

March 31, 1977

# The Stage



Preparing to go for their 1977 season, which starts in Hackney in June, are the Bubble Theatre Company which Glen Walford has returned as artistic director. Her associate director is Adrian Harris. Howie Gibbins is administrator and the actors are John Ashton, Christopher Ettridge, James Griffin, Michael Barley, Jenny Howe, Tina Jones, Elaine Loudon, Ian Milne, Bill Monks, Wendy Morgan, Kate Saunders, Colin Simons, Christina Thymides and Hugh Trethowan. The productions are "The Beggar's Opera", "The Merry Wives of Windsor", "Star Boy" and "The Stupid Dragon" for young children, a variety of poetry readings and cabaret.

*Bubble Theatre Starts here!*

## BUBBLE THEATRE COMPANY *The Beggar's Opera*

BUBBLE Theatre's 1977 season opened with "The Beggar's Opera", an appropriate choice for a company actively engaged in fund-raising! Ian Milne has made a new orchestration of the Pepusch score which keeps the early 18th century flavour within a subtly updated harmonisation; it works very well with small playing forces — the players also leave their stands to take part in the action — and singers who are basically actors. Jeremy Barlow is the musical consultant for this show.

Glen Walford both directs and acts as the hard-bargaining Mrs. Trapes. The Peachums are Bill Monks and Christina Thymides with John Ashton as a dashing Macheath, Tina Jones as Polly and Kate Saunders as Lucy. Elaine Loudon is a chilling Jenny Diver. Both the acting and singing are very good, and Mike St

Ledger has touched these up with some pretty dance steps, which again mingle today and the 18th century. This is echoed visually with Elaine Garrard's costuming — her shapes are those of the original period and so is her use of colour but she deliberately uses denim and a King's Road ragbag of accessories to point the moral of the continued success of the piece — it is a show for all time.

As far as the spoken dialogue is concerned, it is a fairly full version with a nice added touch in that the deus ex machina who decrees the artificially happy ending is now a Man from the Ministry — of Arts, naturally. Dr Roy Shaw on the opening night looked as though he was happy to take the point!

Anne Morley-Priestman