

THE AUTHOR

John Whiting is among the small select body of young dramatists who have proved themselves something more than just "promising." His name is well known and respected among serious playgoers, and his plays have all been the subjects of considerable, sometimes bitter, controversy.

A Penny for a Song was his first work to reach the stage, when it was produced by Peter Brook at the Haymarket Theatre in 1951. It met with a generally cool reception from critics and had only a short run. But it found many supporters who discovered something to delight them in its odd mixture of farce, fantasy, satire and whimsicality; and it has been often revived by other theatres, professional and amateur, since its first sad failure.

This initial failure was negligible compared with the later collapse of *Saint's Day*, which carried off first prize in the Arts Theatre Festival of Britain play competition after an overwhelming onslaught from critics. Once again there were supporters, among whom John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft, Tyrone Guthrie and Peter Brook were moved to write to the national Press approving the judges' selection: it is worth recalling that the judges were Alec Clunes, Christopher Fry and Peter Ustinov. Never had there been such a complete rift between practising theatre folk and practising critics.

Next, in 1954, came *Marching Song*, which heralded further, if less pronounced arguments among playgoers and critics. Those who were still haunted by *Saint's Day* (which many consider among the greater plays of contemporary theatre) were largely disappointed, though by no means turned against the later play; those who were still in a fog following *Saint's Day* could mostly discern a slight lifting of the mist in *Marching Song*. The appeal of the two plays was quite different in kind. But taking all three plays into account, no one can dismiss John Whiting's work as unworthy.

Meanwhile the author has continued his career as actor. He was in *The Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Phoenix Theatre during the 1951-52 seasons, and was last seen in London at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, in the Paul Scofield *Richard II* in 1953. Last year we found him back in the more important role of dramatist, this time as translator of André Obey's *Sacrifice to the Wind* (Arts Theatre, March, 1955). It is now to be hoped that he may turn once more to original writing, of which there is such a desperate need in the theatre to-day.

B.H.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, April 28th... .. Whist Drive in the Lounge, 7.30 p.m.
Sunday, May 6th Sunday Club: a Play Reading.
Friday, May 11th Spring Dance at the Park Hotel, Hanwell.
Dancing 8 p.m. till midnight.
Tickets, 4s. each, obtainable from Francis
W. Smith, 32, Windmill Lane, Southall.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER"
by OLIVER GOLDSMITH
Opens on Saturday, June 9th.

THE LAST NIGHT AND THE DISCUSSION

If you have enjoyed the play this evening, why not come again on the last night and bring a friend? Members may obtain two tickets for the price of one for the last performance, which is given in aid of the New Theatre Building Fund. The date: Wednesday, April 25th.

The discussion of *A Penny for a Song* will take place in the theatre on Thursday, April 26th, at 7.30 p.m. All members and friends welcome.

Printed by King & Hutchings, Ltd., 57, The Mall, Ealing, W.5



present

A Penny for a Song

by

JOHN WHITING

AT THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING, W.5
APRIL 14TH TO 25TH, 1956

SIXTH PRODUCTION
TWENTY-SEVENTH SEASON
1955-56

PROGRAMME
SIXPENCE

A Penny for a Song

by

JOHN WHITING

★

Characters in order of their appearance:

William Humpage	...	...	...	...	...	...	MICHAEL GREEN
Pippin	...	...	...	...	...	...	ELISABETH WELLMAN
Sir Timothy Bellboys	...	...	...	...	...	...	JOHN VERNON
Samuel Breeze	...	...	...	...	...	...	BRYAN EVANS
Lamprett Bellboys	...	...	...	...	...	...	DAVID LORRAINE
Hester Bellboys	...	...	...	...	...	...	BARBARA HUTCHINS
Dorcas Bellboys	...	...	...	...	...	...	FFRANGCON PRICE
Hallam Matthews	...	...	...	...	...	...	VINCENT McQUEEN
Edward Sterne	...	...	...	...	...	...	NEVILLE BRADBURY
Jonathan Watkins	...	...	...	...	...	...	ANTHONY GRANT
George Selincourt	...	...	...	...	...	...	REGINALD HAMLYN
Joseph Brotherhood	...	...	...	...	...	...	TONY WORTH
James Giddy	...	...	...	...	...	...	HARRY IVES
Rufus Piggott	...	...	...	...	...	...	BERNARD McLAUGHLIN

The play produced by	...	...	...	...	JOHN CLEMOW
Associate producer	...	...	...	...	JAMES DRINKWATER
The setting designed by	...	...	...	...	JANE KINGSHILL
Costumes designed by	...	...	...	...	ELISABETH WELLMAN

The Play is in Two Acts, and takes place in the Garden before Sir Timothy Bellboys' House in Dorset on a day in the summer of the year 1804.

During the interval you may remain in your seats and be served with tea and biscuits, at the fixed price of 6d., or cross to the Lounge where coffee and light refreshments may also be obtained.

★

Stage Manager	...	...	...	...	...	...	DAVID WEDMORE
Assistant Stage Managers	MOLLY DALE and MARJORIE McGARRICK						
	assisted by JO ARUNDEL, COYA BISGOOD, DOREEN CROSBY						
	and KATHLEEN HARRINGTON						
Scenery constructed by the workshop staff	under the direction of DENIS ROBINSON and JOHN KNIGHT						
Costumes made in the Questors Wardrobe	under the direction of JANE SIMPSON						
	assisted by SALLY GREENFIELD						
Lighting	...	...	...	...	...	...	NEIL CARMODY
Sound Operator	...	...	...	...	...	...	STUART HARTLEY
Technical Adviser	...	...	...	...	...	...	DOUGLAS WEARE

★

Theatre Manager	...	...	...	...	...	...	RENA RICE
House Manager	...	...	...	...	...	...	ARCHIE COWAN
Press Representative	...	...	...	...	...	...	BASIL HULL

BOX OFFICE (6.30—7.30 p.m.) EALING 5184

MEMBERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REMINDED THAT SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE THEATRE WHILE THE PLAY IS IN PROGRESS.