

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



GEORGE
BERNARD SHAW

Edited by Christopher Innes

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CHRISTOPHER INNES
York University, Ontario



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SALLY PETERS has published widely on modern drama, dance, and cultural studies and is the author of the biography *Bernard Shaw: The Ascent of the Superman* (1996). Vice-president of the Bernard Shaw Society and member of

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KERRY POWELL is Professor of English and director of graduate studies at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. He is the author of *Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s* (1990) and *Women and Victorian Theatre* (1997), both from Cambridge University Press. He is a contributor to *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde* (1998), as well as to a forthcoming collection of articles on the Salome legend from the University of Chicago Press. His essays on Victorian theatre and Oscar Wilde have appeared in *Philological Quarterly*, *Modern Drama*, *Nineteenth Century Theatre* and *Papers on Language & Literature*.

MATTHEW H. WIKANDER, Professor of English at the University of Toledo, is the author of *The Play of Truth and State: Historical Drama from Shakespeare to Brecht* (1996) and *Princes to Act. Royal Audience and Royal Performance, 1578–1792* (1993), and contributor of an essay to *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill* (1998).

J. L. WISENTHAL's work on Shaw includes *Shaw's Sense of History* (1988), *Shaw and Ibsen* (1979), and *The Marriage of Contraries: Bernard Shaw's Middle Plays* (1974). He is currently writing about Victorian historical narratives, and is also engaged in an interdisciplinary project on the Madame Butterfly theme in opera, drama, film, and prose fiction. Professor Wisenthal is a member of the English Department at the University of British Columbia.

PREFACE

Bernard Shaw was possibly the most prolific of all twentieth-century authors. In addition to writing plays – accompanied by prefaces frequently longer than the dramatic scripts – Shaw was a novelist, lecturer, and journalist, who established a significant reputation as a music critic and published several volumes of dance and theatrical criticism, social commentary and political theory, as well as carrying out a voluminous correspondence through the whole of an unusually long and active lifetime. He also directed many of the first productions of his earlier plays and subsequently exercised tight control over the way his work was staged, designed costumes and settings for some of his plays, and later adapted several for film-versions. However, while recognizing other aspects of his writing, *The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw* focuses primarily on Shaw's theatre.

The volume covers his plays from the 1890s up to the decade before his death in 1950, and the wider theatrical context against which Shaw established himself, as well as contemporary stagings of his work. The chapters deal with his whole career; but since Shaw has over fifty plays to his credit, ranging from the eight-hour *Back to Methuselah* to short sketches and interludes, detailed attention can only be given to his major plays. His novels, political lectures and pamphlets, musical and theatrical reviews are referred to primarily where these contribute to the understanding of his drama. At the same time, attention is also paid to his publishing practices, since Shaw was the first modern dramatist to establish his plays as literature – indeed his aim was to persuade the public that drama (which at the end of the nineteenth century was widely despised as a genre) was no less worthy of serious attention than the novel. In that sense, as well as the specific influence of his plays on other writers, Shaw could be seen as the father of modern British drama, having created the conditions that attracted later authors to write for the theatre.

Shaw is still very much a living presence on the stage; and the illustra-

tions have been selected to showcase the work of the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Founded in 1962, and with a professional company operating every summer, the popularity of the Shaw Festival is indicated by its expansion to a six-month season and into three different theatres: a main stage (constructed in 1973), the Court House Theatre (an intimate space inside a historic building), and the Royal George Theatre (a small restored vaudeville house). Christopher Newton, the artistic director of the Festival since 1980, has the ambition to present every one of Shaw's plays during his tenure, although Shaw's major works are frequently remounted in new productions. This is reflected in some illustrations that take examples from different productions of the same play. The mandate of the Festival is to present not only the works of Bernard Shaw, but also of his contemporaries, which provides a rich image of the wider cultural context in which Shaw was working. However, the illustrations here focus solely on the performances of Shaw's plays. In writing his plays, Shaw of course was always closely attuned to theatrical requirements, and the dialogue frequently imposes specific physical relationships among the actors. So even if some of the stage interpretations represented in these photos have been quite untraditional, there is a surprisingly close correspondence between the visual record and the points brought out in the various chapters.

