Harold Pinter was one of the world’s leading and most controversial writers, and his impact and influence continues to grow. This Companion examines the wide range of Pinter’s work – his writing for theatre, radio, television and screen, and also his highly successful work as a director and actor. Substantially updated and revised, this second edition covers the many developments in Pinter’s career since the publication of the first edition, including his Nobel Prize for Literature win in 2005, his appearance in Samuel Beckett’s play Krapp’s Last Tape and recent productions of his plays. Containing essays written by both academics and also leading practitioners, the volume places Pinter’s writing within the critical and theatrical context of his time and considers its reception worldwide. Including three new essays, new production photographs, five updated and revised chapters and an extended chronology, the Companion provides fresh perspectives on Pinter’s work.

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

HAROLD PINTER

Second Edition

EDITED BY

PETER RABY

Homerton College, Cambridge
## CONTENTS

[List of illustrations] page vii  
[Notes on contributors] ix  
[Chronology] xii  
[Note on the text] xx  

**Introduction**

PETER RABY

1 Part I: Text and Context

1 Pinter, politics and postmodernism (I)

AUSTIN QUIGLEY

2 Pinter and the 1950s

JOHN STOKES

3 The sacred joke: comedy and politics in Pinter’s early plays

FRANCESCA COPPA

4 Tales of the city: some places and voices in Pinter’s plays

PETER RABY

5 Pinter and twentieth-century drama

RONALD KNOWLES

6 Harold Pinter, screenwriter: an overview

STEVEN H. GALE

7 Speaking out: Harold Pinter and freedom of expression

MARY LUCKHURST
## CONTENTS

### Part II: Pinter and Performance

8  Body language in Pinter’s plays  
   **Richard Allen Cave**  
   123

9  Harold Pinter as director  
   **Michael Pennington**  
   146

10  Directing the plays of Harold Pinter  
    **Peter Hall**  
    160

11  Pinter in Russia  
    **Charles Evans**  
    170

12  Pinter and Ireland  
    **Anthony Roche**  
    195

13  Pinter’s late tapes  
    **John Stokes**  
    216

### Part III: Reactions to Pinter

14  Pinter’s sexual politics  
    **Drew Milne**  
    233

15  Pinter and the critics  
    **Yael Zarhy-Levo**  
    249

16  Pinter as celebrity  
    **Harry Derbyshire**  
    266

17  Pinter, politics and postmodernism (2)  
    **Mireia Aragay**  
    283

18  The Pinter paradigm: Pinter’s influence on contemporary playwriting  
    **Steve Waters**  
    297

19  Afterword: Harold Pinter and cricket  
    **John Fowles**  
    310

---

**Bibliography**  
312

**Main Index**  
316

**Works Index**  
322
ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Lindsay Duncan and Steven Pacey in *The Room*, directed by Harold Pinter, The Almeida Theatre Company, 2000 (photo: Geraint Lewis)  

2. Keith Allen, Lia Williams, Lindsay Duncan, Andy de la Tour, Susan Wooldridge and Steven Pacey in *Celebration*, directed by Harold Pinter, The Almeida Theatre Company, 2000 (photo: Geraint Lewis)  

3. Dirk Bogarde and James Fox in *The Servant* (reproduced courtesy of Avco Embassy)  

4. Finbar Lynch and Paul Ritter in *The Hothouse*, directed by Ian Rickson, designed by Hildegard Bechtler, Royal National Theatre, 2007 (photo: Catherine Ashmore)  

5. Harold Pinter as Harry in the Gate Theatre’s production of *The Collection*, part of the Pinter Festival at the Gate, April 1997 (photo: Tom Lawlor)  


7. Michael Pennington and Daniel Massey in *Taking Sides*, directed by Harold Pinter, the Minerva Studio Theatre, 1995 (photo: Ivan Kyncl)  

8. Michael Pennington and Daniel Massey in *Taking Sides*, directed by Harold Pinter, Criterion Theatre, 1995 (photo: Ivan Kyncl)  


10. Set of *The Caretaker* at the (then) Krasnaya Presnya Theatre, November 1994 (photo: Charles Evans)
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

