

# JOE HARMSTON DIRECTOR

---

## INTRODUCTION

Joe's directing career now spans nearly twenty years. In that time he has forged close associations with some of British theatre's most significant voices including Harold Pinter, David Hare, Trevor Nunn, Peter Hall, Ronald Harwood, Peter Ustinov and Bill Kenwright. He is in constant demand not only as a director, but also as a consultant on new writing projects and has directed the world premieres of several plays and musicals. His feel for period drama has led him to create the hugely commercially and critically successful Agatha Christie Theatre Company with Bill Kenwright while at the other end of the spectrum he continues to champion new writing projects on the fringe.

Highlights of his career have been *The Lover* and *The Collection* which he directed at The Donmar Warehouse starring their writer, Harold Pinter. ("Joe Harmston directs this ice-cold gem of a play (*The Collection*) with immaculate precision. *The Lover* is equally compelling. They are without doubt, the most disturbingly erotic dramas on the London stage." Charles Spencer - *The Daily Telegraph*. "Twenty-four carat theatre. Not to see these plays would be worse than a crime." John Peter - *The Sunday Times*) and the world premiere of *King James' Ear* ("Only rarely do all the facets of a single production combine to produce such a fine cut crystal as this one, flashing with fire and clarity for two-and-a-half memorable hours. - *Time Out*.)

Recent new departures have included his first major musical; the world premiere of *Magic Tree House: The Musical* which he created in collaboration with the writers in the USA, and a return to writing with *Scattering the Antelope* a piece he is currently creating with David Sommerville.

## AS DIRECTOR

### MOST RECENT AND FUTURE

- 2010 WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION**  
Fifth year long national tour by The Agatha Christie Theatre Company
- Oct 09 **MURDER ON AIR** Devised by Joe Harmston from Agatha Christie's radio plays  
Starring Martin Shaw and Jenny Seagrove
- April – Nov 09 **THE GRASS IS GREENER** by Hugh and Margaret Williams  
National tour with Chris Casenove, Jack Ellis, Liza Goddard and Sophie Ward.
- Jan to March 09 **TONS OF MONEY** by Alan Ayckbourn. National tour.
- Jan – Nov 2009 **THE SPIDER'S WEB** by Agatha Christie.  
Fourth national tour by The Agatha Christie Theatre Company.
- Sept 2008 – June 2009 **MAGIC TREE HOUSE:THE MUSICAL** year one of 3 year USA national tour  
Staring in Connecticut and covering East Coast in 08/09, West Coast in 09/10 and central states in 10/11 prior to Far East dates in 12/13.
- Feb – Aug 2008 **SLEUTH** by Anthony Shaffer  
Starring Simon MacCorkindale and Michael Praed for Bill Kenwright
- Jan – Nov 2008 **AND THEN THERE WERE NONE** by Agatha Christie  
Starring Gerald Harper, Alex Ferns, Chloe Newsome, Dennis Lill, Peter Burn and Mark Wynter. Third national tour of the Agatha Christie Theatre Company.
- Aug – Sept 2007 **MAGIC TREE HOUSE:THE MUSICAL**  
World Premiere in USA of new musical based on the 60 million copy best-seller children's book series by Mary Pope Osborne.  
Book and lyrics by Will Osborne, Music by Randy Courts
- Jan – Nov 2007 **THE UNEXPECTED GUEST** by Agatha Christie  
Starring Simon MacCorkindale Second national tour of Agatha Christie Theatre Company
- Feb – July 2007 **HAY FEVER** by Noel Coward  
Starring Stephanie Beacham and Christopher Timothy for Bill Kenwright

## **WEST END PRODUCTIONS**

- Sept – Dec 2003 **WAIT UNTIL DARK**  
At Garrick Theatre. London. Kenwright Productions  
Starring Peter Bowles and Saskia Wickham
- Feb - July 1999 **THE BIRTHDAY PARTY** by Harold Pinter  
With Timothy West, Prunella Scales, Salisbury, national tour and Picadilly Theatre, London.
- May - June 1998 **THE COLLECTION & THE LOVER** by Harold Pinter  
With Harold Pinter, Lia Williams, Douglas Hodge and Colin McFarlane  
Donmar, London
- Feb - March 1996 **A TALENT TO AMUSE**. Peter Greenwell's one man show of Noel  
Coward songs, poems and anecdotes at the Vaudeville Theatre.

