

Playing Higgins

a second time

WHEN Chelmsford solicitor, David Hawkins, walks on to the stage of the town's Civic Theatre on Monday for the opening performance of the week long run of Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society's production of *My Fair Lady*, it will not be the first time he has played the role of Professor Higgins.

The first time was nine years ago when the society's spring productions were still staged at the Regent Theatre (in pre-Bingo days of course) with Pat Viles as his Eliza Doolittle.

This time David will be playing opposite Pam Medcroft and at rehearsals his director has been Ray (Wind of Change) Jeffrey instead of Phil Payne.

DIFFERENT

And so it is not surprising that David is finding playing Higgins second time round a different experience from the first.

What appeals to David, who lives at East Bergholt, about this professor of phonetics is his enigmatic quality and he confesses to having had to learn the lines quite as carefully this time as in 1969.

"Of course I'd remembered some phrases but there is always a danger second time round of

thinking you know the part better than you do."

Because, on his own admission, "I'm not working so hard now as in 1969, I've got some partners now," David has been able to think about Higgins more.

And as Ray's moves are totally different from Phyl's there's no danger of David getting muddled in that direction.

"As well as the moves Ray's directing is quite different. If Phyl liked what you were doing she let you get on with it, but Ray has got very definite ideas about how he sees Higgins," David explained.

"Generally he sees him as a much more extrovert character than the way I played him first. This took some getting used to but the concept has grown on me."

David makes quite a habit of playing the same role twice, having also done so previously in *South Pacific* and *Perchance To Dream*.