11. Ian Holm as Duff and Penelope Wilton as Beth in the Gate Theatre’s production of Landscape, part of the Pinter Festival at the Gate, May 1994 (photo: Tom Lawlor) 203
12. The full cast of the Plays, Poetry and Prose readings with Harold Pinter on stage at the Gate Theatre as part of the Pinter75 Celebration 2005 (photo: Shane McCarthy) 204
13. Stephen Brennan, Janie Dee and Donna Dent in Old Times at the Gate Theatre as part of the Pinter75 Celebration 2005 (photo: Shane McCarthy) 205
14. Harold Pinter in Samuel Beckett’s play Krapp’s Last Tape, directed by Ian Rickson, Upstairs Theatre, Royal Court, 2006 © John Haynes /Lebrecht Music & Arts 218
15. Dervla Kirwan and Sam West in Betrayal, Donmar Warehouse, 2007 (photo: Geraint Lewis) 299
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MIREIA ARAGAY is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Barcelona. She has written on contemporary English and Irish drama, and on film adaptation. She is editor of *Books in Motion: Adaptations, Intertextuality, Authorship* (2005) and co-editor of *British Theatre of the 1990s: Interviews with Directors, Playwrights, Critics and Academics* (2007). In 1996, her Spanish translation of *One for the Road, La última copa*, was awarded the 10th National Translation Prize by the Asociación Española de Estudios Anglonorteamericanos.

RICHARD ALLEN CAVE is Professor of Drama and Theatre Arts at Royal Holloway in the University of London. He has written extensively on Renaissance, nineteenth-century and modern theatre, and in particular on Anglo-Irish drama. His most recent publication is *W. B. Yeats: ‘The King of the Great Clock Tower’ and ‘A Full Moon in March’: Manuscript Materials* (2007). As a director he has staged productions of plays by Lady Gregory, Yeats and Brian Friel, and is joint artistic director of Border Crossings Theatre Company.

FRANCESCA COPPA is Associate Professor of English and Director of Film Studies at Muhlenberg College, where she specialises in British drama and cultural studies. She has edited and written critical introductions for three volumes of Joe Orton’s work, and is the editor of *Joe Orton: A Casebook* (2003).

HARRY DERBYSHIRE is Programme Leader for English at the University of Greenwich. Recent articles include ‘Stamping Ground: London as Disputed Territory in the Plays of Harold Pinter’ in *Literary London* and ‘Roy Williams: Representing Multicultural Britain in Fallout’ in *Modern Drama*. As company writer with the theatre company sob, he has scripted several shows at Battersea Arts Centre.

CHARLES EVANS is a retired naval officer, and lecturer at the Service colleges, with an honorary doctorate from Moscow University. He has held research fellowships from the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust, and has travelled widely in Russia. In 2005 he was awarded a
Hawthornden Fellowship. He continues to write on Russian life and culture, and is also a playwright and poet.

John Fowles’s novels include The Collector (1963), The Magus (1966) and Daniel Martin (1977). The French Lieutenant’s Woman (1969) was filmed in a screenplay by Pinter in 1981. He was in addition a very keen natural historian, and interested in all aspects of local history.

Steven H. Gale holds the University Endowed Chair of the Humanities at Kentucky State University. He was the founding President of the Harold Pinter Society, the founding co-editor of The Harold Pinter Review: Annual Essays and the author or editor of a number of studies of Pinter, including Butter’s Going Up: An Analysis of Harold Pinter’s Work, and, most recently, Sharp Cut: Harold Pinter’s Screenplays and the Artistic Process (2003).

Sir Peter Hall, formerly the Artistic Director of the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, has directed many of Pinter’s plays, and drew on this first-hand knowledge in his discussion of Pinter in his Clark Lectures of 2000, later published as Exposed by the Mask. His most recent Pinter production was Old Times (2007).

Ronald Knowles is a former Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Reading University. He is associate editor of The Harold Pinter Review, and the author of two books and many articles on Pinter. His most recent publication, as editor, is Henry VI, Part II (The Arden Shakespeare, 1999).

Mary Luckhurst is Professor of Modern Drama and the co-founder of the new Department of Theatre, Film and Television at the University of York. Her books include Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre (2006) and the Blackwell’s Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama. In 2006 she was made a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Drew Milne is the Judith E. Wilson Fellow in Drama and Poetry in the English Faculty at the University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Trinity Hall. He co-edited Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader (1996) with Terry Eagleton, and edits the journal Parataxis: Modernism and Modern Writing. Among his recent books of poetry are Mars Disarmed (2002) and Go Figure (2003). His publications in 2008 are Reading Marxist Literary Theory and a collection of essays, Agoraphobic Poetics.

Michael Pennington has been a leading actor for thirty years, with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal National Theatre, on tour with his own English Shakespeare Company and in London’s West End. His publications include The Story of the Wars of the Roses, User’s Guides to Hamlet (1996) and Twelfth Night (2000), and Chekhov in Mind (2001).

