
Born in London and educated at Haileybury School, Hertfordshire, he was an acting stage manager in repertory before joining the Studio Theatre Company at the Library (later Stephen Joseph) Theatre in Scarborough. A founder-member of the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent in 1962, he returned in 1964 to Scarborough, where most of his plays have premiered and where he became the artistic director in 1972. The first of a torrent of West End successes was *Relatively Speaking* in 1967, and he was quickly established as a master of farce. His plays often shrewdly observe the English class structure, but it is in sheer mechanical ingenuity that he excels. He has made considerable experiments with staging and dramatic structure: *Way Upstream* (1982), for example, necessitates the flooding of the stage. Among his most successful farces are *Time and Time Again* (1972), *Bedroom Farce* (1977) and *Joking Apart* (1979). He has also written musicals and plays for children, and was a BBC radio drama producer (1964-70). Later plays, including *Woman in Mind* (1985) and *Henceforward ...* (1987), reflect an increasingly bleak vision of society, and he has revealed himself to be a savage social commentator. In 1996 he and the Stephen Joseph Theatre realized a long-held ambition by moving to a new location in Scarborough. He is also recognized as a distinguished director, not only of his own work, but of plays by such authors as Arthur Miller. In 2006 he suffered a stroke, but he returned to work some months later to direct his 70th play, *If I Were You*, at Scarborough. He retired as artistic director at the start of 2009, although he directed a revival and a premiere of his own plays there in the same year. Amongst numerous other awards, he was awarded the CBE in 1987 and was knighted in 1997.

**APA**

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA