ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

Arden

A Study of His Plays

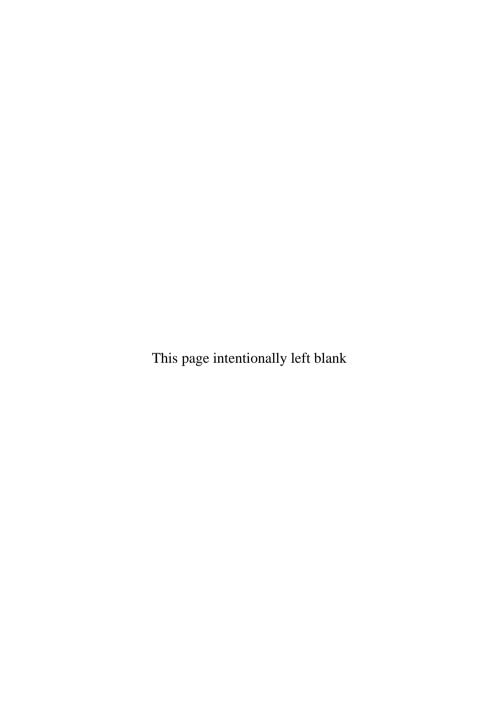
Albert Hunt



Routledge Revivals

Arden

John Arden was one of the major playwrights to have emerged during the 1950s, yet his work has arguably been misunderstood. In this book, first published in 1974, Albert Hunt's primary concern is to relate the plays written by John Arden alone, as well as those written in collaboration with Margaretta D'Arcy, both to Arden's whole concept of theatre, and to his social and political attitudes. The book begins with a biographical introduction, followed by a play-by-play study of Arden's work and a survey of the impact of his plays in performance, alongside fascinating images. Celebrating the work and life of the playwright, this timely reissue will be of particular value to students of theatre studies as well as professional actors with an interest in John Arden's plays and theatrical ideologies.



Arden

A Study of His Plays

Albert Hunt



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A STUDY OF HIS PLAYS

by

ALBERT HUNT



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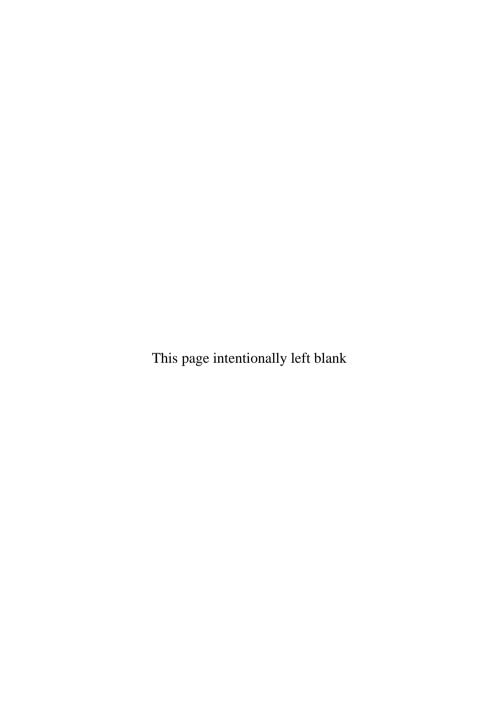
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Illustrations

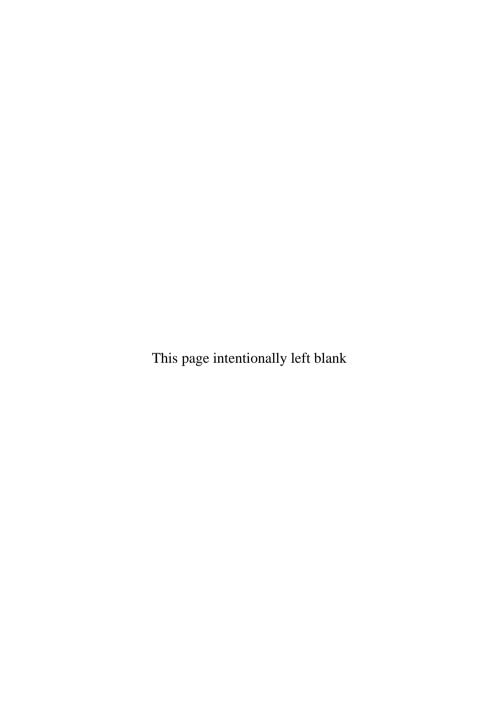
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- 1a LIVE LIKE PIGS (LEBEN UND LEBEN LASSEN): production by Peter Palitzsch at the Württembergische Staatstheater, November 1966; Ingeborg Engelmann (Rachel); Hannelore Hoger (Rossie); Hans Mahnke (Seefahrer Sawney) (Photo: Madeline Winkler)
 - b ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS: production by Albert Hunt, with students from Shrewsbury School of Art, at the Hawnby Entertainment, 1966. (Photo: John Fox)
- 2a SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE: original production by Lindsay Anderson at the Royal Court Theatre, 1959; Ian Bannen (Serjeant Musgrave) (Photo: Lord Snowdon)
- b SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE (LA DANSE DU SERGENT MUSGRAVE): production by Peter Brook at the Théâtre de L'Athenée in Paris, 1963; Laurence Bourdil (Annie); Laurent Terzieff (Sergent Musgrave) (Photo: Bernand)
- c SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE: production by Minnesota Theater Company at the Tyrone Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, 1968; Len Cariou (Serjeant Musgrave) (Photo: The Guthrie Theater Company)
- 3a THE HAPPY HAVEN: production at the Long Wharf Theater, New Haven, Connecticut, August 1966; Marcie Hubert (Mrs Phineus); Kate Wilkinson (Mrs Letouzel) (Photo: Long Wharf Theater)

