

STATE ED

STATE THEATRE COMPANY  
of South Australia presents

# Betrayal

by harold pinter



STATE SA  
THEATRE  
COMPANY



**DURATION APPROX:** *85 minutes (no interval)*  
**SUITABLE FOR** *Years 10 - 12*  
*DWS performance followed by a 20 - 30 min Q&A session*

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# Theatre Etiquette

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## THEATRE ETIQUETTE

*“An audience member had clambered onto the stage of the Booth Theatre and tried to plug a cell phone charger into an outlet on the set of Hand to God.” – Playbill news July 2015*

While this occurrence in New York seems pretty ridiculous, our State Theatre Company Audience Spy Panel have already clocked the following right here in South Australia; phones ringing, phones used as lights, note-taking, heckling of actors and people walking across the stage - all while the actors are performing onstage!

A live performance is a unique experience shared between performers and the audience. Unlike television or movies, the actors on stage can hear noise and see lights from the audience. So, as a courtesy to the performers and the others around you, please review the following information with your class before attending a performance.

### **Day with State performances**

Please notify front of house when your school arrives; as schools are seated in order of arrival. Teachers must accompany students into the theatre and are responsible for their behaviour throughout the performance. Students will be asked to leave large school bags in the foyer.

### **Be on Time!**

Some shows have a lock-out period where you won't be let into the theatre until a suitable break in the performance.

### **Running Late for a Matinee Performance?**

If your group is running late for a performance, please contact State Theatre Company's main number on 8415 5333 during working hours, or contact the venue after 5pm.

### **Note taking**

Many teachers like students to take notes during a performance. This is distracting to actors on stage and other audience members, particularly when phones are used as lighting devices. Instead, notes should be written in the interval and after the show. If you are seeing a performance with a Q&A following, this is a good time to take notes. Perhaps allow class discussion time in the foyer after the show. If students have further questions after the performance I am happy to respond.

Email: [education@statetheatrecompany.com.au](mailto:education@statetheatrecompany.com.au)

### **Talking**

Everyone attending the production deserves to see the play without distractions.

When someone in the audience talks, it ruins the story and spoils the mood being created on stage.

### **Leave food and drinks outside**

Food and drinks are not permitted in the theatre. They make a mess and the noise is distracting to the actors and the rest of the audience.

**Seats are for sitting**

Do not place your feet on the seat in front of you. Always walk along the row rather than jumping over seats. For safety reasons stay in your seat at the end of the show until the auditorium lights go up.

**Turn OFF all electronic devices**

Mobile phones should be turned off during a performance, as they can interfere with the sound system. Phones used to SMS give off a glow that the actors can see from the stage and is distracting to them and others around you. All recording devices (camera, MP3 recorders, and video recorders) are illegal to use unless you have prior copyright permission.

**Feel free to laugh, cry and applaud**

Show your appreciation of the performance (the actors love it!!)

**Length of Performance**

The length of a performance in the Study Guide is an estimation made during rehearsals. For updated details check out our website. [www.statetheatrecompany.com.au](http://www.statetheatrecompany.com.au)

**Suitability**

Warning guides are usually given on all productions in our brochure and online. Should you have further questions please ring the Education Manager for more information.

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: The BAD Audience Member!**

A fun way to review theatre etiquette with your students is to have them point out bad audience behaviour during a show. Here's one way to illustrate this concept:

1. Have one or two students come up to the front of the room and present something to the class. They can tell a story, present an oral report, or tell some jokes – it doesn't matter what they present; the important thing is that they are the "actors" and the class is the audience.
2. Once they are into the activity, you (the teacher) leave the room and then re-enter. Enter loudly, chew gum, step on people's feet, talk to them, etc. Be the worst audience member you can possibly be. Find a seat and continue to talk to others, ask what's going on in the performance, take pictures, talk on your cell phone etc.
3. Afterward, ask the class to list all the bad behaviour. Write these on the board. Include coming in late, talking, gum chewing, waving to friends, etc.
4. Then ask the audience members how they felt when the bad audience member came into the theatre. Could they hear the actors? Were they distracted? And finally ask the actors how they felt. Could they concentrate on their performance? They may have ended up listening to you instead of continuing with their presentation!

The important goal of this activity is for students to actively see and feel what it's like to have someone disrupt their theatre experience, both from the performer and the audience side of the stage.

After you come back from seeing the State Theatre show, review the experience with your students. Were they "good" or "bad" audience members? How was the experience of watching the show given their behavior and the behavior of other audience members?

