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978-0-521-74538-3 - The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller, Second Edition

Edited by Christopher Bigsby

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#### THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ARTHUR MILLER

Arthur Miller is regarded as one of the most important playwrights of the twentieth century, and his work continues to be widely performed and studied around the world. This updated *Companion* includes Miller's work since the publication of the first edition in 1997 – the plays *Mr. Peters' Connections*, *Resurrection Blues*, and *Finishing the Picture* – and key productions of his plays since his death in 2005. The chapter on Miller and the cinema has been completely revised to include new films, and demonstrates that his work remains an important source for filmmakers. In addition to detailed analyses of his plays including *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*, Miller's work is also placed within the context of the social and political climate of the time. The volume contains a detailed chronology of the work of this influential dramatist and closes with a bibliographic essay which reviews the key studies of Miller.

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY is Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia and has published more than thirty books covering American theatre and popular culture and British drama, including *Modern American Drama* (1992), *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (2005), *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust: The Chain of Memory* (2006), and *The Cambridge History of American Theatre*, which received the Barnard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research from the American Society for Theatre Research. He is also an award-winning novelist, has written plays for radio and television, and is a regular radio and television broadcaster.

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## NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of this book appeared in 1997, when Arthur Miller was still alive. It follows that the tense used throughout was the present. Rather than retrospectively change this, the present tense is retained except in those chapters which have of necessity been updated. The updated chapters are: chapter 11 – The last plays (Christopher Bigsby), chapter 12 – Arthur Miller and the cinema (R. Barton Palmer) and chapter 13 – Arthur Miller's fiction (Malcolm Bradbury).

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SUSAN HAEDICKE

## Chronology

- 1915 Arthur Asher Miller born on 17 October in New York City to Isidore and Augusta Miller. Second of three children.
- 1929 Father's clothing business declines because of the Depression, forcing the family to move to Brooklyn.
- 1933 Miller graduates from high school, but is rejected from Cornell University and University of Michigan. Works at a variety of jobs and writes his first short story "In Memoriam" depicting an aging salesman. Reapplies to University of Michigan and is granted a conditional acceptance after writing to Dean that he is now "a much more serious fellow."
- 1934 Studies journalism at University of Michigan where he becomes night editor of *Michigan Daily*. Studies playwriting under Professor Kenneth T. Rowe.
- 1936 First play, *No Villain*, is produced and wins University of Michigan's Avery Hopwood Award.
- 1937 Receives second Avery Hopwood Award for *Honors at Dawn*, but the play is never produced. Receives the Theatre Guild's Bureau of New Plays Award for *They Too Arise* (revision of *No Villain*).
- 1938 Comes in second for Avery Hopwood Award for *The Great Disobedience*, which is produced at University of Michigan. Graduates and moves to New York.
- 1939 Completes another revision of *They Too Arise* (now entitled *The Grass Still Grows*). Writes scripts for Federal Theatre Project until it is closed by Congress. He then writes radio plays for CBS and NBC.
- 1940 Completes *The Golden Years*. Marries Mary Grace Slattery. They will have two children, Jane (1944) and Robert (1947).

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1941 Completes two radio plays, *The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man* and *William Ireland's Confession*. Also works at various odd jobs.
- 1942 Completes radio play, *The Four Freedoms*.
- 1943 Completes *The Half-Bridge*.
- 1944 Tours army camps gathering material for screenplay, *The Story of G.I. Joe*, and book, *Situation Normal*. First Broadway production, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, closes after four performances, but wins Theatre Guild National Award and is published in *Cross-Section: A Collection of New American Writing*.
- 1945 Publishes first novel, *Focus*, on anti-Semitism. Completes radio play, *Grandpa and the Statue*, and a one-act play, *That They May Win*. Attacks Ezra Pound for his pro-Fascist activities.
- 1947 *All My Sons* opens on Broadway and wins New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. Auctions off manuscript on behalf of Progressive Citizens of America. Becomes involved in variety of anti-Fascist and pro-Communist activities.
- 1949 *Death of a Salesman* (originally entitled *The Inside of His Head*) opens in New York with Lee J. Cobb in the title role. Jo Mielziner designs the innovative set. Wins the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. Miller publishes the first of his many theatrical and political essays.
- 1950 Adaptation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* opens; but closes after thirty-six performances.
- 1953 *The Crucible* opens in New York to mixed reviews that differ on play's relevance to McCarthyism. Play wins Antoinette Perry and Donaldson Awards.
- 1954 Denied passport by State Department to attend opening of *The Crucible* in Brussels because of his alleged support of the Communist movement. Miller supporters claim this move is a retaliation for the parallels between McCarthy era tactics and the Salem witch trials evident in *The Crucible*.
- 1955 Contracts to write a film script for New York City Youth Board, but is dropped from film after a condemnation of his leftist activities appears in a New York City newspaper. *A Memory of Two Mondays* and the one-act version of *A View from the Bridge* produced as double-bill in New York.