- b THE HAPPY HAVEN: original production by the Bristol Old Vic Company, 1960 (Photo: Desmond Tripp)
- 4a THE WORKHOUSE DONKEY: original production by Stuart Burge at Chichester, 1963; Frank Finlay (Alderman Butterthwaite)
 (Photo: Angus McBean, Harvard Theatre Collection)
 - b THE BALLYGOMBEEN BEQUEST: production by Brian McAvera, in the Falls Road, Belfast, 1972 (Photo: Brian McAvera)
- 5 ARMSTRONG'S LAST GOODNIGHT: production by John Dexter and William Gaskill at the National Theatre, 1965; Albert Finney (Johnny Armstrong)
 (Photo: Angus McBean, Harvard Theatre Collection)
- 6 THE HERO RISES UP: original production by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy at the Round House, 1968; Henry Woolfe (Nelson); Bettina Jonic (Lady Hamilton) (Photo: Donald Cooper)
- 7a THE HERO RISES UP: production by Bill Hays and the Nottingham Playhouse Company at Edinburgh, 1969; Thelma Ruby (Lady Emma Hamilton); Robin Parkinson (Nelson)
 (Photo: Allan Hurst, courtesy of Nottingham Playhouse)
- b THE HERO RISES UP: production by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy at the Round House, 1968; Ann Mitchell (Lady Nelson); Henry Woolfe (Nelson); Bettina Jonic (Lady Hamilton) (Photo: Donald Cooper)
- 8a THE ROYAL PARDON: original production by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy at the Beaford Arts Centre, 1966; John Arden (*Policeman*) (*Photo: John Lane*)

b THE ROYAL PARDON: original production by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy at the Beaford Arts Centre (*Photo: John Lane*)

The photograph of John Arden on the front of the cover is by Roger Mayne and that of Albert Hunt on the back of the cover by David Sheard



Author's Note

This book is about the plays of John Arden. But no study of his work would be accurate without full acknowledgement of the part played by his wife, Margaretta D'Arcy.

From the beginning, Margaretta D'Arcy, a former professional actress, has contributed ideas and material and criticism and technical know-how to John Arden's work. In recent years she has increasingly shared in the actual writing.

Stylistically it is clumsy and irritating to keep referring to Arden/D'Arcy, and so, for convenience, I have usually referred to them, when writing of plays on which they have collaborated, as the Ardens. This is not intended to suggest in any way that Margaretta D'Arcy is less than an equal partner in the collaboration.

Of the earlier plays, *The Happy Haven* owed most to Margaretta D'Arcy. Although she did not actually write any of the play, she worked closely with Arden during the writing, and contributed many of the key ideas.

The following plays are, in every sense, collaborations:

The Business of Good Government The Royal Pardon Ars Longa, Vita Brevis The Hero Rises Up The Island of the Mighty The Ballygombeen Bequest

Margaretta D'Arcy's influence on Arden's work has not been confined to offering ideas and collaborating on the writing. She has been the driving force behind the experiments in which he has been involved outside the professional theatre – particularly the Kirbymoorside Festival and, more recently, the work (in Oughterard) which led to *The Bally-gombeen Bequest*. Without her, as he himself puts it, he would have been a different, and a lesser, playwright.

John Arden

- 1930 Born in Barnsley, Yorkshire, on 26 October, son of C. A. Arden and A. E. Layland.

 Educated at Sedbergh School and went on to study architecture at King's College, Cambridge, and Edinburgh College of Art.
- 1955 Production of All Fall Down by fellow students at Edinburgh.

 Met Margaretta D'Arcy.
- 1956 Production of radio play *The Life of Man* this won the BBC Northern Region prize.
- 1957 Production of *The Waters of Babylon* at the Royal Court, 20 October, director Graham Evans.
- 1958 Soldier, Soldier written for BBC Television.