There are several complete editions of Shaw's plays and their prefaces available, but the text generally accepted as standard is *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with their Prefaces*, edited by Dan Laurence (London, 1970–74), or the American edition (*Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with their Prefaces*, edited by Dan Laurence [New York, 1975]). Quotations from Shaw's plays in this *Companion* are generally to one of these editions. However, in some cases other editions have been used, particularly in chapters dealing with the early plays where the argument requires reference to the original texts. Wherever this occurs, full bibliographical details are given in the endnotes to the relevant chapter.

Most of the major critical studies, as well as recent biographies of Shaw, are listed in the endnotes to the various chapters. Additional information on Shaw criticism and scholarship is supplied in the lists of "further reading."

CHRISTOHER INNES

Toronto, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Christopher Newton and the staff of the Shaw Festival, particularly Denis Johnston, for their invaluable aid in making this photographic record available. We are extremely grateful to all the members of the company appearing in the various productions illustrated, who have been so generous in allowing permission to reproduce their work, and whose names are listed in the captions. In addition, we would like to thank the designers who created the visual context, and the photographers who captured the images. Specifically, listing the productions in the order they appear throughout the book, these are:

The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, 1996 (Frontispiece, and Nos. 1, 2, 23, 25); *Misalliance*, 1990 (No. 15); and *Pygmalion*, 1992 (No. 28);
Designer: Leslie Frankish Lighting Designer: Robert Thomson
Photo: David Cooper

Shakes versus Shav, 1989 (No. 4); Designer: Ronnie Burkett Photo: David Cooper

Mrs. Warren's Profession, 1997 (Nos. 5, 8); and *The Philanderer*, 1995 (No. 6); Designer: Leslie Frankish Lighting Designer: Kevin Lamotte Photo: David Cooper

Widowers' Houses, 1992 (No. 7); Set Designer: Yvonne Sauriol
Costume Designer: Sean Breaugh Lighting Designer: Graeme S. Thomson Photo: David Cooper

Arms and the Man, 1994 (No. 9); and *Man and Superman*, 1989 (No. 12);
Designer: Eduard Kochergin Lighting Designer: Robert Thomson
Photo: David Cooper

Arms and the Man, 1994 (No. 10); Designer: Michael Levine with Charlotte Dean Lighting Designer: Jeffrey Dallas Photo: David Cooper

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Man and Superman, 1977 (No. 11); Designer: Brian H. Jackson Lighting Designer: John Stammers Photo: Robert C. Ragsdale

Major Barbara, 1987 (No. 13); and *Caesar and Cleopatra*, 1983 (Nos. 17, 18); Designer: Cameron Porteous Lighting Designer: Jeffrey Dallas Photo: David Cooper

Getting Married, 1989 (No. 14); Designer: Christina Poddubiuk Lighting Designer: Robert Thomson Photo: David Cooper

Heartbreak House, 1985 (No. 16); Designer: Michael Levine Lighting Designer: Jeffrey Dallas Photo: David Cooper

Saint Joan, 1993 (Nos. 19, 29, 30); and *The Millionairess*, 1991 (No. 24); Designer: Cameron Porteous Lighting Designer: Robert Thomson Photo: David Cooper

Candida, 1993 (No. 20); Set Designer: Yvonne Sauriol Costume Designer: Cameron Porteous Lighting Designer: Kevin Lamotte Photo: David Cooper

Captain Brassbound's Conversion, 1979 (No. 21); Set Designer: Michael Eagan Costume Designer: Astrid Janson Lighting Designer: Robert Thomson Photo: Robert C. Ragsdale

Too True To Be Good, 1994 (No. 22); Designer: Peter Hartwell Lighting Designer: Robert Thomson Photo: David Cooper

The Man of Destiny, 1993 (No. 26); Designer: Kenneth Shaw Lighting Designer: Aisling Sampson Photo: David Cooper

The Philanderer, 1971 (No. 27); Set Designer: Maurice Strike Costume Designer: Tiina Lipp Lighting Designer: Donald Acaster Photo: Robert C. Ragsdale

CHRONOLOGY

For the plays, dates of composition and first professional production in Britain have been given, as well as details of copyright and amateur or foreign performances where these occurred earlier.

