

# STEPHEN UNWIN

## Curriculum Vitae

### Theatre and Opera Director Writer and Teacher

Stephen Unwin was born in Budapest in 1959. He read English at Cambridge University, where he studied under Margot Heinemann. He directed and designed fifteen student productions. These included an award-winning production of *Measure for Measure* that transferred to the Almeida Theatre from the 1981 Edinburgh Festival. As a result, he was awarded an Arts Council of Great Britain Trainee Director's Bursary to work at the Almeida for a year.

### Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh

For much of the 1980s, Stephen was Associate Director of the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh. All of his productions there were of new plays from Scotland, England and abroad, including Chris Hannan's *Elizabeth Gordon Quinn* and *The Orphans' Comedy*, Peter Arnott's *White Rose* and *Elias Sawney* and Peter Jukes' *Abel Barebone* and *Shadowing the Conqueror*. Six of his productions transferred to London theatres: Michel Tremblay's *Sandra/Manon* (Donmar Warehouse); Mario Vargas Llosa's *Kathie and the Hippopotamus* and Peter Arnott's *White Rose* (Almeida); John McKay's *Dead Dad Dog* (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs); and the British premieres of two plays by Manfred Karge: the Time Out Award-winning *Man to Man* (with Tilda Swinton) and *The Conquest of the South Pole* (with Alan Cumming), (both to the Royal Court). Actors Stephen directed at the Traverse include Simon Russell Beale, Ewen Bremner, Katrin Cartlidge, Alan Cumming, Kathryn Hunter, Tilda Swinton and Ken Stott.

### National Theatre

In the early 1990s, Stephen was Resident Director at the National Theatre Studio, where his work included: Marivaux' *The Lottery of Love*; Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* (Cottesloe); the anonymous *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (Cottesloe); *Shakespeare's Poor*; Terry Heaton's *Echoes of a Revolution*; the British premiere of Peter Handke's *The Long Way Round* (Cottesloe); and his devised show for the under-fives *The Magic Carpet* for the RNT Education Department (Cottesloe and Olivier).

### English Touring Theatre

In January 1993, Stephen founded English Touring Theatre ([www.ett.org.uk](http://www.ett.org.uk)). His first production was *Hamlet*, which transferred to the Donmar Warehouse and received two Shakespeare Globe Nominations and a TMA Best Actor Award for Alan Cumming. Subsequent productions have been: *A Doll's House*, in a new translation by Kenneth McLeish; *The Beaux' Stratagem*; *As You Like It* (TMA Best

Actress Award to Kelly Hunter); *The School for Wives*; *Macbeth* (co-production with the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith); *Hedda Gabler* (TMA Best Touring Production Award; First Prize Ian Charleson Award to Alexandra Gilbreath; also Donmar Warehouse); *Henry IV Parts One and Two* with Timothy West and Samuel West (also Old Vic); *The Seagull* (First Prize Ian Charleson Award to Mark Bazeley; also Donmar Warehouse); Marty Cruickshank's *A Difficult Age*; *The Taming of the Shrew*; *Don Juan*; *The Master Builder* (TMA Best Supporting Actress Award to Emma Cunniffe); *The Cherry Orchard* with Prunella Scales; *Love's Labour's Lost*; *Ghosts* (TMA Best Actress Award to Diana Quick; Manchester Evening News Award); *King Lear* (TMA Best Actor Award to Timothy West; MEN Award; also Old Vic); *John Gabriel Borkman* with Michael Pennington; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Twelfth Night*; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*; *Hamlet* with Ed Stoppard and Anita Dobson (also New Ambassador's Theatre); *The Old Country* with Timothy West, Jean Marsh and Simon Williams (also Trafalgar Studios); Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children* with Diana Quick; *Someone Else's Shoes* by Drew Pautz (Soho Theatre) and *The Changeling* (co-production with Nottingham Playhouse). Actors Stephen directed at ETT include Kacey Ainsworth, Gillian Barge, Linda Bassett, Eleanor Bron, Cheryl Campbell, Emma Cunniffe, Michael Cronin, Anita Dobson, Daniel Evans, Michael Feast, Deborah Findlay, Alexandra Gilbreath, Paterson Joseph, Jean Marsh, Frank Middlemass, Michael Pennington, Diana Quick, Prunella Scales, Ed Stoppard, Gary Waldhorn, Timothy West, Samuel West, Simon Williams and Marjorie Yates.

As Artistic Director of ETT Stephen produced *A Taste of Honey* (directed by Polly Teale); *No Man's Land* (directed by Simon Usher); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (100th Anniversary production, directed by Nicholas Wright); *The School for Scandal* (directed by John Burgess); *Design for Living* (directed by Tim Luscombe); *Measure for Measure* (directed by Mick Gordon); and the world premieres of Jonathan Harvey's *Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club* (Donmar Warehouse and the Criterion, directed by John Burgess); *Hushabye Mountain* (Hampstead Theatre Club, directed by Paul Miller); *The York Realist* (Royal Court and the Strand Theatre, written and directed by Peter Gill); *French Without Tears* (directed by Paul Miller); Richard Bean's *Honeymoon Suite* (Royal Court, directed by Paul Miller); and *Uncle Vanya* (Rose Theatre, Kingston, directed by Peter Hall).

Stephen maintained his connection with the National Theatre through the Cohen Foundation Training Director Scheme, which he set up with the Studio. Trainees: Mick Gordon, Erica Whyman, Arlette George, Tim Stark, Bijan Sheibani, Lucy Kerbel and Jamie Harper. Other Assistant Directors include Thea Sharrock, Sascha Wares, Josie Rourke and Paul Miller. In 2005 Stephen was appointed ETT's first Director and Chief Executive. He stepped down from ETT in April 2008 after fifteen years at the helm. In 2013 Stephen directed a new production of his own translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* to mark ETT's 20th Anniversary.

## **Rose Theatre, Kingston**

Stephen was Artistic Director of the Rose Theatre in Kingston for six years from January 2008 until January 2014.

He directed at the Rose *A Christmas Carol*; *The Winslow Boy* (with Timothy West); *Miss Julie*; *Treasure Island*; Joe Penhall's *Dumb Show* (with Sanjeev Bhaskar); Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* (with Celia Imrie); *As You Like It*; *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the première of Harley Granville Barker's *Farewell to the Theatre* (both with Jane Asher); his own translation of *The Lady from the Sea* (with Joely Richardson); Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (with Laura Michelle Kelly); Noel Coward's *The Vortex* (with Kerry Fox, David Dawson and James Dreyfus); Peter Nichols' *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* (with Ralf Little, coproduction with Liverpool Playhouse) and Ibsen's *Ghosts* (coproduction with ETT: 20th anniversary production).

As Artistic Director he produced three productions directed by Peter Hall: *Love's Labour's Lost*; *Bedroom Farce*; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (with Judi Dench); a new musical by George Stiles, *The Three Musketeers*; two family shows, *The Snow Queen* and *Cinderella*; and revivals of Michael Frayn's *Here* and Richard Bean's *Smack Family Robinson*.

## **Opera**

Stephen has directed fifteen operas including Hanns Eisler and Bertolt Brecht's *The Decision* (Almeida Music Festival & Radio 3); *The Marriage of Figaro*; *Lucia di Lammermoor*; *Così fan Tutte* (all tours for Opera 80); Handel's *Scipio* for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama; *Gianni Schicchi* for English National Opera; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; *Thomas Mann's Hollywood* for the Almeida Opera Festival; *Così fan Tutte*; *Albert Herring*; *Falstaff*; *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*; *Le Nozze di Figaro*; and *Don Giovanni* (all Garsington Opera Festival); Richard Strauss's *Intermezzo*; Dvorak's *The Jacobin* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Buxton Opera Festival). Forthcoming: Poulenc's *Mamelles de Teiresias* and Chabrier's *A Wasted Education* at the Royal College of Music.