## **NATIONAL TOURS**

- Jan – Nov 2006 **THE HOLLOW** by Agatha Christie  
First National tour for The Agatha Christie Theatre Company
- June – Oct 2005 **WAIT UNTIL DARK**  
Starring Suzy Amy and Derren Nesbitt. National Tour for Bill Kenwright
- July – Aug 2004 **THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE**  
Theatre Royal Windsor and national tour
- Feb – May 2003 **THE BLUE ROOM** by David Hare  
National Tour for Green & Lenagan Productions
- Jan - April 2002 **RELATIVE VALUES** by Noel Coward  
Starring Susan Hampshire and Michelle Gomez. National tour for Theatre Royal Bath  
Productions
- May - July 1999 **THE KINGFISHER** by William Douglas Home  
With Tony Britton and Rosemary Leach. National tour
- Feb - April 1999 **THE BIRTHDAY PARTY** by Harold Pinter  
With Timothy West, Prunella Scales, Salisbury, national tour

## **FRINGE**

- Sept – Dec 2005 **JOE & I** a new play by Laurie Slade about Terence Rattigan, Joe Orton and Oscar Wilde  
Kings Head Theatre starring Peter Bowles
- April-June 2002 **THE LAST OBIT** by Peter Tinniswood  
The New End Theatre, London
- April - June 2000 **THE GUESTS AND GOODBYE KISS** by Ronald Harwood  
The Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond
- Sept - Oct 1998 **PLAY** by Samuel Beckett  
The Riverside Studios, London
- Feb 1998 **BLUE WINDOW** by Craig Lucas  
The Old Red Lion, Islington. Critics' Choice Time Out
- Oct-Nov 1997 **VORTIGERN** The Great Shakespearean Forgery for Tour de Force Ltd  
The Bridewell Theatre, London
- 1993 **KING JAMES' EAR** by Rod Dungate  
Old Red Lion, Islington. Critics Choice Time Out

## **FOR TOUR DE FORCE**

Aug – Oct 2004 **HENRY V** for Tour de Force Ltd  
Tour in Essex and Suffolk.

Aug – Oct 2003 **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** for Tour de Force Ltd  
Arundel Festival, New Theatre Royal Portsmouth, and schools tour in UK

May – June 2002 **COMUS** by John Milton  
Modern interpretation for Milton Simposium. South Carolina. USA

July - Oct 2001 **MACBETH** for Tour de Force Ltd  
Castle grounds Arundel Festival, Ross on Wye Festival and Connecticut, USA.

Aug/Sept 2000 **HENRY V** for Tour de Force Ltd  
Castle grounds Arundel Festival

## **OUT OF LONDON**

July – Aug 2006 **PRIVATE LIVES**  
With Caroline Langrish and Adrian Lukis. Theatre Royal Windsor

Mar/Apr 2001 **BOORSKALE** world premier of a new musical by Paul Tomkinson. Palace Theatre  
Westcliff.

May - July 2001 **GO BACK FOR MURDER, THE UNEXPECTED GUEST** and  
**SPIDER'S WEB** The Christie Festival, Palace Theatre Westcliff.

Nov 2000 **A STRING OF PEARLS** a new play by Pearl Goodman. Minerva Chichester.

August 1997 **A SIMPLE HEART.** The letters of Flaubert and Sand. The Arundel Festival

May- July 1996 **BEETHOVEN'S TENTH.** Chichester Festival Theatre.  
With Sir Peter Ustinov, John Neville, Liz Robertson

Aug 1995-  
March 1996 **BRIGHT STAR - A LIFE OF JOHN KEATS,** by Bill Dufton  
Arundel Festival and tour.

Aug 1994 **THE CRAFT OF COMEDY,** with Patricia Routledge at The Minerva  
Studio Theatre, Chichester

## **EUROPEAN**

Oct – Dec 2003 **INTENT TO MURDER** by Leslie Sands  
Vienna

Sept 93 –May 94 **OUR SONG** by Keith Waterhouse  
Starring Vassia Panagopolou and Angelos Andronoplous  
Co-directing with Ned Sherrin, Moussouris Theatre, Athens.

## **EVENTS**

October 2007 **ST WILFRID'S BIRTHDAY GALA**  
Chichester Festival Theatre with a cast including Patricia Routledge, Christopher Timothy,  
James Bolam, Geraldine James, Teatro, Jonathan Ansell, Dean Gaffney and Paul McGann.

September 2006 **THE JOHN BETJEMAN VARIETY SHOW**  
Royal gala performance in presences of TRHs Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall  
Hosted by Barry Humphries and including Jools Holland, Joanna Lumley, Hugh Grant, Griff  
Rhys Jones and cast of other stars numbering 85.