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- 1956 Two-act version of *A View from the Bridge* opens in London. Testifies before the House Un-American Activities Committee and refuses to name names of others attending meetings organized by Communist sympathizers. Divorces Mary Slattery and marries Marilyn Monroe.
- 1957 Indicted on charges of contempt of Congress for refusing to name suspected Communists. Publishes *Collected Plays*.
- 1958 US Court of Appeals reverses contempt of Congress conviction. Filming begins of Miller's *The Misfits*, starring Marilyn Monroe.
- 1959 Awarded Gold Medal for Drama by National Institute of Arts and Letters.
- 1961 *The Misfits* released. Divorces Marilyn Monroe. Opera versions of *A View from the Bridge* and *The Crucible* produced.
- 1962 Marries Ingeborg Morath, an Austrian-born photographer. Daughter, Rebecca (1963).
- 1964 *After the Fall* and *Incident at Vichy* open in New York.
- 1965 Elected president of PEN (Poets, Essayists and Novelists), an international literary association.
- 1967 Publishes *I Don't Need You Any More*, a collection of short stories.
- 1968 *The Price* opens on Broadway. Serves as a delegate to the Democratic Party National Convention.
- 1969 Publishes *In Russia* (travel journal) with photographs by his wife, Inge Morath. Films *The Reason Why*, an anti-war allegory. Refuses to be published in Greece to show his opposition to the government's oppression of writers.
- 1970 Two one-act plays, *Fame* and *The Reason Why*, performed at New York's New Theatre Workshop. The Soviet Union, in response to *In Russia*, bans all of Miller's works.
- 1971 *The Portable Arthur Miller* published. *The Price* and *A Memory of Two Mondays* appear on television. Helps win release of Brazilian director/playwright Augusto Boal.
- 1972 *The Creation of the World and Other Business* produced in New York, but closes after twenty performances. Protests oppression of artists worldwide – very active politically through the 1970s. Permission granted for all-black production of *Death of a Salesman* in Baltimore. Revival of *The Crucible* in New York.

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- 1973 Revival of *Death of a Salesman* in Philadelphia – first time the play is performed within one hundred miles of Broadway since 1949.
- 1974 *Up from Paradise* (musical version of *The Creation of the World and Other Business*) produced in Ann Arbor, Michigan. *After the Fall* appears on television.
- 1975 Revival of *Death of a Salesman* in New York at Circle in the Square.
- 1977 *The Archbishop's Ceiling* has limited run in Washington DC. Publishes *In the Country* (travel journal) with photographs by Inge Morath.
- 1978 Visits China. *The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller* published. *Fame* appears on television. Protests the arrests of dissidents in Soviet Union.
- 1979 Publishes *Chinese Encounters* (travel journal) with photographs by Inge Morath.
- 1980 *The American Clock* opens in New York. In spite of its success in South Carolina, the play closes in New York after a few performances. *Playing for Time*, adaptation of Fania Fenelon's book, appears on television.
- 1981 Arthur Miller's *Collected Plays*, vol. II is published.
- 1982 Two one-act plays, *Some Kind of Love Story* and *Elegy for a Lady*, open in New Haven.
- 1983 Directs *Death of a Salesman* in Beijing with Chinese cast. Revival of *A View from the Bridge* in New York. Revision and revival of *Up from Paradise* in New York.
- 1984 Publishes *Salesman in Beijing* with photographs by Inge Morath. *Death of a Salesman* is revived on Broadway with Dustin Hoffman in lead role. Involved in dispute with the Wooster Group over their unauthorized use of scenes from *The Crucible* for their production of *LSD*.
- 1985 Revival of *The Price* opens successfully on Broadway. Hoffman version of *Death of a Salesman* produced on television. *Playing for Time* produced in Washington DC.
- 1986 *The American Clock* and *The Archbishop's Ceiling* produced in London. Revival of *The Crucible* in New York and Washington DC.

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- 1987 *Timebends: A Life* (Miller's autobiography) published. *Danger: Memory!* (two one-act plays, *I Can't Remember Anything* and *Clara*) produced in New York. *All My Sons* appears on television.
- 1989 Revival of *The Crucible* in New Haven. Opening of The Arthur Miller Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
- 1990 Revival of *The Crucible* in New York and London. Screenplay for motion picture *Everybody Wins*.
- 1991 *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* opens in London.
- 1992 *Homely Girl, A Life* published.
- 1993 *The Last Yankee* opens in New York. Continuing a life-long commitment to the freedom of writers, Miller contributes to volume on censorship entitled *Censored Books: Critical Viewpoints*.
- 1994 *Broken Glass* opens in New York and London.
- 1995 *Plain Girl* published in England. Eightieth birthday marked by Gala Performance at the Royal National Theatre in London and Gala Dinner at the Arthur Miller Centre.
- 1996 Film version of *The Crucible* released.
- 1997 BBC TV production of *Broken Glass*, directed by David Thacker.
- 1998 *Mr. Peters' Connections* opens at the Signature Theatre in New York, part of a season of Miller plays.
- 1999 50th anniversary production of *Death of a Salesman*, directed by Robert Falls, with Brian Dennehy as Willy Loman.
- 2000 *Mr. Peters' Connections* opens at the Almeida Theatre, London. 85th birthday celebrations at the Arthur Miller Centre in Norwich. Gala performance at the Royal National Theatre. *Echoes Down the Corridor* (collected essays 1944–2000) published.
- 2001 *The Man Who Had All the Luck* revived at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Film version of *Focus* released, with William H. Macy. *On Politics and the Art of Acting* published.
- 2002 Death of Inge Morath. *Resurrection Blues* premieres at Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis. *The Man Who Had All the Luck* on Broadway. Revival of *The Crucible*, directed by Richard Eyre, with Liam Neeson as John Proctor.
- 2003 Death of Arthur Miller's brother, Kermit.
- 2004 *Finishing the Picture* opens at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 2005 Arthur Miller dies on 10 February. *Remembering Arthur Miller* published by Methuen in association with the Arthur Miller Centre.
- 2006 *Presence: Stories* published by Viking.
- 2007 *Resurrection Blues*, directed by Robert Altman, opens at the Old Vic, London. Arthur Miller Theatre opens at University of Michigan.
- 2008 Arthur Miller Festival at Arena Stage, Washington.
- 2009 *A View from the Bridge* directed by Lindsay Posner, The Duke of York's Theatre, London.