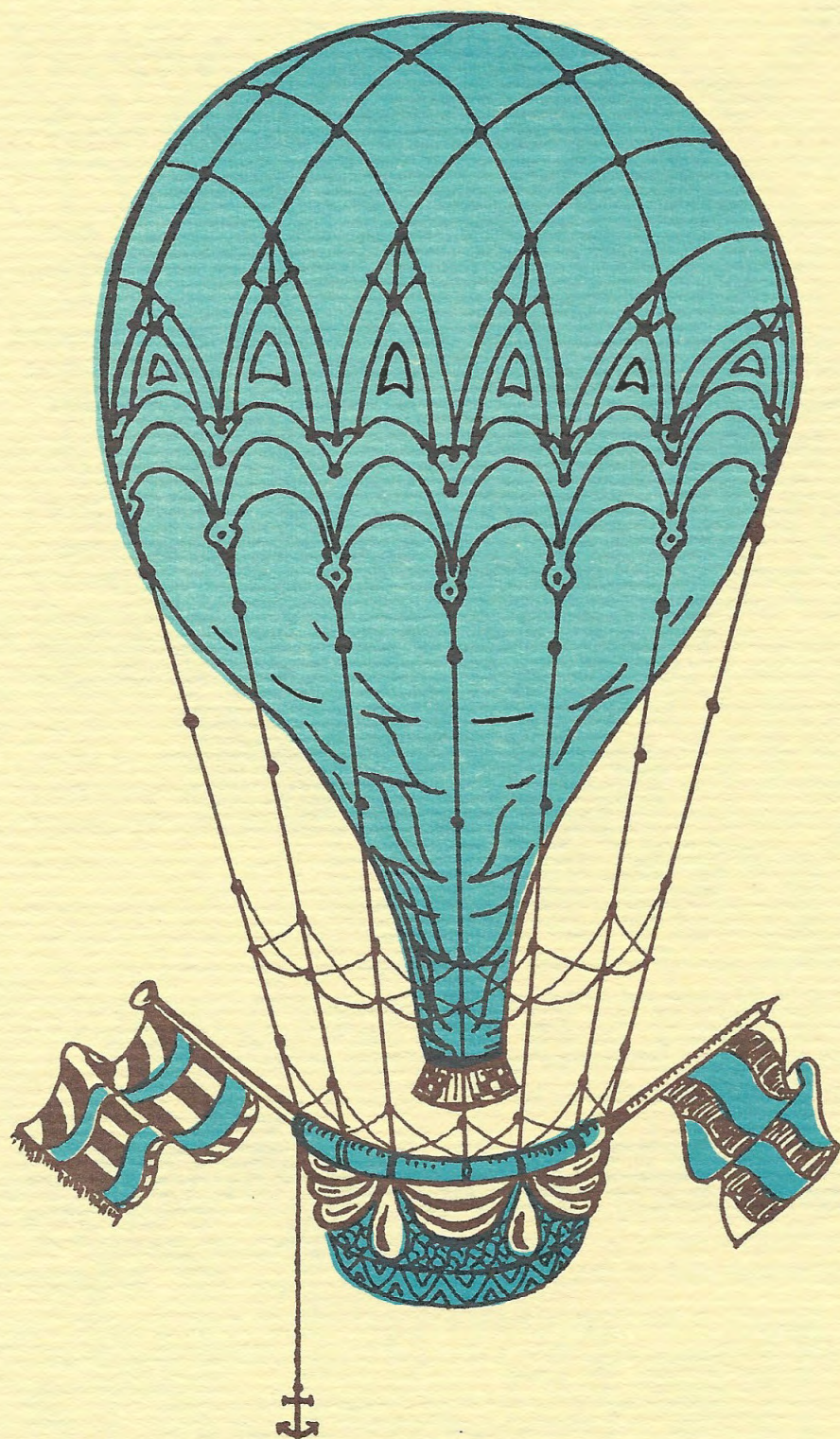


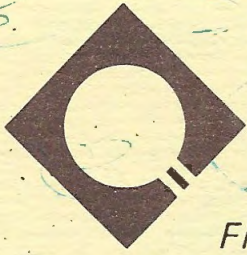


THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY



*A Penny  
for a Song.  
by John Whiting.*





# THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

*First Performance Monday 7th August 1978*

## ABOUT THE PLAY

*A Penny for A Song* was written in 1949/50 at what Whiting calls 'a time of great personal happiness.' He goes on to say: ".....it seemed natural that such a feeling should be expressed in a play. I was entirely uncritical of life as I was living it then, and the whole world seemed to be in love. War appeared the greatest absurdity."

The play was his second to be written, but his first to be performed. It was first produced in 1951, the year in which Whiting won the Festival of Britain Play Competition with *Saint's Day*. This play evoked the kind of adverse critical response that was to be the initial greeting for most of Whiting's work, although many distinguished actors and directors acclaimed it, speaking of it as 'moving, beautiful and fascinating.' (John Gielgud and Peggy Ashcroft) and recording their '.....deep faith in his talent, integrity and promise' (Tyrone Guthrie and Peter Brook).

*A Penny for A Song* had a similarly mixed reception. In a production by Peter Brook at the Haymarket it ran for only thirty-six performances. This lack of success was due in no small part to the unenthusiastic reaction of the critics.

For the play's revival at the Aldwych in 1962 Whiting re-wrote several sections. Whether this was a result of being worn down by adverse criticism to a state of indifferent non-resistance, or as a result of a changed and disillusioned view of life, it is impossible to say. Certainly, the second version has less charm, the delicate and gentle atmosphere of the garden being shattered by an aggressive and militantly left-wing Edward Sterne.

It is the earlier version that we are presenting at the Minack. This, despite the carpings of the critics, has remained popular with audiences, and ours is the third production here, the two previous productions being in 1962 and 1968 — you may see them commemorated on the gully seats.

The play takes its title from a poem by W. B. Yeats, as does *Marching Song*, one of Whiting's later plays.

All things can tempt me from this craft of verse:  
One time it was a woman's face, or worse —  
The seeming needs of my fool-driven land;  
Now nothing but comes readier to the hand  
Than this accustomed toil. When I was young,  
I had not given a penny for a song  
Did not the poet sing it with such airs  
That one believed he had a sword upstairs;  
Yet would be now, could I but have my wish.  
Colder and dumber and deafer than a fish.

When the play was performed in Germany, it was given a title which translated means 'When We Were Happy' — a title of which Whiting approved.



# A Penny for a Song

by John Whiting.

## Cast in order of speaking:

Sir Timothy Bellboys	— TED SCRIVENER
Humpage	— PHILLIP SHEAHAN
Samuel Breeze	— GRAHAM WILLIAMS
Lamprett Bellboys	— PHILIP REMINGTON
Hester Bellboys	— ROSEMARY PURKIS
Dorcas Bellboys	— JUDY EMMET
Hallam Matthews	— ALAN DRAKE
Edward Sterne	— TONY BARBER
Jonathan Watkins	— ALEXANDER BARBER
George Selincourt	— KEN RATCLIFFE
Pippin	— ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
James Giddy	— DEREK LONGHURST
Rufus Piggott	— SIMON SURTEES
Rev. Joseph Brotherhood	MICHAEL DAVIS

Directed by JOHN DAVEY  
Designed by ROGER HARRIS

The action takes place in the garden of Sir Timothy Bellboys' house on the coast of Dorset, on a summer's day in 1804.

ACT 1: Morning  
ACT 2: Later in the day

*THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL OF 20 MINUTES BETWEEN THE ACTS*

## HISTORICAL NOTE

In the summer of 1804 England was trembling in anticipation of a vast invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte, who was seen by many as the devil incarnate. Wild tales and rumours of his method of attack ran up and down the country, but the fact of impending invasion was widely accepted.

It is against this background that Whiting sets his play. He says: "The historical references in the play are actual. I have taken no liberties. It is rarely necessary to embroider the finer lunacies of the English at war."



## FOR THE QUESTORS LTD.

*TOUR MANAGER* : ROGER KELLY  
*PUBLICITY MANAGER* : JACKIE TODD

*HOUSE MANAGER* : ALAN GREENBERG  
*BOX OFFICE* : BETTY SCRIVENER

## FOR 'A PENNY FOR A SONG'

*Stage Manager* : TIM HAYWARD  
*Deputy Stage Manager* : LESLEY MONTGOMERY  
*Lighting* : MARTIN STONER  
*Sound* : BRIAN McLOUGHLIN  
*Wardrobe* : BARBARA HUTCHINS  
*assisted by* : ANNETTA BROUGHTON  
ADRIENNE HOWELL  
SUSAN SHEAHAN  
*Properties* : JANET WOOLBAR  
*Construction* : ROY BRIERLEY  
*Assistant Stage Managers* : ALEC ATCHISON, TINA HARRIS,  
SALLY HILL, JAN MORGAN  
*Stage and Tour Assistants* : LISTER BECK,  
ARTHUR BOYD TAYLOR,  
DIANA FARLEY,  
KATH HARRINGTON,  
JOHN HAZELL, DAVID HOWELL,  
CHRIS LEJEUNE,  
RICHARD LEWIS,  
BARBARA MORRIS,  
NINA ROBINSON,  
STEVE SHEDLOCK,  
MARK SINGLETON,  
CHRIS SYDENHAM,  
MARTIN UDALL,  
PETER WALTERS,  
ANNIE WILLIAMS,  
NEIL WILLIAMS

Members of the audience are respectfully requested not to leave litter at the theatre, nor to walk on the stage at any time.

All photographic rights are retained by the owners of the Minack Theatre. The taking of flash photographs during the performance is strictly forbidden.

*Next week at the Minack —*

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PLAYERS *present*  
SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE by John Arden



*About the author:*

**JOHN WHITING**

- 1917      born in Salisbury, the son of an army captain  
1930      sent to school in Taunton  
1934-6     at R.A.D.A.  
1936-8     series of acting jobs at Aberystwyth, Regent's Park and  
              Bideford, where he met Jackie Mawson, whom he later  
              married  
1939      joined anti-aircraft section of Royal Artillery  
1940      married Jackie Mawson  
1944      discharged because of sinus trouble  
1944-6     wrote unpublished novel 'Not a Foot of Land' and  
              various stories and plays for radio  
1947-51    in repertory at York and Scarborough  
1947      wrote radio play *Eye Witness* and started on *Saint's Day*  
1948-9     wrote *Conditions of Agreement*  
1949      finished *Saint's Day*; started *A Penny for A Song*  
1951      *A Penny for A Song* at the Haymarket  
              *Saint's Day* won Festival of Britain Play Competition  
1951-2     wrote *Marching Song*  
1953      wrote *The Gates of Summer*  
1954      *Marching Song* first produced  
1957      wrote one-act play *No Why*  
1960      Peter Hall commissioned *The Devils*  
1961      *The Devils* opened at the Aldwych — and was a success  
1962      cancer was diagnosed  
1963      died on June 16th, a week after entering hospital.

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# **AIR PRODUCTS**

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to British Industry*

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## THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Founded in 1929, the Questors has become one of the leading amateur theatres in Great Britain. The Questors has over 4,000 members, and owns a large and valuable site in West London.

On this site, in 1964, a completely new, flexible playhouse was opened in the presence of Her Majesty, the Queen Mother. The playhouse is adaptable to thrust, arena or proscenium arch staging and it was far advanced for its time. It has attracted interest from all corners of the world.

The Company is entirely amateur. It presents fourteen major productions each year in its main theatre, plus some eight Studio productions in its smaller workshop theatre. *A Penny for a Song* will be performed in the main playhouse during October 1978.

Apart from presenting a wide variety of plays, Questors houses visiting companies from home and abroad, mounts art exhibitions, runs several workshops and clubs for young people, as well as a two-year training course for actors, and occasionally tours productions in this country and overseas.

The Questors is a theatre club; therefore only members may purchase tickets at its London playhouse — but it's easy to join! The current annual subscription is £6.00. Students and those under 18 need only pay £2.50. All members are entitled to an average of ten free seats per season for Questors productions.

For further details, apply to:

The Administrator,  
The Questors Theatre,  
Mattock Lane,  
Ealing,  
London W5 5BQ

Telephone: 01-567 0011.

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### NEXT SEASON AT THE QUESTORS—

**September 9 - 16**

**THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE** by Frank Marcus.

**October 7 - 14**

**A PENNY FOR A SONG** by John Whiting.

**November 4 - 18**

**ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA** by William Shakespeare.

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