Unfinished/unperformed playscripts are also indicated. In addition, novels and major essays, or collections of essays, have been included to show the wider dimensions of Shaw's career.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1856 | (July 26) Born: Dublin |
| 1876 | First essays (as a music critic) published |
| 1878 | "Passion Play" (unfinished) |
| 1879 | <i>Immaturity</i> (first published 1930) |
| 1882-83 | <i>Cashel Byron's Profession</i> (first published 1886, revised 1899, 1901) |
| 1886 | First essays (as an art critic) published |
| 1887 | <i>An Unsocial Socialist</i> (first serialized in <i>Today</i> , 1884) |
| 1898 | "The Gadfly or The Son of the Cardinal" (adaptation of the novel by Ethel Voynich – unfinished) |
| 1889 | "Un Petit Drame" (unfinished) |
| 1889 | <i>Fabian Essays</i> |
| 1889-90 | "The Cassone" (unperformed) |
| 1891 | <i>The Quintessence of Ibsenism</i> (revised 1913) |
| 1885-92 | <i>Widowers' Houses</i> (An Original Didactic Realistic Play)
First presented: December 9 and 13, 1892, Independent Theatre Society at the Royalty Theatre in London |

- First presented in public: October 7, 1907, by Miss Horniman's Company at the Midland Theatre in Manchester
- 1893 *The Philanderer* (A Topical Comedy in Four Acts of the Early Eighteen-Nineties)
Copyright performance: March 30, 1898, at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater, London
First presented: February 20, 1905, by the New Stage Club at the Cripplegate Institute, London
First presented in public: February 5, 1907, by J. E. Vedrenne and Harley Granville Barker at the Court Theatre, London
- 1893–94 *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (A Play in Four Acts)
First presented: January 5, 1902, by the Stage Society of New Lyric Club, London
First presented in public: October 27, 1905, by Arnold Daly at the Hyperion Theatre, New Haven, CT, USA
First publicly performed in England: July 27, 1925, by the Macdona Players at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham
- 1894 *Arms and the Man* (A Romantic Comedy in Three Acts)
First presented: April 21, 1894, by Florence Farr at the Avenue Theatre, London
- 1894 *Candida: A Mystery*
Copyright performance: March 30, 1895, at the Theatre Royal, South Shields
First presented in public: July 30, 1897, by the Independent Theatre Company at Her Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen
First presented in London: July 1, 1990, by the Stage Society at the Strand Theatre
First publicly presented in London: April 26, 1904, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre
- 1895 *The Man of Destiny* (A Trifle/A Fictitious Paragraph of History)
First presented: July 1, 1897, by Murray Carson at the Grand Theatre, Croydon
First presented in London: March 29, 1901, by J. T. Grein at the Comedy Theatre
- 1895–96 *You Never Can Tell* (A Pleasant Play in Four Acts)
Copyright performance: March 23, 1898, at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater, London

First presented: November 26, 1899, by the Stage Society at the Royalty Theatre, London

First presented in public: May 2, 1900, by James Welch and Yorke Stephens at the Strand Theatre

1896–97 *The Devil's Disciple: A Melodrama*

Copyright performance: April 17, 1897, at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater, London

First presented: October 1, 1897, by Richard Mansfield at the Hermanus Bleeker Hall, Albany, New York

First presented in public in England: September 26, 1899, by Murray Carson at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Kennington, London

1898 *The Perfect Wagnerite*

1898 *Caesar and Cleopatra: A History*

Copyright performance: March 15, 1899, by Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Company at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle upon Tyne

