

British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

Half a Sixpence

Book by Beverly Cross; Music & Lyrics by David Heneker; New Version by Warner Brown
Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield, and touring
(2008)

If you are expecting a polemic about the importance of social issues to the working classes, the underlying themes of H.G.Wells' original comedies, you will be greatly surprised at the way these are handled. We have here a fast-moving well shaped interaction, certainly, between Kipps and his fellow drapers, moving into the upper classes with a bang, using his unexpected wealth to gain access to the best people, trying not to drop his haunches, learning to play cricket, and becoming engaged to an elegant but cold beauty. He rejects his fellow orphan, Ann and their shared pieces of a sixpence - 'What's a sixpence, Daddy?'

But it is carried out within a bright, musically exciting series of pieces, attractive, well sung, particularly by Gary Wilmot as Kipps, and his supporters, Chris Crosby, Tom Gilling and Samuel J. Holmes. We are told that there has been a blowing off of dust from the 40 year old musical, now smoothly rolling along with some new lyrics by Warner Brown, and excellent scenic changes, but retaining the compassion of the favourite pieces, *Half a Sixpence*, *If the Rain's Got to Fall* and the great rouser *Flash Bang Wallop*, which achieved an encore in the first half and a joyful farewell finale.

The cast work exceptionally well together, and while Gary Wilmot carries the songs along, the interaction of all the players weaves an affectionate story as background to the songs which are the mainstay of the process. All the singing is good without being great, as is the musical accompaniment, as well as the excellent deft touches of scenery which swiftly alter one's perspective in accord with the action.

Sit back and relax and enjoy the show - it is that kind of evening.

This production was reviewed by [Wayne Miller](#) in Sunderland and [John Johnson](#) in Northampton

Reviewer: [Philip Seager](#)