Wider social and political context 1990-2019

Stavroula Varella

Made possible with Heritage Fund

chichester festival theatre

1. Society and politics in the 90s and into the 21st century: an overview

The 1990s in the UK was a decade of significant political shifts, marked by the end of Conservative rule and the emergence of New Labour. With it came a cultural renaissance known as 'Cool Britannia', which saw a surge in British art, music, and fashion. Britpop, with bands like *Oasis*, *Blur* and *The Verve* dominated the music scene, defining a distinct British sound. The world of art belonged to *Young British Artists* such as Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst. The UK economy continued its shift from manufacturing to services, while the period was one of economic stability for the majority of the population, with GDP growth and inflation both remaining (largely) within a range of 2–4% from 1993 onwards. The decade also witnessed the beginning of the information age, with the internet becoming more accessible. International travel also became more accessible, facilitating not only tourism but an increase in migration and significant demographic changes that gained pace through the 1990s and continued steadily into the 21st century. The Millenium Dome, completed in 1999 to celebrate the beginning of the third millennium, came to symbolise both the hope of the 90s and the disappointment of the noughties, criticised for mismanagement and public funding wastage.

The 2000s witnessed further political shifts. The UK government's support of the Iraq invasion in 2003 sparked the beginning of Labour's decline in popularity. A global financial crisis peaked in 2008 and when the Conservatives returned to power in

2010, they introduced a range of austerity measures that were to define the decade. Often referred to as the ‘age of austerity’, the period saw significant cuts across various public services, including welfare, local government, policing, and education. Meanwhile, migration continued to grow. A rise in populism, seen as the consequence of social decay, would ultimately lead to the Brexit referendum of 2016 and the subsequent departure of the UK from the European Union.

In terms of technological advancements, the internet had become an indispensable tool for communication, information dissemination, and entertainment, fostering global interconnectedness and the rise of digital platforms. Social media platforms like *YouTube* and *Facebook* gained widespread popularity in the 2000s, whereas in the 2010s smartphone availability meant that the majority of the global population were digitally interconnected.

Theatrical form might have changed little since its inception in Ancient Greece in the 6th century BCE, but the political and technological shifts of the last three decades introduced profound changes to British Theatre and beyond, as we’ll see in the following sections.

2. 1990s: Farewell, fringe?

In the period 1968-1988 ‘over 700 alternative theatre companies came and (mostly) went’, write Rebellato and Harvie in their comprehensive account of the fate of radical alternative theatre, or ‘the Fringe’, a label they adopt to capture ‘the flowering of new companies, styles and shows – often playing to new audiences and new venues – that emerge in the 1960s to challenge both the commercial and subsidised theatre sectors’ (2023:123). In their view, the fringe was a product of its times, born in the swinging 1960s and continuing to evolve through the 1970s and 1980s, decades characterised by political turmoil, cultural shifts and social change. Through detailed case studies of three theatre companies (*Portable Theatre, The Pip Simmons Group,* and *Monstrous Regiment*) the authors conclude that the reasons for the collapse of alternative theatre were three: a) the lure of the mainstream (facilitated by the decline of working-class radicalism and the emergence of politically

more moderate, less oppositional, playwrights and companies); b) the challenges of collectivity (made apparent through protests from within some collectives, which had hitherto concealed sexual and gender inequality, and worsened by the fact that Arts Council bureaucracy preferred to work with individuals rather than collectives; and c) the effects of subsidy (directly destructive to pretty much everything that made fringe theatre what it was, including organisation, production volume, performance styles, etc.).

We could safely speculate, therefore, that locally, the motives that gave us *New Ventures* in the 1970s and *The Tent* in the 1980s were simply not there in the 1990s. Indeed, judging by the local scene, the appetite for radical or experimental work must have been significantly supressed for a long period, well into the 21st century and only until *Theatre on the Fly* literally popped up in 2012, breaking the long spell of absence of alternative theatre venues and, perhaps, radical new theatre, at least in Chichester. But that would be a simplifying generalisation. Before we write a kind of eulogy for the fringe, we need to consider other developments that took place in the theatre industry over the last three decades. We need to ask ourselves: What was happening in mainstream venues in the last thirty years? What sort of venues did flourish in this period? Did any new venues make an appearance? And how did policy around arts funding and theatre subsidy affect the whole landscape? This is the focus of the next section.