- November 2005 **BY CHRISTOPHER! – CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE**  
Gala to recall the life and work of Christopher Fry. Cast including Dame Judi Dench and Sir Donald Sinden.
- March 2005 **ONLY ONE KNIGHT – HAYMARKET THEATRE TSUNAMI GALA**  
Charity gala. Cast including: Dames Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Eileen Atkins, Joan Plowright, Helen Mirren and Sir Anthony Sher, Kevin Spacey and Joan Collins among others.
- Dec 2004 **JUDI DENCH & FRIENDS – THE ROSE THEATRE KINGSTON**  
A gala evening to launch Sir Peter Hall's new theatre. Cast including; Judi Dench, Charles Dance, Harold Pinter, Tim Pigott Smith, Martin Jarvis
- May 2004 **THE WORD BITES LIKE A FISH** Royal Festival Hall  
An evening of Stephen Spender poetry with Harold Pinter, Seamus Heaney, Tony Harrison and Vanessa Redgrave.
- April 2004 **SIR JOHN GIELGUD CENTENARY GALA** Gielgud Theatre for the RSC.  
With Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Alan Bennett, Peter Hall, Paul Scofield, Ian Richardson, Martin Jarvis, David Hare, Ned Sherrin
- March 2003 **CHILLER- AN ADVENTURE IN FROZEN FOOD**  
A launch show for Birds Eye Walls. Wrote, directed, designed and produced.
- Jan 1997 **A GRAND KNIGHT OUT**  
An evening with Sir Peter Ustinov, Alan Bates, and fifty others. Theatre Royal Bath

**AS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

- March – June 09 **CYRANO DE BERGERAC** Director Trevor Nunn  
Starring Joseph Fiennes at Chichester Festival Theatre
- Mar – Aug 2006 **HAY FEVER** Director Sir Peter Hall  
With Dame Judi Dench and Peter Bowles  
at Theatre Royal Haymarket for Bill Kenwright
- July – Dec 05 **YOU NEVER CAN TELL** by GB Shaw Director Sir Peter Hall  
for Theatre Royal Bath Productions  
National Tour and Garrick Theatre starring Edward Fox
- April – Aug 2005 **THE HOME PLACE** by Brian Friel Director Adrian Noble  
Sonia Friedman Productions.  
Starring Sir Tom Courtenay at The Comedy Theatre.
- Jan – May 2005 **WHOSE LIFE IS IT ANYWAY?** by Brian Clark Director Sir Peter Hall  
Sonia Friedman and Mark Rubinstein  
Starring Kim Cattrall at The Comedy Theatre.
- 1996 **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** Director Harold Pinter  
(Bristol Old Vic and Comedy Theatre)
- 1995-6 **COMMUNICATING DOORS** Director Sir Alan Ayckbourn  
(Gielgud Theatre)
- 1995-1996 **TAKING SIDES** Director Harold Pinter  
(Minerva, Richmond, Bath and Criterion Theatre)
- 1995-1996 **THE HOTHOUSE** Director David Jones  
CFT. Redirected for tour and Comedy Theatre)
- 1995 **HOBSON'S CHOICE** Director Frank Hauser  
(Main House, national tour and Lyric Theatre)

## **OTHER EXPERIENCE**

- Joe was Resident Director of Chichester Festival Theatre from 1994 – 97 working under Patrick Garland, Duncan Weldon and Sir Derek Jacobi. He transferred over fifty productions on to tour and into the West End.
- He is Chief Executive of THE IDEAS FOUNDRY; a company dedicated to raising funds to invest in the promotion and development of new writing and composing for the stage.
- He was Artistic Director of TOUR DE FORCE LTD from 1993 - 2006.
- Company Manager for Triumph Proscenium Productions Ltd on shows on tour and in The West End.
- Production Assistant (and some time stunt double) to Dawn French on MURDER MOST HORRID, for Talkback Productions, Producer Jon Plowman.
- He continues to be a Guest Director at The RADA, Webber Douglas Academy, Guildford School of Acting, Eastern Connecticut State University, University of South Florida, and Birmingham University.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

1989-1990      **MA in Directing, University of Birmingham**

1986-1989      **BA Drama and Theatre Arts Course, University of Birmingham**  
First Class BA Hons.

## **REPRESENTATION**

Joe is represented in the UK as a director by Bronia Buchanan and as a writer by Diana Tyler at MBA. In the USA he is represented by Susan Gurman.