## **Royal Court Theatre**

The British premiere of Klaus Pohl's *Karate Billy Comes Home*.

## **Theatre Royal Bath**

Peter Nichols' *Born in the Gardens* (with Stephanie Cole); David Storey's *Home*; Noel Coward's *This Happy Breed* (with Dean Lennox Kelly); *Moon Tiger* (with Jane Asher) and Noel Coward's *Present Laughter* (with Samuel West). Forthcoming *The Real Thing* with Lawrence Fox

## London Fringe

Manfred Karge's *The Conquest of the South Pole* (Arcola). Forthcoming: Stephen Unwin's *All My Children* (Jermyn Street Theatre, Tara Finney Productions).

## Other theatre

*Measure for Measure* and *The Comedy of Errors* at the Schauspielhaus, Graz, Austria; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Century Theatre; Heinrich von Kleist's *The Broken Jug* at the Raamtheater in Antwerp, Belgium; *Macbeth* at the Bochum Schauspielhaus, Germany, and the Rheinisches Landestheater Neuss (Globe); *Much Ado About Nothing* at the University of California (Davis) as Granada Television's Artist in Residence; *Look Back in Anger* and Carl Sternheim's *Knickers!* at the Bristol Old Vic; Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* at the Leicester Haymarket; Arthur Miller's *The Price* for Oxford Stage Company; and *A View from the Bridge* for the Touring Consortium. Forthcoming: David Edgar's *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* for the Touring Consortium.

## Writing

Stephen co-wrote, with Kenneth McLeish, *A Pocket Guide to Shakespeare's Plays* (Faber and Faber, Farrah Strauss Giroux, Alba, P Haase, and Polish, Hungarian and Portuguese editions); with Carole Woddis, *A Pocket Guide to Twentieth Century Drama* (Faber and Faber, Farrah Strauss Giroux, Chinese editions); and, with Michael Pennington, *A Pocket Guide to Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg* (Faber and Faber). *So You Want to be a Theatre Director?* was published by Nick Hern Books in 2003. *A Guide to the Plays of Bertolt Brecht* was published by Methuen in 2005 and he has written *The Doll's House: from Page to Stage* for Nick Hern Books.

*The Well Read Play* was published by Oberon Books, which also published Stephen's performance editions of *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*. He has contributed a chapter on *Acting Brecht* for the LAMDA guide to acting styles and *The Complete Brecht Toolkit* was published by NHB in 2014. He has contributed to NHB's *My First Play* birthday collection. He is an Advisory Editor for *New Theatre Quarterly*.

He is currently writing *Poor Naked Wretches*, a study of Shakespeare's working people, and a personal book about being the father of a boy with severe learning disabilities.

He has written articles, reviews and obituaries for *The Evening Standard*, *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Independent* and *The Sunday Times*.

## Translations

Stephen has translated four plays by Heinrich von Kleist (*The Broken Jug*, *The Prince of Homburg*, *Amphitryon* and *Katie of Heilbronn*) as well as Bertolt Brecht's *The Demise of the Egotist Johann Fatzer*, *The Threepenny Opera* and ten scenes

from *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich (Hitler's People)* He has translated Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde* (NHB 2007) and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House, Rosmersholm, Little Eyolf, The Lady from the Sea* (Faber 2012) and *Ghosts* (Oberon 2013).

### **Original plays**

Stephen is the author of three original plays. *All Our Children*, about the Nazi persecution of the disabled (Jermyn Street, May 2017); *Poor John*, is about the young British Communist, John Cornford, who was killed in the Spanish Civil War (Arcola, 2018) and *Gustav Hirsch: Immigrant*.

### **Television**

Scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (with Anna Friel) for BBC Schools.

### **Dance**

*Seyi Goli* for Adzido Pan African Dance Company at Nottingham Playhouse, Sadler's Wells, the Glasgow Tramway and on tour.