3. Theatre developments 1990-2019

3.1 In-yer-face theatre

This is how theatre critic Aleks Sierz chose to describe a new wave of British Theatre that emerged in London the 1990s. ‘In-yer-face’, that is, confrontational, provocative, upsetting, shocking, revolting… Sarah Kane’s *Blasted*, staged at the Royal Court in 1995 is generally regarded as the herald of this new style in British theatre-making. A dystopian fantasy with multiple scenes of explicit sexual and military violence, *Blasted* generated shock waves amongst audiences and theatre critics alike, provoking ‘a moral hullabaloo and media panic unmatched in British theatre’

(Billington 2007:355). Other young writers followed suit though, including Mark Ravenhill, whose 1995 play *Shopping and Fucking* rose to international acclaim. The critics' initial scepticism gradually evaporated as this style of theatre was becoming commonplace. London-based playwrights of the latter half of the 1990s came to be considered to belong to a sort of an avant-garde circle, producing work that was seen as fashionable, cutting edge, daring, 'cool'; it was after all, the product of such bigger movements as New Labour and Cool Brittania. Sierz popularized the term 'in-yer-face' in his seminal book with the same title published in 2001. But as the author wrote later[1], the book 'like much contemporary history, is inevitably something of a backward glance'. Indeed, 'in-yer-face', which came to represent a style and sensibility rather than a movement, was considered burnt out before the decade was over. Kane's suicide in 1999 was certainly a catalyst for that. When her debut play returned to the stage fifteen years later, Simon Stephens[2] made a poignant comment: 'I think it is time to separate Sarah Kane's plays from her biography. Let's not make a false equation between her despair and her talent, or believe that one came out of the other. Let's just revel in her work'.

Sierz concludes his account of the decade thus[3]:

> This avant-garde takes a classic form: innovation, scandal and then retrenchment. But although by 2001 the new wave has broken, one of the reasons for this is that in-yer-face theatre has done its job — it has kicked down the door of complacency in the theatre, and, where it led, others have followed. In-yer-face writers give theatre the oxygen of publicity, and help inspire the diverse ***New Writing culture*** (emphasis added) that has emerged since.

We explore this culture in the next section.

3.2 New Writing culture

[1] Author's website: https://www.sierz.co.uk/writings/what-ever-happened-to-in-yer-face-theatre/

[2] Simon Stephens, 'Sarah Kane's debut play Blasted returns'. *The Guardian* 24 October 2010.

[3] Author's website: https://www.sierz.co.uk/writings/what-ever-happened-to-in-yer-face-theatre/

Plays from the 1990s are not to be remembered by the provocative nature of their content alone. New writing in this period brought other innovations, too, including experimentation with theatrical form. Originally the reserve of ‘fringe’ venues or festivals, many experimental companies had by the beginning of the new century moved decidedly into the mainstream. *Théâtre de Complicité*, specializing in physical theatre, is the best example, according to Sierz (2012). Other examples would include *Forced Entertainment*, with their unique use of language, *DV8 Physical Theatre*, noted for their groundbreaking dance routines, and *Frantic Assembly*, who pioneered a style that incorporates dance and music that is entirely their own. The advent of technology played a crucial role in the enrichment of styles and productions, a topic we’ll return to later on.

Thematically, the new writing culture that emerged in the 1990s falls into the following broad trends, according to Pattie (2006:393-4): ‘preoccupation with masculinity’, ‘a welcome tendency to treat gay and lesbian relationships as entirely normal’, ‘an interest in the marginalised and excluded’, and ‘a wider exposure of writers from other parts of the British Isles’.

Such themes, however, have no doubt departed from the overtly political subject matter that characterised theatre in previous decades. Lane (2010) summarises some of the criticism directed at new plays in this period, pointing to low quality, introspection, counter-productiveness, and reactionary nature. Considering even those described as ‘political’, they in fact dealt with politics with a small p, short on ideology and lacking in grand narrative, and focusing on the domestic and the personal, not social change.

