

The American Drama Group Europe presents
TNT Theatre Britain

OLIVER TWIST

by **Charles Dickens**

Director: **PAUL STEBBINGS**

Director's notes/ Description

OLIVER TWIST has been described as the first modern novel. It is one of the few novels whose characters have entered into modern myth- Fagin, Bill, Nancy and the Artful Dodger can claim to be some of the best known literary creations outside of Shakespeare. The enormous energy of these characters and the full blooded portrait of the first modern urban nightmare, London, make the story not only exciting and dramatic, but also truly contemporary.

The themes and social issues raised by Dickens are as relevant today as when it was first published over one hundred and fifty years ago. The central theme is the link between poverty and crime. Beyond that it explores the way society treats its weakest members.

Dickens' style is highly theatrical, and indeed he himself gave dramatic readings of much of OLIVER TWIST to huge audiences in Britain and the USA. Dickens' style switches between the almost documentary to the comic, from action packed narrative to emotional drama.

TNT sweep away the sentimentality of so many versions and present the story through the eyes of Fagin as he stands on the gallows awaiting execution. The story is his last attempt at justifying his life of crime. The audience too must answer if he was indeed at fault. Is he a criminal or a victim? Does he care for his boy thieves or does he exploit them?