The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill

Caryl Churchill’s plays are internationally performed, studied and acclaimed by practitioners, theatre scholars, critics and audiences alike. With fierce imagination the plays dramatize the anxieties and terrors of contemporary life. This Companion presents new scholarship on Churchill’s extraordinary and groundbreaking work. Chapters explore a cluster of major plays in relation to pressing social topics – ecological crisis, sexual politics, revolution, terror and selfhood – providing close readings of texts in their theatrical, theoretical and historical contexts. These topic-based essays are intercalated with other essays that delve into Churchill’s major collaborations, her performance innovations and her influences on a new generation of playwrights. Contributors explore Churchill’s career-long experimentation – her risk-taking that has reinvigorated the stage, both formally and politically. Providing a new critical platform for the study of a theatrical career that spans almost fifty years, the Companion pays fresh attention to Churchill’s poetic precision, dark wit and inexhaustible creativity.

Elaine Aston is Professor of Contemporary Performance at Lancaster University. Elin Diamond is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
CARYL CHURCHILL

EDITED BY
ELAINE ASTON AND ELIN DIAMOND
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ELIN DIAMOND is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University. She is the author of *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays On Feminism And Theater* (1997) and *Pinter’s Comic Play* (1985), and editor of *Performance And Cultural Politics* (1996). Her essays on performance and feminist theory have appeared in *Theatre Journal, ELH, Discourse, TDR, Modern Drama, Kenyon Review, Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, Art And Cinema, Maska*, and in anthologies in the USA, UK, France, South Korea and India. She is currently at work on a new book on Modernism and performance.

R. DARREN GOBERT is Associate Professor of English and Theatre Studies at York University, Toronto, where he specializes in comparative Western drama (especially modern and contemporary), and dramatic and performance theory. He has published articles on Bertolt Brecht, Michel Marc Bouchard, the classicist Jacob Bernays and Molière. He is on the Editorial Advisory Board, and is Book Review Editor, of *Modern Drama*. His special issue of that journal, on contemporary playwriting from the UK, appeared in fall 2007. Also a theatre practitioner, he has directed plays by, among others, Albee, Beckett and Chekhov.

JEAN E. HOWARD is George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University and Chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature. At
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Columbia she has also served as Chair of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and as Vice Provost for Diversity. She is one of the four editors of The Norton Shakespeare. Her books include Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration: Stagecraft and Audience Response, The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England, Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare’s English Histories (with Phyllis Rackin), and Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy 1599–1642. In November of 2008 the latter won the Bernard Hewitt Award for the Year’s Outstanding Book of Theater History.

MARY LUCKHURST is Chair of Modern Drama and the co-founder of the new Department of Theatre, Film and TV at the University of York. Her published works include Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660–2000 (2005), Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre (2006), A Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama (2006), and A Concise Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Drama (2007). She has published many essays on contemporary dramatists such as Crimp, Kane, McDonagh and Pinter, and is currently working on a monograph entitled ‘Death and Terror on the Modern Stage’. She is also a director and most recently staged Churchill’s Far Away and Mad Forest at the York Theatre Royal. In 2006 she was made a National Teaching Fellow by the Higher Education Academy for her outstanding contributions to teaching and scholarship in the fields of drama and of actor and director training.

SHEILA RABILLARD is Associate Professor of English, University of Victoria, Canada. She has edited a collection of essays on Churchill and published articles on modern drama and performance in a number of scholarly journals including Theatre Journal, Modern Drama, Theater, Essays in Theatre, Criticism, Journal of American Drama and Theatre, Cycnos and Australasian Drama Studies.

DAN REBELLATO is Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has published widely on British theatre including 1956 and All That (1999), and essays on Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, David Greig, Caryl Churchill, David Hare, theatrical violence, the state of the nation play, Terence Rattigan and Noel Coward. Theatre & Globalization (2009) appears in the ‘Theatre&’ series that he is co-editing with Jen Harvie. He is a contributing editor to New Theatre Quarterly and an associate editor of Contemporary Theatre Review, for whom he has edited two special issues, on Theatre and Globalization and on the Broadway Musical. He is also a playwright whose plays have been performed in Britain, Europe and America and include Showstopper, Erskine May, Here’s What I Did With My Body One Day, Outright Terror Bold and Brilliant, A Modest Adjustment and Futurology.

JANELLE REINELT is Professor of Theatre and Performance at University of Warwick in the UK. She was President of the International Federation for Theatre Research (2004–2007) and former Vice President for Research and Publications.

Libby Worth is a Senior Lecturer in Theatre Practice at Royal Holloway, University of London. She trained in dance with San Francisco-based artist Anna Halprin and co-authored a book with Helen Poynor on Halprin’s work for the Routledge Performance Practitioner series. She has published articles in Contemporary Theatre Review on Halprin and Australian writer/director Jenny Kemp and for Arts Based Educational Research on the making of a physical theatre performance concerning young male suicide. Her current research focuses on stage directions for movement in work by Peter Handke, Caryl Churchill, David Lan and Jenny Kemp.
NOTE ON EDITIONS

The majority of Caryl Churchill’s plays have been anthologized either by Methuen or Nick Hern Books. For ease of reference, chapters in the Companion cite the collected editions of Churchill’s work. Exceptions are where a single play edition is used to refer to notes or illustrations that do not appear in the main published collections. Full details of all editions can be found in the Select bibliography.
CHRONOLOGY

1938 Caryl Churchill born in London.

1948 Family move out to Montreal, Canada. Educated at Trafalgar School for Girls in Montreal.

1957–60 Studies English Language and Literature at Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford. Student production of *Downstairs*, a one-act play (1958) which went on to the Sunday Times / National Union of Students Drama Festival (1959).

1960 *Having a Wonderful Time* performed at the amateur Questors Theatre, London.

1961 Student radio production of *You’ve No Need to Be Frightened*. Marriage to barrister David Harter.


1963–9 Birth of three sons.

1967 *Lovesick* broadcast on BBC Radio 3, directed by John Tydeman.

1968 *Identical Twins* broadcast on BBC Radio 3, directed by John Tydeman.

1971 *Abortive* and *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* broadcast on BBC Radio 3, both directed by John Tydeman.

1972 Writes *The Hospital at the Time of the Revolution* – unperformed stage play.
Chronology

Schreber’s Nervous Illness and Henry’s Past broadcast on BBC Radio 3, both directed by John Tydeman.

Schreber’s Nervous Illness performed at King’s Head Theatre, London (one-man show).

The Judge’s Wife broadcast on BBC 2 television, directed by James Fearman.

First professional stage production, Owners, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, London, directed by Nicolas Wright.

1973

Perfect Happiness broadcast on BBC Radio 3, directed by John Tydeman.

Owners performed in Mercer-Shaw Theatre, New York.

1974

Turkish Delight broadcast on BBC 2 television, directed by Herbert Wise.

1974–5

Writer in Residence, Royal Court Theatre.

1975

Objections to Sex and Violence, Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, directed by John Tydeman.

Moving Clocks Go Slow, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, directed by John Ashford.

Perfect Happiness, stage performance at Soho Poly, London, directed by Suzanna Capon.

Save it for the Minister, with Mary O’Malley and Cherry Potter, broadcast on BBC 2 television.

1976

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Joint Stock, Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh; on tour, and Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, directed by Max Stafford-Clark.

Vinegar Tom, Monstrous Regiment, Humberside Theatre, Hull; on tour and ICA and Half Moon theatres, London, directed by Pam Brighton.

1977

Traps, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, directed by John Ashford.

1977–8

Floorshow, Monstrous Regiment, cabaret, on tour, scripted with Bryony Lavery, Micheline Wandor and David Bradford.

1978

The After-Dinner Joke broadcast on BBC 1 television, directed by Colin Bucksey.

The Legion Hall Bombing broadcast on BBC 1 television in censored version, directed by Roland Joffé.

Writes unperformed stage play Seagulls.
Chronology

1979  
Cloud Nine, Joint Stock, Dartington College of Arts; on tour and Royal Court Theatre, directed by Max Stafford-Clark.

1980  
Three More Sleepless Nights, Soho Poly and Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, directed by Les Waters.  
Cloud Nine revival at Royal Court, co-directed by Max Stafford-Clark and Les Waters.

1981  
Cloud Nine, American premiere at Lucille Lortel Theatre, New York, directed by Tommy Tune.

1982  
Crimes broadcast on BBC 1 television, directed by Stuart Burge.  
Top Girls, Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, directed by Max Stafford-Clark. Transfers to the Joseph Papp Public Theater, New York.  
Cloud Nine wins Obie award.

1983  
Fen, Joint Stock, University of Essex, Colchester; Almeida and Royal Court Theatres, London, directed by Les Waters. New York transfer to Public Theater.  
Top Girls wins Obie Award.

1984  
Softcops (written in 1978) staged by the RSC at the Barbican Pit, London, directed by Howard Davies.  
Midday Sun (with Geraldine Pilgrim and Peter Brooks) ICA, London, directed by John Ashford.  
Fen wins Susan Smith Blackburn Award.

1985  
First collection of plays published by Methuen.

1986  
A Mouthful of Birds, with David Lan, Joint Stock, Birmingham Repertory Theatre; on tour, and Royal Court Theatre, directed by Ian Spink (choreography) and Les Waters.

1987  
Serious Money, Royal Court Theatre, directed by Max Stafford-Clark. London West End transfer to Wyndham’s and New York transfer to Public Theater.  
Serious Money wins several awards including an Obie Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Award, Olivier Award for Best Play of 1987, Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy and Best Play Award from Plays and Players.

1988  
Fugue, play with dance, broadcast on Channel 4 television, choreography and direction by Ian Spink.  
Omnibus on Caryl Churchill broadcast on BBC 1 television.
CHRONOLOGY

Serious Money, Broadway premiere at Royale Theatre, New York.

1989

Icecream, Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, directed by Max Stafford-Clark.
Hot Fudge, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, performance reading.

1990

Mad Forest, project with Central School of Speech and Drama, directed by Mark Wing-Davey, staged at Central; National Theatre of Romania, Bucharest, and Royal Court Theatre. Icecream and Hot Fudge in New York production at the Public Theatre, directed by Les Waters.
Second collection of plays published by Methuen.
Collection of Churchill: Shorts published by Nick Hern.

1991

Lives of the Great Poisoners, in collaboration with Orlando Gough (composer) and Ian Spink (choreography/director) at the Arnolfini, Bristol; on tour, and Riverside Studios, London, directed by James Macdonald.
Top Girls broadcast on BBC television.

1994

The Skriker, Cottesloe, Royal National Theatre, London, movement by Ian Spink and direction by Les Waters.
Thyestes (translation), Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, directed by James Macdonald.

1996

The Skriker, American premiere at the Public Theater, movement by Sara Rudner and direction by Mark Wing-Davey.

1997

Hotel, Second Stride, Schauspielhaus, Hanover, Germany; on tour, including to The Place, London, with music by Orlando Gough and direction/choreography by Ian Spink.
This is a Chair, Royal Court Theatre at the Duke of York’s, London, directed by Stephen Daldry.
Blue Heart, Out of Joint and the Royal Court Theatre at the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds; Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, and Royal Court at the Duke of York’s, directed by Max Stafford-Clark.

1998

Third collection of plays published by Nick Hern.

1999

New York premiere of Blue Heart at Brooklyn Academy of Music.

2000

Far Away, Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, directed by Stephen Daldry.
### Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>West End transfer of <em>Far Away</em> to Albery Theatre, London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td><strong>A Number</strong>, Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, directed by Stephen Daldry, accompanied by a season of ‘Caryl Churchill Events’: rehearsed readings of select early works – <em>Seagulls</em>, <em>Three More Sleepless Nights</em>, <em>Moving Clocks Go Slow</em> and <em>Owners</em> – and productions without décor of <em>This is a Chair</em>, <em>Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen</em> and <em>Identical Twins</em>. <em>A Number</em> wins Evening Standard Award for Best New Play. American premiere of <em>Far Away</em>, New York Theatre Workshop, directed by Stephen Daldry. ‘She Bit her Tongue’ (text) for <em>Plants and Ghosts</em>, Siobhan Davies Dance Company, premiered in USAF Air Force Base, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire. Text recorded and spoken by Linda Bassett.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>‘Iraqdoc’, contribution to <em>War Correspondence</em>, Royal Court Theatre. West End transfer of <em>A Number</em> to Albery Theatre.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td><strong>A Dream Play</strong> (a version), Cottesloe, Royal National Theatre, directed by Katie Mitchell.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td><strong>Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?</strong>, Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, directed by James Macdonald.<em>We Turned on the Light</em> (text), composer Orlando Gough, <em>The Shout</em> (choir), BBC proms.</td>
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| 2008 | Translates *Bliss (Félicité)* by Olivier Choinière, performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. *Top Girls*, Broadway premiere, Manhattan Theater Club at the Biltmore Theater, directed by James Macdonald. A series of one-off readings at the Royal Court Theatre, London, directed by ten playwrights to celebrate Caryl Churchill’s seventieth birthday: *Owners* (directed by April de Angelis); *Light Shining* (directed by Mark Ravenhill); *Vinegar Tom* (directed by Winsome Pinnock); *Top Girls* (directed by Nicholas Wright); *Three More Sleepless Nights* (directed by debbie tucker green); *Icecream* (directed by Wallace Shawn); *The Skriker* (directed by Zinnie Harris); *Blue Heart* (directed by Marius von...
Mayenburg); Far Away (directed by Martin Crimp) and A Number (directed by Joe Penhall).

Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?, American premiere at The Public Theater, New York, directed by James Macdonald.

Fourth collection of plays published by Nick Hern.

A Number filmed for television by HBO and BBC, directed by James Macdonald.

2009

Seven Jewish Children – A Play for Gaza, Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, directed by Dominic Cooke.