These criticisms, which were by no means widely shared, might even be unjustified if we consider where such new writing emerged, that is, the actual stages that produced it. In London, the Royal Court, Bush, Hampstead and Soho theatres had all at some point specialised in new writing, as did the Traverse in Edinburgh and Live Theatre in Newcastle. But instrumental in promoting new work were the unsubsidised fringe venues in London, including the Finborough, the King’s Head,

and the Old Red Lion. Famously housed above or below pubs and, inevitably, showing to very small audiences, they have enjoyed (and still do) huge success in showcasing emerging artists that would later become household names. As theatre director and writer Dominic Dromgoole[4] said, 'In the mid-1990s, there was a more vibrant garage-band feel when anyone could get their play on at the Old Red Lion or the Finborough. And people would enjoy that. […] You were as likely to have a good evening on the fringe as at the National.'

It would be fair to argue, therefore, that what sort of plays get written when very much depends on what sort of stages are willing to put them on. To demonstrate this further, I chose two phenomena from the mid-noughties, demonstrated by two groups of six playwrights each, and each group with its own unique agenda and ambitions.

On the one hand, we have the 'Monsterists', a group of playwrights including David Eldridge, Richard Bean, Ryan Craig, Roy Williams, Moira Buffini and Colin Teevan. Starting with an article to *The Guardian* they proceeded with a wider campaign calling out for 'monsterist' plays. To quote from their manifesto[5]:

> Monsterism is a theatre writers' campaign to promote new writing in the British theatre. It is a positive, forward looking movement that aims to create opportunities for British theatre writers to create large scale plays, for large stages.
>
> The key aesthetic tenets of a monsterist work are:
> - Large scale, large concept and, possibly, large cast
> - The primacy of the dramatic (story showing) over storytelling
> - Meaning implied by action (not by lecture)
> - Characters caught in a drama (not there to facilitate a polemic)
> - The exposure of the human condition (not sociology)
> - Inspirational and dangerous (not sensationalist)

[4] Dominic Dromgoole, interviewed by Aleks Sierz (29 March 2001) and cited in Sierz (2012:66).

[5] David Eldridge, 'Massive attack'. *The Guardian* 27 June 2005.

> On a practical level the implications of the manifesto are:
> - The elevation of new theatre writing from the ghetto of the studio 'black box' to the main stage
> - Equal access to financial resources for plays being produced by a living writer (i.e. equal with dead writers)
> - Use of the very best directors for new plays
> - Use of the very best actors for new plays

Their campaign did have an impact. Theatres, including the National under the directorship of Nick Hyther, but also the RSC, the Globe and the Olivier, became more ambitious in their programming, just as writers committed to writing big stories.

Meanwhile, above a pub in London's Battersea, another group of six playwrights formed their own collective, calling themselves the 'Apathists'. The group included Mike Bartlett, Nick Gill, Morgan Lloyd Malcolm, Duncan Macmillan, Simon Vinnicombe and Rachel Wagstaff. Together they made Theatre 503 (catering to an audience of a mere 64 members) their creative home and produced an output of such notable quality that soon generated a cult following. The Union Theatre hosted a festival showcasing their work, which would later transfer to Latitude Festival.

Monsterists, apathists, solo writers, or collectives, they all contributed significantly to the new writing boom of the period, lending it both variety and vitality. To quote David Farr[6], then artistic director of the Lyric Hammersmith,

> What theatre needs to survive is original, provocative and innovative storytelling. How you tell the story - the puppetry of Shockheaded Peter, the hitech video of An Elephant Vanishes, the collective bravura of Kneehigh, the solitary brilliance of Harold Pinter or David Harrower - is a personal choice with specific needs and consequences. There are an infinite number of ways of making new work in the theatre. It's a bastard form. That's what makes it so great.

[6] David Farr, 'Make mine a large'. *The Guardian* 17 November 2005.

