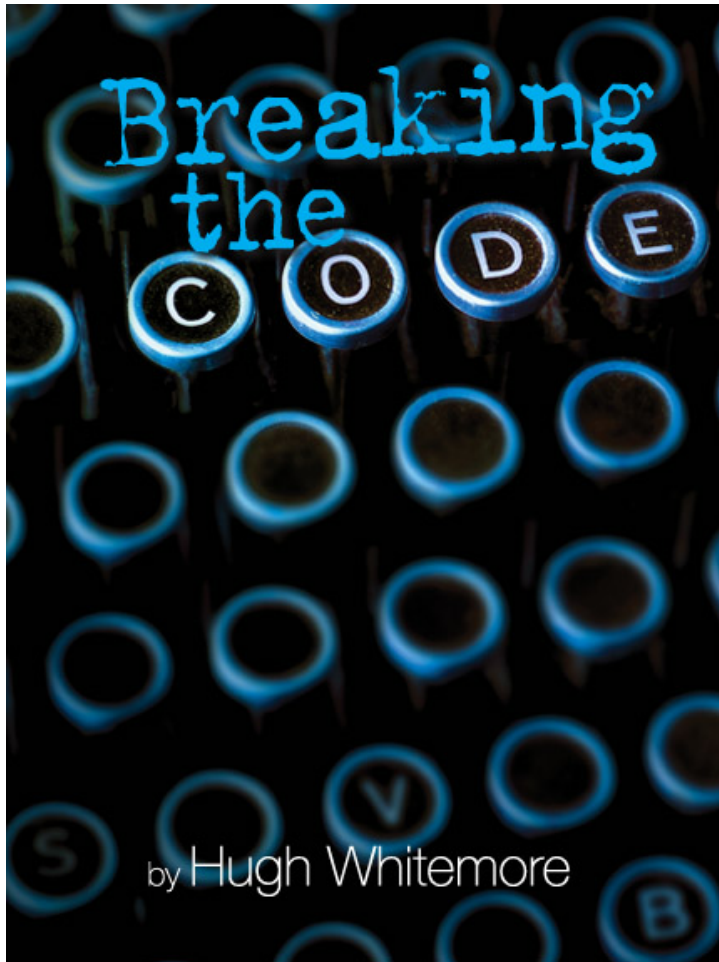


Jewel Theatre Audience Guide



directed by Kirsten Brandt

by Susan Myer Sifton, Dramaturg
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ABOUT THE PLAY

CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Mick Ross (Jeffrey (Geoff) Fiorito): Detective Sergeant, Wilmslow, England

Alan Turing (David Arrow): an English computer scientist, mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher and theoretical biologist

Christopher Morcom (Matthew Kropschot): a friend of Alan Turing's from Sherborne School

Sara Turing (Emilie Talbot): Alan Turing's mother

Ron Miller (Wallace Bruce): Alan Turing's lover

John Smith (David Bryant): an "authoritative man", possibly from the British Foreign Office

Dillwyn Knox (Rolf Saxon): a British classics scholar and papyrologist at King's College, Cambridge, codebreaker and the chief cryptographer at GC&CS, the British Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park

Pat Green (Maryssa Wanlass): friend of Alan Turing and fellow member of the code-breaking team at Bletchley Park

Nikos (Matthew Kropschot): Greek lover of Alan Turing

Please see separate biographies of each characters as addendums to the Guide

SYNOPSIS

A staged biography of Alan Turing, based on the book, *Alan Turing: The Enigma* by Andrew Hodges, first published in 1983, the play intersperses flashbacks, scenes and events from Alan's life with readings from his papers and letters, discussions of his ideas and theories, and court records from his trial for Gross Indecency.

SETTING

The scenes of the play take place in Alan's apartment in Wilmslow, England; the home of his youth in Guildford; Dillwyn Knox's office in Bletchley Park; the police station in Wilmslow; Sherborne School in Sherborne, Dorset; Alan's office at Bletchley; several places in Manchester; and Corfu, Greece.

TIME

The scene with Christopher takes place in 1929. The scenes taking place in Bletchley Park are in 1939 and 1943. The remainder of the scenes take place from Christmastime 1951 through the summer of 1954.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

HUGH WHITEMORE



Hugh Whitmore was born on July 16, 1936 in Royal Tunbridge Wells, United Kingdom (UK). He was the only son of Samuel Whitmore and his wife, the former Kathleen Fletcher. He was educated at King Edward VI School, Southampton, and the Royal Academy of the Dramatic Arts (RADA) in London. He would become one of the most prolific and distinguished playwrights in the UK, producing over 100 plays, films, television episodes and television series.