Austin Quigley is the Brander Matthews Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University, where he has also been serving as...
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS


ANTHONY ROCHE is Associate Professor in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College, Dublin. He has written extensively on Irish theatre of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He contributed the chapter ‘Contemporary Irish Drama: 1940–2000’ to the Cambridge History of Irish Literature (2006) and edited the Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel (2006). A revised edition of Contemporary Irish Drama will be published in 2008.

JOHN STOKES is Professor in the Department of English at King’s College London. His most recent publications include The French Actress and her English Audience (2005) and, co-edited with Maggie Gale, The Cambridge Companion to the Actress (2007). He reviews theatre regularly for The Times Literary Supplement.

STEVE WATERS is a playwright whose plays include World Music, The Unthinkable, and Fast Labour (Hampstead Theatre, 2008), all published by Nick Hern Books Ltd. He is the convenor of the M.Phil(B) in Playwriting Studies at the University of Birmingham.

YAEEL ZARHY-LEVO is a senior lecturer in the Department of Literature at Tel Aviv University. She is the author of The Theatrical Critic as Cultural Agent: Constructing Pinter, Orton and Stoppard as Absurdist Playwrights (2001), and her most recent book is The Making of Theatrical Reputations: Studies from the Modern London Theatre (2008).
1930 (10 October) Harold Pinter born at 19 Thistlewaite Road in Hackney, north London, the son of Jack and Frances Pinter.
1939 Evacuated to Caerhays, near Mevagissey, Cornwall, the first of a number of wartime stays outside London.
1944 Gains a place at Hackney Downs Grammar School, where he is particularly influenced by an excellent English teacher, Joe Brearley.
1947 Plays Macbeth in a school production, reviewed in the News Chronicle.
1951 (January to July) Spends two terms at Central School of Speech and Drama. (August) Is engaged by Anew McMaster for a six-month tour playing Shakespeare and other classic drama in Ireland.
1952 In McMaster’s company, with Pauline Flanagan and Barry Foster. Continues to write poetry. Discovers Beckett.
1953 Joins Donald Wolfit’s company. Works on his novel The Dwarfs.
1954 Changes stage name to David Baron. Joins Huddersfield Repertory company for the winter.
1956 Acting in Bournemouth, with Vivien Merchant.
(14 September) Marries Vivien Merchant. After a honeymoon in Cornwall, they join the repertory company in Torquay.

1957

Acting in Torquay, Birmingham, Palmer’s Green, Worthing.

(15 May) *The Room*, produced at Bristol University Drama Department.

(December) New production of *The Room* entered for *Sunday Times* student drama competition, praised by Harold Hobson.

1958


1959

(January) Directs *The Birthday Party* at Birmingham.


1960


1961


1962


1963

(28 March) *The Lover*, television (Associated Rediffusion) (awarded the Prix Italia for Television Drama).
(18 September) Directs The Lover and The Dwarfs, Arts Theatre Club, London.

The Caretaker, film, directed by Clive Donner (Berlin Film Festival Silver Bear) (released, 1964, in the United States as The Guest).

The Servant, film, directed by Joseph Losey.

1964 (April/May) That’s Your Trouble, That’s All, Applicant, Interview and Dialogue for Three, radio (BBC Third Programme).

The Pumpkin Eater, film, directed by Jack Clayton.

Plays Garcin in In Camera, by Jean-Paul Sartre.


(3 June) The Homecoming, Royal Shakespeare Company, Aldwych Theatre.

1966 Created Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

(25 September) Night School, radio (BBC Third Programme).

The Quiller Memorandum, film, directed by Michael Anderson.

1967 (3 January) The Homecoming, Music Box, New York.

(20 February) The Basement, television (BBC), with Pinter as Stott.

Accident, film, directed by Joseph Losey.

The Homecoming receives New York Drama Critics Award.

1968 (25 April) Landscape, radio, BBC, after Pinter refuses to amend the text at the Lord Chamberlain’s request.


The Birthday Party, film, directed by William Friedkin.


(9 April) Night in Revue Mixed Doubles, Comedy Theatre.

Plays Lenny in The Homecoming, Watford.


(17 September) Tea Party and The Basement, Duchess Theatre, with Pinter as Stott.

Directs Exiles, by James Joyce, Mermaid Theatre.

Awarded the German Shakespeare Prize.

Filming The Go-Between, film, directed by Joseph Losey.

1971 (May) The Go-Between awarded the Palme d’Or at Cannes Film Festival.

(1 June) Old Times, Royal Shakespeare Company, Aldwych Theatre.


1972 Works on The Proust Screenplay.

1973 (13 April) Monologue, television (BBC).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td><em>The Last Tycoon</em>, film, directed by Elia Kazan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>(23 April) <em>No Man’s Land</em>, Royal National Theatre at the Old Vic Theatre, transfers (15 July) to Wyndham’s Theatre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>(22 October) <em>Old Times</em>, television (BBC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Directs <em>Otherwise Engaged</em>, by Simon Gray, Queen’s Theatre, and later in New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td><em>The Homecoming</em> (film), released in UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Directs <em>Quartermaine’s Terms</em>, by Simon Gray, Queen’s Theatre, London.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1986  (6 March) *Victoria Station* (BBC radio). Directs *Circe and Bravo*, by Donald Freed, Hampstead Theatre Club, Wyndham’s Theatre.


CHRONOLOGY

First Pinter Festival, Gate Theatre, Dublin (Betrayal, The Dumb Waiter, Old Times, One for the Road, Moonlight and Landscape).
Plays Roote in The Hothouse, Chichester Festival and Comedy Theatre.
(21 October) Directs Landscape, television (BBC).
Awarded David Cohen British Literature Prize, for lifetime’s achievement in literature.
(31 December) The Proust Screenplay (BBC Radio 3).

1996 Directs Twelve Angry Men, by Reginald Rose, Bristol Old Vic and Comedy Theatre.
(12 September) Directs Ashes to Ashes, Royal Court Theatre at the Ambassadors Theatre, later seen in Palermo and Paris.
Receives Laurence Olivier award for lifetime’s achievement in theatre.

Second Pinter Festival, Gate Theatre, Dublin (The Collection, Ashes to Ashes, A Kind of Alaska, No Man’s Land – plays Harry in The Collection, directs Ashes to Ashes).
Plays John Smith in Breaking the Code, by Hugh Whitemore, television (BBC).
Directs Life Support, by Simon Gray, Aldwych Theatre.

1998 (13 May) 3 by Harold Pinter, Donmar Warehouse (A Kind of Alaska, The Collection and The Lover).
The Collection, with Pinter as Harry, and The Lover subsequently tour to Theatre Royal, Bath and Richmond Theatre.
Plays Sam Ross in Mojo, by Jez Butterworth (BBC films).

1999 Directs The Late Middle Classes, by Simon Gray, Palace Theatre, Watford.

Plays Sir Thomas Bertram in Mansfield Park, film.
(8 October) Moonlight (BBC Radio 3) with Pinter as Andy.
(13 October) A Slight Ache (BBC Radio 3) with Pinter as Edward.
(15 November) The Caretaker, Comedy Theatre.
(23 November) Remembrance of Things Past (adapted by Di Trevis from Pinter’s screenplay), Royal National Theatre.

2001 Receives S. T. Dupont Golden Pen Award for a Lifetime’s Distinguished Service to Literature.
<p>2002  (14 January) <i>Monologue</i> (Cottesloe, Royal National Theatre).
</p><p>2003  (23 April) New adaptation of <i>The Dwarfs</i>, by Kerry Lee Crabbe, Tricycle Theatre. <i>War</i> (collection of war poems) published. (8 October) <i>Betrayal</i> (Duchess Theatre).
</p><p>2005  (10 October) <i>Voices</i> (BBC Radio 3).
</p><p>2007  (30 January) <i>Pinter’s People</i> (sketches and monologues) Theatre Royal, Haymarket. (2 February) <i>The Dumb Waiter</i> (Trafalgar Studios).
(18 March) Plays Max in *The Homecoming* (BBC Radio 3).
(April) *Old Times* (Theatre Royal, Bath).
(5 June) *Betrayal* (Donmar Warehouse).
(18 July) *The Hothouse* (Lyttelton, Royal National Theatre).
Awarded Légion d’honneur.
*Sleuth* (screenplay).

2008

(29 January) *The Lover and The Collection* (Comedy Theatre).
(14 February) *Being Harold Pinter* (Belarus Free Theatre) (Soho Theatre).
(25 July) *A Slight Ache* (Lyttelton, Royal National Theatre).
(21 August) *No Man’s Land* (Gate Theatre, Dublin).
(8 September) Discusses post-war British theatre, British Library.
(13 September) *A Slight Ache* and *Landscape* (Lyttelton, Royal National Theatre).
(7 October) *No Man’s Land* (Duke of York’s Theatre, Gate Theatre production).
(24 December) Harold Pinter dies in London.
NOTE ON THE TEXT

The references to Harold Pinter’s plays within the text vary, with respect to edition, from chapter to chapter. Full details of editions used are given in the notes to each chapter.

Within the quotations from Pinter’s plays, three dots (...) is a Pinter convention, and four dots (….) indicates an omission.