Farr's words are indicative of another cultural shift that took place in the early years of the century. A long debate within critic and academic circles as to what exactly constitutes theatre was finally settling with a more inclusivity-oriented consensus. Rebellato's review of Billington's *State of the Nation* (2007)[7] and Haydon's review of Sierz's *Rewriting the Nation* (2011)[8] give a flavour of the antagonisms of the time. The debate, which had polarised critics and scholars between 'new writing' (newly written plays) and 'new work' (any form of theatre, including visual theatre, devised theatre, physical theatre, etc.) was ultimately a debate between tradition and innovation.

Innovative work had already been gaining in prominence and popularity. In the 1990s, venues like the Battersea Arts Centre, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and the Drill Hall, all specialised in fringe theatre. 'Under Morris's artistic directorship BAC has been transformed from a marginal fringe venue into a buzzing powerhouse of experiment and development that is setting the agenda for the next generation of theatre makers', wrote *The Telegraph* in 2003 (cited in Sierz 2012:65). And as Haydon notes, 'By 2000, it would also have been easy to argue the old fringe model – the network of rooms above, beside or below London pubs – was all but dead. Dead, or else – in the case of venues like the Bush or the Gate – elevated to 'Off-West-End' status by virtue of solid critical profile and public funding' (2013:54).

Haydon also talks of the creation of a 'New Writing Industry', which he attributes to the arrival of new money and a change in the rubric of how it would be spent. But he also acknowledged the increasing 'plurality' in the work available, using examples such as *Punchdrunk*, which produced 'truly immersive' theatre, or *Shunt*, which started at a disused railway arch in Bethnal Green and in a few years moved to the huge network of caves under London Bridge Station, creating The Shunt Vaults, and showing the way in what came to be widely known as site-specific theatre. We'll consider this and other innovations in theatre making in the following section.

---

[7] Dan Rebellato, review of *State of the Nation* by Michael Billington. *Contemporary Theatre Review* 18 (2008), Issue 4, pp. 528-30.

[8] Andrew Haydon, review of *Rewriting the Nation* by Aleks Sierz. *Postcards from the Gods* 22 March 2011.

Talking about New Writing, it would be a big oversight not to mention the more targeted initiatives by established venues such as the Royal Court or the National Theatre. The former had for decades been renowned for staging risk-taking shows, but the 2000s were a particularly prolific period, with Simon Stephens heading *The Young Writers Group* and promoting some of the most successful playwrights now working in Britain, including James Graham and Jack Thorne. The National, meanwhile, gave its audiences not just new work but new temporary venues in which to enjoy them, launching *The Loft* in 2002 and *The Shed* in 2013.

Michael Billington remembers *The Loft* thus: 'Between May and September 2002 some thirteen new works were premiered in the two auditoria at much-reduced ticket prices. […] The National was trying to connect with new audience and counter its own greying constituency' (2007:369). One of these plays really stood out for Billington for being 'highly durable'. That was Roy Williams's *Sing Yer Heart Out For The Lads.* Shocking audiences with its unique exposure of chauvinism and racism, it was deemed at the time to reflect New Labour's commitment to social inclusion. The CFT production nearly two decades later proved the play's durability, with a script deemed 'as hot as ever' by a *Guardian* reviewer[9].

Quite naturally, perhaps, *The Shed*, erected eleven years after the Loft, specialised entirely on new writing and contemporary theatre, offering a more experimental and less traditional programming than the main National Theatre venues. 'Its rough and ready, provisional quality has been one of its many strengths, presumably making the NT feel more comfortable in programming contemporary theatre that is often very nimble in its ability to respond to what is happening in the world', Lyn Gardner said in *The Guardian*[10].

[9] Anya Ryan, 'Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads review – a burning portrait of racism in Britain'. *The Guardian* 28 July 2022.

[10] Lyn Gardner, 'The National Theatre's Temporary space must spark permanent change'. *The Guardian* 28 April 2016.

3.3 Plurality and inclusivity

If one was to choose a single word to capture the changes that took place in the 21st century British theatre, *plurality* would be that word. Unlike the 90s, no single style predominates in the noughties and afterwards. Along with a multiplicity of styles and themes, we also see an expansion of places that could potentially stage plays and a diversification of creative voices.