Whitmore turned down a scholarship to study literature at Cambridge and instead applied to RADA, where his hope was to prepare for an acting career. His audition piece was the familiar "What a piece of work is man" speech from *Hamlet*, only he gave it a unique spin. Applying his lifelong gift for impersonation, he delivered it in the style of Frankie Howerd, a popular comic actor at the time whose monologues were replete with verbal tics such as "Oooh, no missus" and "Titter ye not," as well as seemingly off-the-cuff (but carefully prepared) remarks and suggestive double-entendres, which he'd chide the audience for enjoying. RADA rewarded his effort with a scholarship.

He studied under the renown Peter Barkworth, who, according to Whitmore's obituary in the *Guardian*, advised him that although he might have a future in the theatre, it would probably not be on the boards. So, he translated his love for acting into creating strong characters for the stage, which in turn became star vehicles for actors. He often adapted other works for the stage and screen with the aim to "link emotion and experience in an historical context".

Breaking the Code is an outstanding example of his ability to condense the works of other writers: it is based on the 1983 book *Alan Turing: The Enigma* by Andrew Hodges, which has nearly 800 pages. To make Hodges' book into a two-Act play that lucidly presents such a range of complex mathematical and scientific thought but still delivers distinct, relatable characters, dramatic intensity, believable relationships, and a cohesive flow, is truly an accomplishment. Of writing *Breaking the Code* and its subject, Alan Turing, Whitmore told *The Times*, "I am neither mathematician nor homosexual," explaining that, regardless, he could always immerse himself in someone else's life, imagine their inner feelings and be truthful to the character. "Even if you adapt a book by Dickens," he said, "it's jolly hard work. At the end you believe you have really invented those characters. And if you don't, you've done it rather superficially. After they have watched an adaptation, the audience should be left with the same sort of feeling as if they had read the book."

Another characteristic of his writing was his ability to build a story. He also would imbue his dialogue with a rhythm and flow conducive to stage delivery, a seldom found "musicality" of phrasing noted by Timothy West and treasured by actors. His *Times* obituary tells of how his wife Rohan McCullough, whom he married in 1998, would hear him working at his keyboard, muttering aloud the lines he was giving his characters.

Despite his prodigious talent, he was unpretentious. He shied from publicity and granted few interviews; as a result, he went mostly unrecognized in his lifetime, though his circle of friends, which included Harold Pinter, Simon Gray, and Ronald Harwood—all well-known playwrights—sent him their scripts for his feedback. They, along Edward Fox and Brian Epstein, longtime friends from RADA, treasured his entertaining company, endless stories and abiding wit.

Besides adaptation, he was drawn to recent historical intrigues: disgraced political figures and forbidden affairs among the high-placed. "I love the research," Whitmore told *The Times*. "The treasure trove of history is so

marvelous. I find it absorbing, fascinating and enormous fun. It's always a nice idea to love what you do, isn't it?"

That love is evident in his body of work, a listing of which follows this biography. "He only stopped working when he couldn't," Rohan McCullough told *The Times*. She was his third wife. His two previous marriages ended in divorce: to the actress Jill Brooke, whom he married in 1961, and Sheila Lemon, a theatre agent, whom he married in 1976. He and Lemon had a son, Tom, who is now training to be an occupational therapist.

Later in life, Whitmore suffered a mild form of agoraphobia, shunning social gatherings and canceling engagements at the last minute. According to McCullough, "He never liked going anywhere really," said his wife. "Didn't like crossing the line out of the W8 postcode district. Going to SW15 was like going on safari."

Hugh Whitmore died of undisclosed causes on July 17, 2018, at the age of 82. His obituary in *The Stage* stated, "Despite his notable successes in TV and film, Whitmore's first love was always theatre. He told one interviewer: 'A theatre audience gives you that feeling of what you've written being a living, breathing thing.'"

HUGH WHITMORE WRITINGS

STAGE

Stevie: A Play from the Life and Work of Stevie Smith, first produced in Richmond, U.K., then Vaudeville Theatre, London, both 1977, later Manhattan Theatre Club, New York City, 1979, published by Samuel French, Inc., 1977, then Limelight, 1984.

Pack of Lies, first produced in Brighton, U.K., then Lyric Theatre, London, both 1983, later Royale Theatre, New York City, 1985, published by Amber Lane Press, 1983, then Applause, 1986.

Breaking the Code, Haymarket Theatre, London, 1986, then Eisenhower Theatre, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC, later Neil Simon Theatre, New York City, both 1987, published by Amber Lane Press, 1987.

Best of Friends, Apollo Theatre, London, 1988.

FILM

All Neat in Black Stockings (with Jane Gaskell), Warner Brothers/Pathe, 1969.
Decline and Fall ... of a Bird Watcher (also known as *Decline and Fall*) (with Ivan Foxwell and Alan Hackney), Twentieth Century-Fox, 1969.

Man at the Top (with John Junkin), Anglo-EMI, 1973.

All Creatures Great and Small, EMI, 1975.

The Blue Bird (with Alfred Hayes and Alexi Kapler), Twentieth Century-Fox, 1976.

Stevie, First Artists, 1978.

The Return of the Soldier, Twentieth Century-Fox, 1983.

84 Charing Cross Road, Columbia, 1987.

TELEVISION

MINI-SERIES

All for Love (with Douglas Livingstone, Alan Plater, and Ken Taylor), 1982-1983

Shoulder to Shoulder, BBC, then Masterpiece Theatre, PBS, 1975.

Moll Flanders, BBC, 1975, then PBS, 1980.

Rebecca, BBC, 1979, then Mystery!, PBS, 1980.

My Cousin Rachel, BBC, then Mystery!, PBS, 1985.

EPISODIC

"Act of Betrayal," *Play for Today*, BBC, 1971.

"Breeze Anstey," *Country Matters*, 1972.

"Horrible Conspiracies," *Elizabeth R*, published in *Elizabeth R*, Elek, 1972.

"Concealed Enemies," *American Playhouse*, PBS, 1984.

Also "The Wednesday Play", *Armchair Theatre*, and *Play of the Month*.

MOVIES

The Adventures of Don Quixote, CBS, 1973.

All Creatures Great and Small, NBC, 1975.

PLAYS

The Full Chatter, 1963.

Dan, Dan the Charity Man, 1965.

Angus Slowly Sinking, 1965.

The Regulator, 1965.

Application Form, 1965.

Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat, 1965.

Macready's Gala, 1966.

Final Demand, 1966.

Girl of My Dreams, 1966.

Frankenstein Mark II, 1966.

Amerika, 1966.

What's Wrong with Humpty Dumpty?, 1967.

Party Games, 1968.

The Last of the Big Spenders, 1968.

Hello, Good Evening, and Welcome, 1968.

Mr. Guppy's Tale, 1969.

Unexpectedly Vacant, 1970.

The King and His Keeper, 1970.

Killing Time, 1970.

Cider with Rosie, 1971.

An Object of Affection, 1971.

The Strange Shapes of Reality, 1972.

The Serpent and the Comforter, 1972.

At the Villa Pandora, 1972.

Eric, 1972.

Disappearing Trick, 1972.

Good at Games, 1972.

Bedtime, 1972.

Intruders, 1972.

Deliver Us from Evil, 1973.

The Pearcross Girls, 1973.

A Thinking Man as Hero, 1973.

Death Waltz, 1974.

Outrage, 1974.

David Copperfield, 1974.

Trilby, 1975.
Goodbye, 1975.
84 Charing Cross Road, 1975.
The Eleventh Hour (with Brian Clark and Clive Exton), 1975.
Censors (with David Edgar and Robert Muller), 1975.
Brensham People, 1976.
William Wilson, 1976.
Moths, 1977.
Exiles, 1977.
Dummy, 1977.
Mrs. Ainsworth, 1978.
Losing Her, 1978.
Contract, 1981.
A Dedicated Man, 1982.
I Remember Nelson, 1982.
A Bit of Singing and Dancing, 1982.
Lovers of Their Time, 1982.
Down at the Hydro, 1983.
The Boy in the Bush, 1984.

Adapted from *Film Reference: Theatre, Film, and Television Biographies*:
<http://www.filmreference.com/film/98/Hugh-Whitemore.html#ixzz5iUhhOe00>

RESOURCES

Please see separate resources document provided as an addendum to this Guide.