First presented: May 1, 2, 3, 1901, by students of the Anna Morgan Studios for Art and Expression at the Fine Arts Building, Chicago

First presented professionally in German: March 31, 1906, by Max Reinhardt at the Neues Theater, Berlin

First presented in England: September 16, 1907, by Forbes Robertson at the Grand Theatre, Leeds

1899 *Captain Brassbound's Conversion: An Adventure*

Copyright performance: October 10, 1899, at the Court Theatre, Liverpool

First presented: December 16, 1900, by the Stage Society at the Strand Theatre, London

First presented in public: May 12, 1902, by Harold V. Neilson at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester

1900 *Love Among the Artists*

1901 *The Admirable Bashville or Constancy Unrewarded* (Being the Novel of *Cashel Byron's Profession* Done into a Stage Play in Three Acts and in Blank Verse)

First presented: December 14, 1902, by amateurs at the Pharos Club, Covent Garden, London

First presented professionally: June 7, 8, 1903, by the Stage

- Society at the Imperial Theatre, London
 First presented in public: September 22, 1905, by Harold V. Neilson at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester
- 1901-03 *Man and Superman: A Comedy (and a Philosophy)*
 Copyright performance: June 29, 1903, at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater, London
 First presented: May 21, 1905, by the Stage Society at the Court Theatre, London (without Act 3)
 First presented in public: May 23, 1905, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre, London (without Act 3)
 First production of *Don Juan in Hell* (Act 3 Scene 2): June 4, 1907, presented by by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre as a one-act play, subtitled *A Dream from "Man and Superman"*
 First presented in its entirety: June 11, 1915, by the Travelling Repertory Company (Esme Percy and Kristeen Graeme) at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh
- 1904 *John Bull's Other Island*
 First presented: November 1, 1904, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre, London
- 1904 *How He Lied to Her Husband*
 First presented: September 26, 1904, by Arnold Daly at the Berkeley Lyceum, New York
 First presented in England: February 28, 1905, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre, London
- 1905 *The Irrational Knot*
- 1905 *Major Barbara* (A Discussion in Three Acts)
 First presented: November 28, 1905, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre, London
- 1905 *Passion, Poison, and Petrification* or *The Fatal Gazogene* (A Brief Tragedy for Barns and Booths)
 First presented: July 14, 1905, in "The Theatre Royal" at the Theatrical Garden Party, Regent's Park, London
- 1906 *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (Shaw's theatre criticism for *The Saturday Review*, 1895-98)
- 1906 *The Doctor's Dilemma* (A Tragedy in Four Acts and an Epilogue)

First presented: November 20, 1906, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Court Theatre, London

1906–7 *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*

1907 *The Interlude at the Playhouse / The Inauguration Speech: An Interlude*

First and only performance: January 28, 1907, at the reopening of the Playhouse Theatre, London

1908 *The Sanity of Art: An Exposure of the Current Nonsense about Artists Being Degenerate*

1908 *Getting Married: A Conversation* (A Disquisitory Play)

First presented: May 12, 1908, by Vedrenne and Barker at the Haymarket Theatre, London

1909 *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet: A Sermon in Crude Melodrama*

First presented: August 25, 1909, by Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin

First presented in England: December 5, 1909, by the Abbey Theatre Company, under the auspices of the Stage Society, at the Aldwych Theatre, London

First publicly presented in London: March 14, 1921, by Norman Macdermott at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead

1909 *The Glimpse of Reality: A Tragedietta*

First presented: October 8, 1927, by the Glasgow Clarion Players (amateur) at the Fellowship Hall, Glasgow

First presented professionally: November 20, 1927, at the Arts Theatre Club, London

1909 *Press Cuttings* (A Topical Sketch Compiled from the Editorial and Correspondence columns of the Daily Papers during the Woman's War in 1909)

First presented: July 9, 12, 1909, by the Civic and Dramatic Guild at a "Private Reception" at the Court Theatre, London