The impact of technology was widely felt. Haydon (2013:46) reminds readers how it all started:

> At the start of the decade 'multi-media' productions were still the oft ill-judged preserve of large, well-funded companies and buildings. By the end, you could hardly find a student production that did not incorporate video projections, live feeds, homemade soundscapes and all manner of other technical wizardry. The fact that anyone with a laptop and some free, downloaded software would edit sound and video produced an unheralded revolution in theatre comparable to the early days of punk music. One striking new use this technology was put to was the creation of headphone-based theatre.

The author offers a range of examples to illustrate headphone-based theatre which, in the course of the decade has developed to include not only accessible theatre for people with hearing impairments, but also immersive experiences, allowing the audience to follow a specific narrative through sound, explore different soundscapes or choose their own audio path. In addition to immersive audio experiences, some companies also offered audio walks, often in outdoor settings, or headphone-mediated performances where the audience is part of the performance itself. Computer gaming really did meet theatre.

Punchdrunk's 2006 play *Faust in Wapping* offered audiences an interactive experience in a disused warehouse. This is a widely talked about example, but site-specific theatre, though not new, became more commonplace thanks to advances in

technology. Theatre could indeed go anywhere, and anywhere could be re-imagined as a stage, from an underground car park to an office space to a hillside. In the meantime, technology wouldn't escape the big, established theatres either. Katie Mitchell's radical multi-media revival of *Attempts On Her Life* by Martin Crimp opened at the National in 2007. The following decade the RSC was to collaborate with Google, as well as other multi-media and gaming pioneers, as part of their long-term investment in live performance using emerging technology.

Both the National and the RSC, as well as the West End, revolutionised the mainstream stages in other ways too, most notably through their commitment to diversity and inclusivity. *That Face* by 21-year-old Polly Stenham, winner of the 2007 Evening Standard Most Promising Playwright Award, transferred to West End a year later, and was hailed as the youngest new writing debut since 1966.

The 2000s saw other theatre 'firsts' too, including the work of Black playwrights. Between 2003 and 2004 eleven new Black plays were staged in established venues including the National Theatre and the Royal Court, and in 2005 the Tricycle's African American season included the first Black repertory company to perform in London. Also in 2005, *Elmina's Kitchen* by Kwame Kwei-Armah becomes the first new play by a British-born Black writer in the West End, and *The Big Life* becomes the first Black British musical in the West End. Change in terms of ethnic representation had been very slow though. Billington (2007) traces the beginning of it at a 2001 conference organised by the Nottingham Playhouse and the Arts Council, addressing the scarcity of ethnic minority voices in British theatre. The Eclipse Report, produced following the conference, talked of alleged racism and discrimination against Black and Asian artists, who stated that they could only exist on the margins, away from the mainstream.

By the end of the 2010s, diversity is noticeable not just on the stage but in the auditoriums too. 'The discussion around black British playwrights is inextricably

linked to audiences, black or not. Perceptions that black audiences don't come, or that white audiences won't care, are changing', wrote *The Guardian*[11] in 2018.

Billington appears more optimistic too: 'Artists of colour […] currently occupy key positions as artistic directors […] It would now be offensive to stage to stage a classical production without diversity of casting […] Policies within the big theatre companies have also shifted' (2021:175). Instrumental in these shifts was Arts Council England's financial support for Black and minority ethnic artists and organisations including, for instance, the Black Plays Archive, launched in 2013. ACE, the main funding body for theatre and the arts, and its rather inconsistent commitments and policies, is the focus of the next session.

3.4 Policy and funding

The 1990s saw many theatres all around the country facing a financial crisis. In 1998 the National Campaign for the Arts (a charity sponsored by the Association of British Orchestras, the British Actors' Equity Association, the Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance, the Musicians' Union, the Society of West End Theatre and the Theatrical Management Association) announced a cumulative loss of £12 million in funding for producing theatres over a decade and urged local councils to invest in theatres. Two years later, the Arts Council's Boyden Report also investigated the state of English regional producing theatres, finding them facing financial difficulties and a decline in audiences. Its recommendation of a £25m injection of funding annually saved theatres from closure and reinvigorated the sector.

