

THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY

John Whiting's

A PENNY FOR A SONG

Directed by Ken Spencer



IN THE OPEN AIR AT

MOTTISFONT ABBEY

THE AUTHOR

John Whiting died in June 1963; and the English theatre is coming to belatedly appreciate him after some years of neglect.

His career illustrates the problem of the commercial theatre in which luck is an important element, and where there is not much chance for a writer who does not either catch the fashion of the time, or adopt time honoured recipes for success: a completely undistinguished thriller or farce may run for years for no discoverable reason; and a new play of genuine quality may unexpectedly catch the public fancy and draw the fashionable crowds. But there is no assurance that an important new play will be presented at all, or will even be revived after a successful first run.

In 1961 the Royal Shakespeare Company commissioned John Whiting to write a new play for production at the Aldwych, and the result was "The Devils" - his first popular success.

In 1962 the RSC followed this with a revival of "Penny for a Song" which had first been performed at the Haymarket in 1951, when it only ran for a month.

Further commissions and a film script on the life of Sean O'Casey followed, but the development of his career as a fruitful dramatist was ended by cancer at the age of only 45.

THE CAST

<i>SIR TIMOTHY BELLBOYS</i>	<i>Graham Buchanan</i>
<i>HALLAM MATTHEWS</i>	<i>Jim Smith</i>
<i>EDWARD STERNE</i>	<i>Robbie Carnegie</i>
<i>A SMALL BOY</i>	<i>Dominic O'Farrell</i>
<i>LAMPRETT BELLBOYS</i>	<i>John Souter</i>
<i>DORCAS BELLBOYS</i>	<i>Eleanor Blott</i>
<i>GEORGE SELINCOURT</i>	<i>Peter Scrivener</i>
<i>WILLIAM HUMPAGE</i>	<i>David Bartlett</i>
<i>SAMUEL BREEZE</i>	<i>Albie Minns</i>
<i>JOSEPH BROTHERHOOD</i>	<i>Kevin Mitchell</i>
<i>JAMES GIDDY</i>	<i>Chris Bennett</i>
<i>RUFUS PIGGOTT</i>	<i>Graham Hill</i>
<i>HESTER BELLBOYS</i>	<i>Philippa Taylor</i>
<i>A MAIDSERVANT (PIPPIN)</i>	<i>Hazel Burrows</i>

The Scene is the garden befor Sir Timothy Bellboy's house in Dorset, on a summer's day in 1804.

ACT I - Morning

ACT II - Later in the day

There will be an interval of some 20 minutes or so between Acts I and II when the cellarium will be open for the sale of wine, soft drinks and refreshment.

THE COMPANY

DIRECTOR

Ken Spencer

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
PRODUCTION MANAGER
STAGE MANAGER

*Ron Tillyer
Michael Patterson
Belinda Drew*

DESIGNER
SCENE CONSTRUCTION

*Ken Spencer
John Riggs
Geoff Cook
Mike Johnson*

LIGHTING DESIGN
LIGHTING OPERATIONS

*Clive Weeks
Becky Hallam
Stuart Cross
Ali Mountfield*

SOUND

*Chris Jones
Pat Sawyer
Tony Lawther*

WARDROBE

*Angela Stansbridge
Mollie Manns*

PROPERTIES

*Rob Robinson
Ella Lockett*

WIG HIRE

Showbiz of Southampton

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Ron Tillyer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:- The Maskers Theatre Company gratefully acknowledge all those who have helped in this production - but most especially

John and Barbara Cavanagh of Mottisfont Abbey for their kind co-operation, assistance and forbearance.

Hilliers Nurseries of Ampfield for set dressing.

THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY

The Maskers celebrated their 21st birthday last year, and are now established as the leading amateur theatre group in the region. Based in Southampton, membership of the Company is open to all, without audition. If you would like to join - in any capacity - please contact our secretary Jan Ward at 123 Upper Shirley Avenue, Southampton SO1 5NL (Telephone 0703 782746) for an application form or further information.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

Our regular annual presentation at Mottisfont will be immediately followed by rehearsals for our next appearance at **The Plaza Theatre in Romsey** for a production of Alan Ayckbourn's brilliantly funny play "**SEASONS GREETINGS**" - commencing 3rd December. Box Office 0794 513193.

A special stage adaptation of Thomas Hardy's greatest story **TESS** of the D'Urbervilles by Maskers Director Michael Patterson then follows as **Southampton's Nuffield Theatre** for the week commencing 29th January 1991.

Box Office 0703 671771

*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 fish.*

W B Yeats