### **Time To Talk**

While at the Rose, Stephen interviewed on stage numerous leading actors and writers as part of the Time to Talk series. These include Gillian Anderson, Jane Asher, Eileen Atkins, Richard Bean, Alan Bennett, Hugh Bonneville, Jo Brand, Gyles Brandreth, Richard Briers, Stephanie Cole, Judi Dench, Dominic Dromgoole, Anita Dobson, Richard Eyre, Julian Fellowes, Clare Foy, Michael Frayn, Peter Hall, Sheila Hancock, Lenny Henry, Craig Revel Horwood, Nicholas Hoult, Celia Imrie, Derek Jacobi, Penelope Keith, Jonathan Miller, Maureen Lipman, Julian Lloyd Webber, Blake Morrison, Michael Palin, Michael Pennington, Joely Richardson, Michael Sheen, Alison Steadman, Patrick Stewart, Samuel West, Timothy West, Richard Wilson, Zoë Wanamaker, Penelope Wilton and Jacqueline Wilson.

### **Drama School Productions**

Stephen has directed five productions at drama schools: *The Kitchen Sink* by Tom Wells (LAMDA), *Hitler's People* by Bertolt Brecht, and Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, both translated by Stephen Unwin and Peter Zombory-Moldovan (East 15) and *The Secret Rapture* by David Hare and scenes from *The Country Wife* (Guildhall).

### **Teaching**

Stephen has given Platforms at the National Theatre, the Royal Court Theatre, the Traverse Theatre, the British Library and the Cheltenham Literary Festival. He has taught and taken workshops at the RNT, the RSC, the Royal Court, ETT,

BADA, the Traverse, the Actors' Centre, the Actors' Temple and several acting, directing and theatre design schools both in Britain and abroad. He taught a Graduate Shakespeare Course at the University of California (Davis), Shakespeare workshops at South Suburban College in Chicago, and residencies at Emory University, Atlanta, and at the University of South Carolina (Upstate). He has lectured at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He was invited to lead one of the opening workshops at Shakespeare's Globe in August 1995 and gave the keynote lecture at the National Theatre Education Department's Shakespeare Unplugged. He has given four platforms at the National Theatre. He has taught three times on Emory University's British Studies Program.

He has been on the judging panel for the Linbury Biennale prize for Stage Design (2002), the Susan Smith Blackburn Award (2010) and the Sheridan Morley Prize (2014).

### **Academic Positions**

Stephen has been Visiting Professor at the University of California, the Judith E Wilson Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University in Autumn 2003 and from 2007–2010 Visiting Professor at Kingston University. He was Course Leader for the Theatre Directing MA/MFA at East 15 and University of Essex for three months in 2014.

In 2012 he was Halle Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and Visiting Professor at the University of South Carolina.

Stephen has chaired panels at the Kingston Shakespeare Symposium and is giving a paper on Brecht's approach to Shakespeare at the 2016 International Brecht Conference in Oxford.

### **Awards**

Include: three Edinburgh Fringe Firsts; a Time Out Award; six TMA Awards (Best Actor Alan Cumming; Best Actress Kelly Hunter; Best Actor Timothy West; Best Actress Diana Quick; Best Supporting Actress Emma Cunniffe and Best Touring Production for *Hedda Gabler*); two Ian Charleson Awards (Alexandra Gilbreath and Mark Bazeley); several Manchester Evening News Awards; Joint Winner of the 2003 Shakespeare Globe's Sam Wanamaker Prize. In 2010 the Rose was awarded the Best Contribution to the Community in the Kingston Business Awards.

### **Disabilities**

Stephen's second son, Joey, has Severe Learning Disabilities and Stephen has written about this in *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, and campaigned for the way that SLD is regarded.

Stephen is Chair of KIDS, a national charity which provides a wide range of services to disabled young people and their families.

He is also Patron of *Dramatize*, a company which provides drama for young people with Learning Disabilities.

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