The euphoria didn't last. In 2007, the Arts Council announced severe cuts to nearly 200 arts organisations in England, a decision guided by the McMaster Report and its call for a new focus on 'excellence' in art. Further cuts in the sector followed in 2010 when, amidst the global financial crisis, the Westminster Government Spending Review included a 30% reduction of ACE's funding.

[11] Bridget Minamore, 'We are here! The black playwrights storming the West End'. *The Guardian* 3 October 2018.

The years that followed saw the publication of a number of reports which, though acknowledged the significant contribution of theatre to the UK economy, did not result in any significant changes in funding policy. *Rebalancing Our Cultural Capital: A Contribution to the Debate on National Policy for the Arts and Culture in England* was published by Peter Stark et al. in 2013. In similar vein, *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth: The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value* followed. A year later, we see the publication of *Arts Council England: Analysis of Theatre in England: Final Report by BOP Consulting & Graham Devlin Associates*.

Perhaps the consequences of the next shift in funding policy are yet to be seen. *Let's Create: Strategy 2020-2030* was published by ACE in 2020, emphaticising a priority in community involvement in the arts. In 2022, ACE announced National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding for 2023-26, with a mission to 'Level Up', sending a greater proportion of funding away from the capital.

4. Conclusion: national trends, local reflections

The 'Third Way' approach introduced by New Labour in the 1990s, imagined as a sort of marriage between the public and the private, was replicated across all national institutions, including health, education, and of course the arts. With public subsidy maintained at modest levels over the period, theatres nationwide turned to private sponsorship in order to survive. But changes in the political climate affected not only the way theatres are governed, but also what they put on stage. The last three decades saw an ever-increasing reliance on profitable reproductions of the classics and crowd-attracting musicals. But this was also a period regarded by many as a sort of 'golden age' for new writing. Theatres that survived and thrived are those that somehow managed to find the right balance between a safe and a more ambitious programming. And despite the fact that plays became far less oppositional than in previous decades, as the need for them eclipsed with the departure of Margaret Thatcher from power, some of the new work that emerged continued to be radical in different ways, like with in-yer-face theatre in the 90s, or with experiments

in form facilitated by 21st century technology. Community and fringe theatre is seen by many to have suffered in the period but again, what really disappeared were companies and venues describing themselves as 'fringe'. Such a classification became increasingly redundant as mainstream venues were opening their doors to young artists, embracing a plethora of voices from communities that had hitherto been confined to the margins, most notably from ethnic minorities.

The history of the Chichester Festival Theatre is not but a reflection of the national picture. While the 1970s gave us *New Ventures* and the 1980s *The Tent*, it wasn't until 2012 that another temporary / fringe venue, *Theatre on the Fly*, would invite audiences to a riskier, more experimental programming. But it's also interesting to see what was happening in the main theatres in the time that lapsed. In the period 1990-1999 there were 10 world premieres of plays (in the narrowest sense of the word), increasing to 15 in 2000-2009 and 16 in 2010-19. And at least two playwrights made their debuts since 2000. So perhaps Edgar was right when he speculated that 'It's probable that more new plays have been performed this century than at any other time since the invention of cinema and radio' (2021:xi).

It is uncertain whether the latest cuts in funding will have a lasting impact on the volume and quality of new drama. London venues have certainly suffered in recent years (Padley 2022, Thorpe 2024), but regional theatres, including Chichester, have reasons to be optimistic. As Helena Berry, CFT Heritage Manager, said[12], 'We are privileged to rely on a network of wealthy supporters that can help us deliver projects like *The Nest*, to push the arts forward, while others in the industry are facing cuts and restrictions'. Here we have it, again: the 'third way' in action.

The construction of *The Nest* is nearly completed as I write this, promising to connect with the local community in line with ACE's latest policy, nurture young talent, and attract a more diverse, perhaps younger, audience to exciting new productions. Its small size is conducive to new work. 'One of the most significant material factors in staging new plays is the size of the venue', Sierz says. 'Traditionally, these have been small' (2011:41). In the meantime, its thrust-type

[12] Personal communication, 4 April 2025.

stage promises a more intimate interaction with the audience and is in line with recent research on theatre space (e.g. Craddock and Freshwater 2024).