# Cast & Creatives

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**EMMA** *Alison Bell*  
**JERRY** *Nathan O'Keefe*  
**ROBERT** *Mark Saturno*  
**WAITER** *John Maurice*

**DIRECTOR** *Geordie Brookman*  
**LIGHTING AND SET DESIGNER** *Geoff Cobham*  
**COSTUME DESIGNER AND ASSOCIATE DESIGNER** *Ailsa Paterson*  
**SOUND DESIGNER** *Jason Sweeney*  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** *Suzannah Kennett Lister*  
**ACCENT COACH** *Simon Stollery*  
**STAGE MANAGER** *Melanie Selwood*  
**REHEARSAL ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER** *Alison Growden*  
**HEAD MECHANIST** *Vince Louch*  
**HEAD ELECTRICIAN** *Peter Taylor*  
**LIGHTING OPERATOR** *Martin Howard*  
**SOUND OPERATOR** *Luke Bourne*

*Costumes made by State Theatre Company Wardrobe*  
*Set made by State Theatre Company Workshop*

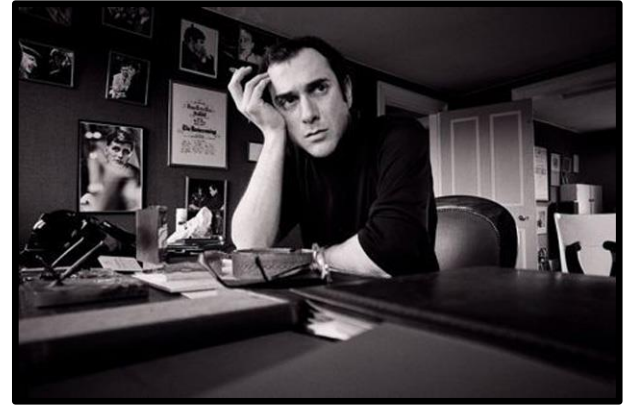
# Playwright

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***Playwright, screenwriter, actor, director, poet, author and political activist, Harold Pinter was at the time of his death considered by many the most influential and imitated dramatist of his generation.***

## **HAROLD PINTER (1930 – 2008)**

Harold Pinter was a Nobel Prize-winning English playwright, screenwriter, director and actor. He was one of the most influential modern British dramatists, with his writing career spanning more than 50 years.



He was born in 1930 in Hackney, a working-class neighbourhood in London's East End. His father was a tailor and his mother a homemaker, both of Jewish decent. During World War II, Pinter, still a child, was evacuated from the city to Cornwall, with 26 other boys. This experience left Pinter with profound memories of loneliness, bewilderment, separation and loss. He returned to London after the war to attend school where he started writing poetry.

In 1948, Pinter attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) for two terms, but hating school, he missed most of his classes and dropped out. He was also called up for military service, but he refused to serve and was fined by the magistrate.

Pinter started his theatrical career as an actor, performing in repertory companies and touring England and Ireland. Having written poetry since he was thirteen, he began to write prose and in 1957 wrote his first play, *The Room*, for the University of Bristol's Drama Department. The same year he wrote, *The Dumb Waiter* and his first full-length play, *The Birthday Party*.

His second full-length play, *The Caretaker* (1959) was his first large success, a success repeated by his next play, *The Homecoming* (1964).

In 1956 he married actress Vivien Merchant, but the marriage was turbulent and began disintegrating in the mid-1960s. His seven year affair with another woman inspired his 1978 play *Betrayal*. Pinter wrote the following: "*There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false.*"

Overall Pinter wrote 29 plays, 15 dramatic sketches, 27 screenplays and film scripts for cinema and television. His best-known works; *The Birthday Party* (1957), *The Caretaker* (1959), *The Homecoming* (1964), and *Betrayal* (1978), were adapted to film. He also adapted other people's works for film; *The Servant* (1963), *The Go-Between* (1970), *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), *The Trial* (1993), and *Sleuth* (2007).

In 2005, Harold Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, the highest honour available to any writer in the world. He died from cancer in December 2008. The night before Pinter's New Year's Eve burial, theatre marquees on Broadway dimmed their lights for a minute in tribute.

# Director

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## GEORDIE BROOKMAN

Geordie is the Artistic Director of State Theatre Company. Since graduating from Flinders University Drama Centre in 2001 Geordie has directed work around Australia, the UK and Asia. His State Theatre Company directing credits include *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Footfalls*, *Kryptonite* (Sydney Theatre Company & State Theatre Company), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Little Bird*, *The Seagull*, *Maggie Stone*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, *Speaking In Tongues*, *romeo&juliet*, *Ghosts*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *Ruby Moon* and *Hot Fudge*, *Toy Symphony* (Queensland Theatre Company & State Theatre Company), *Knives In Hens* (Malthouse & State Theatre Company), Other directing credits include *Spring Awakening: The Musical* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Baghdad Wedding* (Belvoir), *Metro Street* (Arts Asia Pacific, Power Arts, Daegu International Musicals Festival and State Theatre Company), *The City and Tender* (nowyesnow), *Marathon*, *Morph*, *Disco Pigs* and *The Return* (Fresh Track), *Tiny Dynamite* (Griffin), *Macbeth* and *The Laramie Project* (AC Arts).