First presented: in public: September 27, 1909, by Miss Horniman's Company at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester

1909 *The Fascinating Foundling* (A Disgrace to the Author)

First presented by amateurs: 1909, organized by Elizabeth Asquith, Princess Bibesco

CHRONOLOGY

First presented professionally: January 28, 1928, by the Arts Theatre Club, London

- 1909–10 *Misalliance* (A Debate in One Sitting)
First presented: February 23, 1910, by Charles Frohman in his repertory season at the Duke of York's Theatre, London
- 1910 *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets: An Interlude*
First presented: November 24, 25, 1910, by the Committee of the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre at a charity matinée at the Haymarket Theatre, London
- 1911 *Fanny's First Play: An Easy Play for a Little Theatre*
First presented: April 19, 1911, by Lillah McCarthy at the Little Theatre, London
- 1912 *Androcles and the Lion: A Fable Play*
First presented: September 1, 1913, by McCarthy and Barker at the St. James's Theatre, London
- 1912 *Overruled: A Demonstration*
First presented: October 14, 1912, by Charles Frohman at the Duke of York's Theatre, London
- 1912–13 *Pygmalion* (A Romance in Five Acts)
First presented (in German): October 16, 1913, at the Hofburg Theater, Vienna
First presented in England: April 11, 1914, by Herbert Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's Theatre, London
- 1913 *Great Catherine (Whom Glory Still Adores)* (A Thumbnail Sketch of Russian Court Life in the XVIII Century)
First presented: November 18, 1913, by Norman McKinnel and Frederick Whelen at the Vaudeville Theatre, London
- 1913 "Beauty's Duty" (unfinished)
- 1913 *The Music Cure: A Piece of Utter Nonsense*
First presented: January 28, 1914, by Kenelm Foss at the Little Theatre, London as a curtain-raiser to celebrate the 100th performance of G. K. Chesterton's *Magic*
- 1914 *Common Sense About the War*
- 1915 *O'Flaherty, VC: A Recruiting Pamphlet* (A Reminiscence of 1915)
First presented: February 17, 1917, by officers of the 40th

- Squadron, RFC, on the Western Front at Treizennes, Belgium (amateur)
 First presented professionally: June 21, 1920, by the Deborah Bierne Irish Players at the 39th Street Theatre, New York
 First presented in England: December 19, 1920, by the Stage Society at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London
- 1916 *The Inca of Perusalem: An Almost Historical Comedietta* (by "A Member of the Royal Literary Society")
 First presented: October 7, 1916 by Barry Jackson at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham
- 1916 "Macbeth Skit" & "Glastonbury Skit" (unfinished)
- 1916 *Augustus Does His Bit: A True-to-Life Farce* (An Unofficial Dramatic Tract on War Saving and Cognate Topics by the Author of *The Inca of Perusalem*)
 First presented: January 21, 1917, by the Stage Society at the Court Theatre, London
 First presented in public: December 10, 1917, by the Drama League Players (amateur) at Polio's Theatre, Washington, DC
 First public professional production: March 12, 1919, by John D. Williams at the Comedy Theatre, New York
- 1917 *Annajanska, The Wild Grand Duchess / Annajanska, The Bolshevik Empress: A Revolutionary Romancelet* (From the Russian of Gregory Bessinoff)
 First presented: January 21, 1918, at the Coliseum, London, in a variety bill
- 1919 *Heartbreak House* (A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes)
 First presented: November 10, 1920, by the New York Theatre Guild at the Garrick Theatre, New York
 First presented in England: October 18, 1921, by J. B. Fagan at the Court Theatre, London
- 1918–20 *Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch* (A Play Cycle in Five Parts)
 First presented: Parts I and II February 27, 1922, Parts III and IV March 6, 1922, Part V March 13, 1922, by the New York Theatre Guild at the Garrick Theatre, New York
 First presented in England: Part I October 9, 1923, Part II October 10, 1923, Part III October 11, 1923, Part IV October