All in all, then, these are exciting times for CFT!

Works cited

Billington, Michael (2007). *State of the Nation: British Theatre since 1945.* London: Faber and Faber.

Billington, Michael (2021). *Affair of the Heart: British Theatre from 1992 to 2020.* London: Methuen Drama.

Craddock, Kate and Helen Freshwater (2024). *Theatre and its Audiences: Reimagining the Relationship in Times of Crisis*. London: Methuen Drama.

Edgar, David (2021). *How Plays Work*. London: Nick Hern Books.

Eldridge, David (2005). ‘Massive attack’. *The Guardian* 27 June 2005.

Farr, David (2005). ‘Make mine a large’. *The Guardian* 17 November 2005.

Gardner, Lyn (2016). ‘The National Theatre's Temporary space must spark permanent change’. *The Guardian* 28 April 2016.

Harvie, Jen and Dan Rebellato (Eds) (2023). *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haydon, Andrew (2011). Review of *Rewriting the Nation* by Aleks Sierz. *Postcards from the Gods* 22 March 2011.

Haydon, Andrew (2013). ‘Theatre in the 2000s’. In D. Rebellato (Ed.) *Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009. Voices, Documents, New Interpretations.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Lane, David (2010). *Contemporary British Drama*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Luckhurst, Mary (Ed.) (2006). *A Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama 1880–2005*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Minamore, Bridget (2018). ‘We are here! The black playwrights storming the West End’. *The Guardian* 3 October 2018.

Padley, Kate (2022). ‘New Writing, New Woes: The Effect of Devastating Cuts on London Theatre’. *The Indiependent* 15 December 2022.

Pattie, David (2006). ‘Theatre Since 1968’. In M. Luckhurst (Ed.) *A Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama 1880–2005*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Rebellato, Dan (2008). Review of *State of the Nation* by Michael Billington. *Contemporary Theatre Review* 18, Issue 4, pp. 528-30.

Rebellato, Dan (Ed.) (2013). *Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009. Voices, Documents, New Interpretations.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Rebellato, Dan and Jen Harvie (2023). 'The Fringe: The Rise and Fall of Radical Alternative Theatre'. In Jen Harvie and Dan Rebellato (Eds) *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ryan, Anya (2022). '*Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads* review – a burning portrait of racism in Britain'. *The Gurdian*, 28 July 2022.

Sierz, Aleks (2001). *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*. London: Faber and Faber.

Sierz, Aleks (2011). *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today*. London: Methuen Drama.

Sierz, Aleks (2012). 'Theatre in the 1990s'. In A. Sierz (Ed.) *Modern British Playwriting: the 1990s. Voices, Documents, New Interpretations.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Sierz, Aleks (Ed.) (2012). *Modern British Playwriting: the 1990s. Voices, Documents, New Interpretations.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Stephens, Simon (2010). 'Sarah Kane's debut play Blasted returns'. *The Guardian* 24 October 2010.

Thorpe, Vanessa (2024). 'Budget crisis imperils Royal Court's support for new writers'. *The Observer*, 11 February 2024.

Additional reading

Arts Council England. 'Research and data'. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-and-data

Campaign for the Arts. 'News and Views'. https://www.campaignforthearts.org/news/

Chichester Festival Theatre. 'CFT Production lists and schedules'. From Theatre's archive.

Department for Culture, Media & Sport. 'Press releases'. https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-and-sport

Drama Online. 'Plays' and 'Playwrights'. https://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/home

National Theatre. 'Press releases'. https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/communications/

Royal Shakespeare Company. ‘Press releases’.
https://www.rsc.org.uk/press/releases

Saunders, Graham (2015). *British Theatre Companies: 1980-1994.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Sierz, Aleks (2009-2025). ‘Writings’. From author’s website https://www.sierz.co.uk

Tomlin, Liz (2015). *British Theatre Companies: 1995-2014.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.