

Alan Ayckbourn at 80

60 Years of Playwriting

Alan Ayckbourn: A Short Biography

This is the officially approved short biography for Alan Ayckbourn. It has been compiled by Alan Ayckbourn's Archivist, Simon Murgatroyd, and is available to reproduce for free providing Alan Ayckbourn's Official Website www.alanayckbourn.net is credited.

Alan Ayckbourn

Writer / Director

2019 marks Alan's 60th anniversary as a playwright. He is rarely if ever tempted by television or film, which perhaps explains why he continues to be so prolific.

He has written numerous plays. These have been translated into over 35 languages, are performed throughout the world and he and they have won countless awards. Nearly all were first staged at the SJT and he continues to direct and premiere his new work here. He was Artistic Director for 37 years, retiring from the post in 2009; he was honoured to be appointed the SJT's first Director Emeritus during 2018. This season he will also direct the world premiere of his 83rd play, *Birthdays Past, Birthdays Present*.

Since 2005, he and the SJT company have been regular visitors to the Brits Off Broadway Festival at 59E59 Theaters, New York, their work always attracting first class reviews. They have received a Drama Desk nomination and have twice been included in *Time* Magazine's Top Ten Productions of the Year; 2018 was no exception as his 2017 play *A Brief History of Women* garnered universally enthusiastic reviews and regularly featured in *The New York Times* Critics' Choice list.

In the past five years, there have been major revivals of *Season's Greetings* and *A Small Family Business* at the National Theatre; *Absent Friends*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *Communicating Doors*, *Relatively Speaking* and *How The Other Half Loves* in the West End and, at Chichester Festival Theatre, *Way Upstream* and *The Norman Conquests*. This September will see the publication of his first work of fiction, *The Divide*.

He has received many Honorary Doctorates including, happily, in 2018 the very first Honorary Doctorate from CU Scarborough. The University of York acquired his archive in 2011. A recipient of the Critics' Circle Award for Services to the Arts, he has been inducted into American Theatre's Hall of Fame and became the first British Playwright to receive both Olivier and Tony Lifetime Achievement Awards. He was knighted in 1997 for services to the theatre.