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### **O'Neill: Long Day's Journey Into Night**

This is the first full production history of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, by Eugene O'Neill, one of the most influential plays of the twentieth century. It provides a detailed account of the most significant productions throughout the world, on stage, film, and television. Brenda Murphy examines the unique circumstances that led to the posthumous world premiere in Stockholm, in a Swedish translation. Murphy also explores the subsequent first production in English, on Broadway, which established a standard for future directors and actors. The book conveys the unique interpretations of the Tyrone family by such actors as Fredric March, Jason Robards, Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Katharine Hepburn, Colleen Dewhurst, Ruby Dee, Kevin Spacey, Jack Lemmon, and Alan Bates, among other distinguished theatre artists. An extensive production chronology provides details about nearly 100 productions throughout the world. This illustrated history also includes an extensive bibliography, discography, and videography.

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O'NEILL  
*Long Day's Journey Into Night*

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BRENDA MURPHY  
*University of Connecticut*



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia  
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2001

Typeset in 10.75/14pt Adobe Garamond System 3b2 [CE]

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Murphy, Brenda, 1950–

O'Neill : Long day's journey into night / Brenda Murphy.

p. cm. – (Plays in production)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 66197 8 (hardback) – ISBN 0 521 66575 2 (pbk.)

1. O'Neill, Eugene, 1888–1953. Long day's journey into night.

2. O'Neill, Eugene, 1888–1953 – Dramatic production

3. O'Neill, Eugene, 1888–1953 – Stage history.

I. Title. II. Series.

PS3529.N5 L637 2001

812'52–dc21 2001025453

ISBN 0 521 66197 8 hardback

ISBN 0 521 66575 2 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

Cambridge University Press  
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For George, the Ideal Critic, and Rich, the Ideal Reader

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## GENERAL PREFACE

Volumes in the series *Plays in Production* take major dramatic texts and examine their transposition, first on to the stage and, secondly, where appropriate, into other media. Each book includes concise but informed studies of individual dramatic texts, focusing on the original theatrical and historical context of a play in relation to its initial performance and reception followed by subsequent major interpretations on stage, both under the impact of changing social, political, and cultural values, and in response to developments in the theatre generally.

Many of the plays will also have been transposed into other media – film, opera, television, ballet – which may well be the form in which they are first encountered by a contemporary audience. Thus, a substantial study of the play-text and the issues it raises for theatrical realisation is supplemented by an assessment of such adaptations as well as the production history, where the emphasis is on the development of a performance tradition for each work, including staging and acting styles, rather than simply the archaeological reconstruction of past performances.

Plays included in the series are all likely to receive regular performance and individual volumes will be of interest to the informed reader as well as to students of theatre history and literature. Each book also contains an annotated production chronology as well as numerous photographs from key performances.

Michael Robinson  
*University of East Anglia*

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## PREFACE

This volume is a critical history of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in production. It gives as detailed an account as is feasible in the space allotted of *Long Day's Journey* productions throughout the world, on the stage and in the media of film and television, which have contributed significantly to the play's life as an immediate theatrical experience for an audience, and which, in several cases, are themselves significant events in twentieth-century theatre history. The account of the play's composition, its unorthodox pre-production history, and its premiere in English takes up nearly a third of the volume. Because this is the primary production text, the volume offers a detailed account of the artistic process through which director, designers, actors, and others worked in collaboration to fully realize on stage a great play that could no longer benefit from the imagination or craft of its author. In reconstructing this process I have profited gratefully from the wealth of primary material in the Eugene O'Neill Collection at Yale, impeccably catalogued by Miriam Spectre, and the scholarship of those who came before me, particularly Virginia Floyd, Judith Barlow, Edwin J. McDonough, Sheila Hickey Garvey, Edward L. Shaughessy, Travis Bogard, and Jackson Bryer, as well as O'Neill's major biographers, Louis Sheaffer, Arthur and Barbara Gelb, and Stephen Black. Interviews, lectures, memoirs, and letters by the artists have filled out the information that can be gleaned from primary materials such as scripts, notes, and designer's sketches, but always with the caveat that they are subjective sources whose reliability is limited by the subject's personal point of view and ever-less-reliable memory. Where versions conflict, the inconsistencies have been noted.

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Subsequent chapters offer necessarily less detailed accounts of productions. The guiding principle in the narrative of later productions has been to focus on the elements of a production that make it particularly significant in *Long Day's Journey's* stage history. Where possible, scripts, videotapes, recordings, or films of the productions have been examined. The bibliography records the extensive collection of reviews that has been put together and examined in order to reflect the critics' responses to the play and to help construct the narrative of its changing cultural meaning and significance. The production chronology lists nearly one hundred productions that have been significant in *Long Day's Journey's* stage life. The discography and videography provide information on recorded productions that are available to the reader. The guiding principle in arranging the scholarly apparatus has been the hope that this volume will serve as a starting point for future research into the stage and media life of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and always, thanks to my husband George Monteiro for his encouragement, moral support, and constructive criticism, and not least for his considerable material help with the research for this book. Thanks also to Victoria Cooper and Michael Robinson for their editorial wisdom and advice, to Heather Masciandaro and Matthew Cella for their research assistance, and to Mary Gallucci and George Monteiro for their expert translations. A number of professional colleagues have contributed in various ways to this book. Sally Thomas Pavetti, Curator of Monte Cristo Cottage, kindly made the scripts of Fredric March and Florence Eldridge available to me and, with Associate Curator Lois MacDonald, gave me the gift of a day in the O'Neills' sitting room while I examined them. David Hays and Ted Mann provided valuable information about the original New York production. Kurt Eisen gave me a crucial video tape. Pat Bozeman provided information from the José Quintero Collection, University of Houston. Ana Antón-Pacheco provided information about the Madrid production. Jeremy McGraw was particularly helpful in obtaining photographs from the New York Public Library, as was Diane Schinnerer from Tao House.

Absolutely crucial to the work on this project were a number of libraries and their staffs: the University of Connecticut Libraries, particularly the Interlibrary Loan Division of Homer Babbidge Library; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, and the superb finding list of O'Neill Collection curator Miriam B. Spectre; the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, particularly the staff of the Billy Rose Theatre Collection; the Charles E. Shain Library of Connecticut College, particularly Special

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Collections Curator Laurie Deredita; the Museum of Television and Radio, New York; the Library of Congress, particularly the staff of the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room; the Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon; the Tao House Board, particularly Diane Schinnerer and Beverly Lane; and the Doe/Moffitt Library and the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

I am equally grateful to the University of Connecticut Chancellor's Fellowship for some time to write and to the University of Connecticut Research Foundation for the support that made my research possible.

For permission to publish photographs, I am grateful to Peter Cunningham, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Max Eisen, and the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

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#### NOTE ON THE TEXT

Note that the abbreviations *LDJIN* and *LDJ* are substituted for *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *Long Day's Journey*; the abbreviations BEINECKE, NYPL, and SHEAFFER are used in the notes for the major archives; *NYTCR* is used for *New York Theatre Critics' Reviews* and *LTR* is used for the *London Theatre Record*. Full citations may be found in the bibliography.