

"I think you have unearthed a goldmine with this correspondence. Thank you for sharing the fruits of this friendship with me."

IRVING WARDLE, *Drama critic*

"David Wood chronicles his career with gallons of charm, flavouring of witty nostalgia and a headlong enthusiasm for the life he chose... I inhaled every last puff."

MICHAEL COVENEY, *Drama critic*

Between 1959 and 2005, David Wood ('the national children's dramatist') corresponded with his mentor, Frank Whitbourn, teacher, writer and theatre practitioner. **Frank Exchanges** opens with a letter from Whitbourn, praising a young Wood following a performance in one of his plays, and documents an almost fifty-year correspondence before Whitbourn's death in 2005. Wood sent Whitbourn the first draft of every play he wrote, and Whitbourn commented constructively and often came to see and 'review' the plays in production.

The letters chronicle Wood's development as a playwright, director and producer, and Whitbourn's memories of pre-war theatre-going and meeting Sybil Thorndike, Harcourt Williams and other eminent theatre folk. It is a reflection on the provision, content and status of theatre for young audiences, and ultimately a testimony to the man who Wood considered a friend and mentor.

NON-FICTION £12.99

ISBN 978-1-915603-87-6



www.bookguild.co.uk

PRINTED IN THE UK

Frank Exchanges



David Wood



"Wood's record of his fight for recognition of children's theatre and Whitbourn's vivid, personal response makes for richly enticing reading."

MICHAEL BILLINGTON, *Drama critic*



Frank Exchanges

Letters between
FRANK WHITBOURN,
theatre enthusiast, and
DAVID WOOD,
children's dramatist.

EDITED BY CHRIS ABBOTT