gormless guy sequences.

Duccio Alessandri's dramatic red cloak looks as though it might herald a refreshing interlude of folksong Italian style, but except for some eloquent guitar solos, this artiste contributes little. A pity, for with its limited international freight, this folk trek can't afford to carry any passengers.