 When is a Door not a Door? produced at the Embassy
 Theatre, Swiss Cottage, by the Central School of
 Drama, 2 June, director Robert Cartland.
 Production of Live Like Pigs by English Stage Society
 at the Royal Court, 30 September, directors George
 Devine and A. Page.
- 1959 Production of Serjeant Musgrave's Dance at the Royal Court, 22 October, director Lindsay Anderson.

1960

- February, director Stuart Burge.

 The Happy Haven at the Royal Court, 14 September, director William Gaskill.
 - The Business of Good Government presented as the Christmas play at the Church of St Michael, Brent Knoll, Somerset, directed by the authors.

Soldier, Soldier presented on BBC Television, 16

- 1961 Germany's first chance to sample Arden's work Serjeant Musgrave's Dance published by Rowohlt Verlag. Wet Fish presented on BBC Television, 3 September, director Peter Dews.
- 1962 First performance in the German language of Serjeant Musgrave's Dance at Basle Stadttheater, Switzerland, 27 February, director Adolf Spalinger.

 The Life of Man broadcast by Norddeutscher Rundfunk.

 First performance in Germany of Serjeant Musgrave's Dance at Das Jung Theater, Hamburg, 13 September, director Viktor Warsitz.

 Serjeant Musgrave's Dance on BBC Television.
- 1963 Production of *The Workhouse Donkey* at the Festival Theatre, Chichester, 8 July, producer Stuart Burge. *Ironhand* produced at the Bristol Old Vic, November, director Val May.

 Irish première of *The Happy Hayen* at Gate Theatre.

Irish première of *The Happy Haven* at Gate Theatre, Dublin, 2 December, director John Beary.

- 1964 Armstrong's Last Goodnight produced at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, 5 May, director Denis Carey.
 Production of Ars Longa, Vita Brevis, director Peter Brook.
- 1965 The Workhouse Donkey produced at Göttingen, 20 February.

German première of Ars Longa, Vita Brevis at Munich, 27 March.

German translation of Ars Longa published in Theater Heute, May.

German translation of *The Workhouse Donkey* published in *Theater Heute*, June.

Production of Left-Handed Liberty at the Mermaid Theatre, 14 June, director David Williams.

Armstrong's Last Goodnight produced at the Chichester Festival Theatre, July, directors John Dexter and William Gaskill.

Armstrong at the Old Vic with Albert Finney, 12 October.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance produced by the English Stage Company at the Royal Court, 9 December, director Jane Howell.

1966 January – Live Like Pigs in rep. at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance in rep. at the Royal Court from 31 January.

Serjeant Musgrave performed in Belgium and Holland. March – Armstrong's Last Goodnight performed by the National Theatre at the Chichester Festival and at the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow.

Production of Friday's Hiding at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, 29 March, directors Sheila Ronald and Tom Fleming.

Armstrong's Last Goodnight produced at Bochum, Germany, 17 April, director Hans Schalla.

May - German translation of Armstrong published in Theater Heute.

8 August – The Happy Haven given American première at the Long Wharf Theater, New Haven.

The Royal Pardon performed at the Beaford Arts Centre, Devon, I September, directed by the authors.

October - Arden commissioned to write *The Island* of the Mighty for the Canon Studio Theatre.

German première of Live Like Pigs at Stuttgart, 4 November, director Peter Palitzsch.

December - German translation of Live Like Pigs published in Theater Heute.

1967 Armstrong's Last Goodnight produced in Basle, 24 February, director Ernst Kuhr.

The Workhouse Donkey presented at the Nottingham Playhouse, 25 October, director John Neville.

Live Like Pigs produced in Kiel, 14 November, director Helmet Gerg.

German première of *The Happy Haven* at Nuremberg, 9 December, director Konrad Höller.

Christmas – The Royal Pardon presented by the Unicorn Theatre Club at the New Arts Theatre.

1968 Harold Muggins is a Martyr produced at the Unity Theatre.

The True History of Squire Jonathan and his Unfortunate Treasure staged as a lunchtime performance by Interaction Theatrescope at the Ambiance Theatre, 17 June, director Ed Berman.

September – *The Happy Haven* produced in Holland. Institute of Contemporary Arts presentation of *The Hero Rises Up* at the Round House, 6 November, directed by the authors.

December - The Royal Pardon at the Arts Theatre.

- 1969 The Hero Rises Up presented by the Nottingham Playhouse Company at the Edinburgh Festival, 8 September.
- 1970 First performance on BBC Radio of The Bagman.
- 1971 June The Hero Rises Up in rep. at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter.
- First production of *The Ballygombeen Bequest*.

 December First production of *The Island of the Mighty* at the Aldwych Theatre; production disowned by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy.