Shelagh Delaney began writing *A Taste of Honey* in 1956 when she was only seventeen, after seeing Terence Rattigan's *Variations on A Theme* and deciding that she could write a better play. She has written only one other play, *A Lion in Love*, which never achieved the success of *A Taste of Honey*. Being way ahead of its time in content and style it still, therefore, has much to offer audiences in 1980. Moreover, the timeless qualities of earthy comedy, sensitive pathos, and a striving for happiness have maintained their appeal.

Joan Littlewood took Shelagh Delaney's play and adapted it in her inimitable style for performance at her Theatre Workshop. It subsequently transferred to the Wyndham's Theatre in 1959. In the early 60's it was made into a very successful film with Dora Bryan, Rita Tushingham and Murray Melvin, who continued to play the part of Geoffrey which he had made very much his own when creating it in the original stage production. The film, however, loses the magical dream-like quality of the stage version by taking us into the real, outside world.

The play established Miss Delaney as the first 'angry young woman' of the theatre, and she found herself becoming something of a cult figure with young people — especially those girls who could identify with the emotionally-deprived Jo. The play itself caused a considerable stir at the time as a result of the controversial subject-matter and the nature of the characters.

In the original script the part of Peter was very different; Shelagh Delaney made him change character at the end and offer Jo and her baby a home with himself and Helen! In the final scene Jo was rushed off to hospital, and Geoff left holding the (plastic) baby. This, however, appears to be the only radical change which Joan Littlewood made, and it is quite obvious that the two central figures Jo and Helen are still the same restless and changeable characters — we are still left to wonder when (or if) they will ever grow up.

RITA WALLIS
A Taste of Honey
by SHELAGH DELANEY

CAST
in order of appearance

HELEN ............................................. RUTH LISTER
JO ................................................. JUDY EMMET
PETER ............................................. DAVID MORGAN
JIMMIE ........................................... LENNOX THOMAS
GEOFFREY ........................................ RAYMOND CHILDE

MUSICIANS
Saxophone (Helen) ................................. John Rolfe
Clarinet (Jo) ..................................... Larry Whelan
Trumpet (Peter) ................................... Michael Jackson
Bass guitar (Jimmie) .............................. Kim Wallis
Piano (Geoffrey) ................................... Gordon Peace

STREET CHARACTERS
John Griffin, Judith Jones, Patrick Larkin, Maureen Lewis,
Siobhan Nicholas
(Members of The Questors Student Group)

Directed by RITA WALLIS
Designed by JACKIE TYE

The play is set in Salford, Manchester, in 1960.

ACT ONE  Scene 1  The street and the flat. November.
         Scene 2  The same. December.

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

ACT TWO  Scene 1  The street and the flat. May.
         Scene 2  The flat. July.
         Scene 3  The flat. September.

The music is improvised around A Taste of Honey by Bobby Scott.
Lyrics by The Beatles from the song by Ric Marlow.
Stage Manager: Neil Fitzgerald  
Deputy Stage Manager: Simon Crombie  
Assistant Stage Managers: Alison, Campbell, Hillary Carr, Peter Dodd, Patricia McGrail, Sacha Mannin  
Wardrobe: Bridget Murdoch  
assisted by: Cathy Skinner  
Properties: Barbara Sexon  
assisted by: Cornelia Cardew  
Lighting Design: Richard Broadhurst  
assisted by: Lès Smith  
Sound Design: Sue Kendrick and Peter Kendrick  
Sound Operator: Barry Green  
Prompts: Sally Morris, Helen Sniadek

Our thanks to SAFEWAY STORES for their assistance in this production.

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**DISCUSSION**

Continuing our series of after-show discussions, that on *A Taste of Honey* will be held on TUESDAY, 23rd SEPTEMBER, at 7.45 p.m. in the Bernard Shaw Room. It will be led by

**CLIVE BARKER**

Clive Barker started in the theatre as an actor in Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, where Shelagh Delaney's work was first produced. He himself first directed her second play, *The Lion in Love*, when it was produced at the Royal Court Theatre. Since then his wide theatre experience has included a spell as Associate Director of the Northcott Theatre, Exeter, and as Lecturer in Drama at Birmingham University. He is currently Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Studies at the University of Warwick and is also Associate Editor of *Theatre Quarterly*. Few theatre people could be better qualified to lead a discussion on this particular play.

All are welcome  
Admission is free

**NOTE THE DATE**

TUESDAY, 23rd SEPTEMBER at 7.45 p.m.  
in the Bernard Shaw Room
Shelagh Delaney was born in 1939 in Salford, Lancashire, and brought up there in a working-class environment. She was a late developer at school and, unlike most of the 'angry young men' writing at the time, never went on to higher education. A Taste of Honey was first performed in May 1958, two years after John Osborne's Look Back in Anger, and when Shelagh Delaney was only nineteen. Graham Greene described the play as having 'all the freshness of Mr Osborne's Look Back in Anger and a greater maturity'. Joan Littlewood was responsible for the direction of the play which was performed by her Theatre Workshop at the Theatre Royal, Stratford, London. It was her decision to include the music (originally a jazz trio) and to make the musicians very much part of the play. Her style of direction was intended to make the audience feel involved in the production and many of the 'throw-away' lines were directed by the actors to the audience.

Shelagh Delaney's only other play, The Lion in Love, was first performed at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, and later at the Royal Court Theatre, London. In 1964 she published a collection of short stories entitled Sweetly Sings The Donkey.

Joan Littlewood (born 1914) was the founder and, until 1961, the manager of Theatre Workshop. After training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art she went to Manchester where, with her husband Ewan McColl, she founded an amateur group, Theatre Union, which soon made a name for itself with unconventional productions of experimental plays. On the outbreak of war the group dispersed, but came together again in 1945, and in 1953 took over the lease of the Theatre Royal at Stratford, London, where Joan Littlewood, working on a system entirely her own (although to some extent it may derive from both Stanislavsky and Brecht) was responsible for the success of a number of productions which were subsequently transferred to the West End, and also made the company famous on the Continent. Of these, perhaps the best known is Oh, What a Lovely War, first performed in 1963, and seen at The Questors in a very successful production in the Main Playhouse in 1978.

THE GIFT STALL
Meg Kirby's ever-popular Annual Gift Stall springs back into action during the run of Pygmalion (including extra opening hours of 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on the two Saturdays and 12 - 2 p.m. on the two Sundays). This year it expands to take over both Foyers - the Gift Stall in the Main Foyer and the Book Stall in the West Foyer. Wares change each night. All proceeds go to the Development Fund. Gifts for the Stall are still needed.

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