His productions have won or been nominated for Helpmann, Greenroom, Sydney Critics Circle, Adelaide Critics Circle and Curtain Call awards.

He has also worked as a producer, dramaturg, teacher, event director and curator for organisations including the Adelaide Festival, The National Play Festival, University of Wollongong, Australian Theatre for Young People, Australian Fashion Week and Queensland Theatre Company.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Artists leave traces of themselves in everything they make. Sometimes though, they choose to directly address an issue or theme that sits incredibly close to home. When this choice is made what is harder, it seems to me, is to take this piece of highly personal experience and make it universal. But it is exactly this feat that Harold Pinter manages so wrenchingly in *Betrayal*.

It is a play written with a very specific context in regards to time, place, culture and class. On first look we may not be looking at ourselves in the mirror of the stage. But from this highly specific base Pinter builds a series of exquisitely structured moments, nine in all, pulled from almost a decade in the lives of three characters. Each moment is both, polite and savage, domestic and charged, light and dark. As he moves us back and forward in time he draws a web of connections ever tighter until we can see that betrayal most often starts with the self.

There are no innocents in Pinter's world just people like us, full of flaws and yearning to be more complete. *Betrayal*, to me, sees Pinter at his most humane, with empathy for characters even when they reveal themselves to be hateful. It is a devilishly tricky, wonderfully musical text that requires precision in approach and both bravery and incredible discipline in performance. I've been lucky to take the journey with such a wonderful company of actors. I hope you enjoy the ride.

## QUESTIONS FOR DIRECTOR

**1. There is a difference between the silences and pauses in Pinter's script. How do you approach each of these when directing?**

The first task is to analyse exactly what is happening in each pause or silence. Is the situation progressing or has it hit a roadblock? Does the status between the characters shift in the course of the pause or silence? I don't subscribe to the view that there is an exact pre-determined timing to Pinter's pauses and silences; each one has to be navigated individually.

**2. What do you feel is the main theme of the play?**

The easy thing would be to say 'Betrayal' but I think that probably simplifies things too much. It's about failures of communication, selfishness, and our inability to truly know ourselves and those around us.

**3. The play is written starting from the end of a relationship and working backwards. Why do you think it was written this way?**

I think Pinter wanted to remove the cathartic payoff that comes with setting events chronologically. He wants us to forensically examine not just what happened, but why. Working in reverse brings an analytical side out in the audience.

**4. How difficult is this for the actors to be uncluttered by the future?**

Almost all films and television are shot out of sequence, so most actors have the ability to segregate scenes from one another emotionally. But I imagine it will be a challenge. Usually in a drama you move from hope to despair, in *Betrayal* it's the other way around, except we know things won't end well!

**5. How important is 'Englishness' to the play?**

It's important in terms of the construction of the language, the musicality of it. I think there are some important aspects of the traditional quality English emotional reserve that feed into the play. That said, I think you could deliver the piece without setting it in England or using accents, we just haven't made that choice for this production.

**6. Why do you think this play has such lasting appeal?**

I'm not sure. It was actually greeted badly when it first premiered, it took critics a little while to realise just how brilliant it was. I guess we keep coming back to it because within it Pinter managed to connect to and discuss some essential but difficult parts of human nature.

# Actor Profile

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## ALISON BELL - Emma

Alison Bell has worked consistently in theatre and television since graduating from the VCA in 2004.

Her theatre credits include *Hedda Gabler* for State Theatre Company of South Australia; *The Book of Everything*, *Constellations*, *Tribes*, *The Ugly One*, *Blackbird*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Doubt* and *King Lear* for the MTC; *Conversation Piece*, *Old Man*, *As You Like It*, *The Book of Everything* and *The Promise* for Belvoir; *White Rabbit*, *Red Rabbit*, *Moving Target*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Spook* for Malthouse Theatre; *Rabbit* and *Doubt* for the STC. She also completed a New York season of *The Book of Everything* in 2012.



Alison's theatre work has earned her two Helpmann Awards, (*Doubt*, 2006 and *Hedda Gabler* 2013) and a Green Room Award (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; *Sleeping Beauty*; *The Spook*, 2007). Further Best Actress nominations include: Sydney Theatre Award, (*Old Man*); Green Room Awards, (*Constellations*, *Tribes*, *Blackbird*, *Doubt*); Helpmann awards, (*Blackbird* and in 2013 a double nomination for Best Actress, *Constellations* and *Hedda Gabler*)

Alison has appeared in many Australian television series, but is perhaps best known for her role as Roo in the AACTA award winning Comedy, *Laid*. For the latter she received an IF (Out of the Box) nomination, an AACTA Award nomination for Best Performance in a Television Comedy and a Best Actress in a Comedy nomination at the 2012 Monte Carlo International TV Festival. Recently, Alison performed guest roles in *The Dr Blake Mysteries* and *House Husbands*, she is also in the development stage of a work she has co-written for television.

## INTERVIEW WITH ALISON

### 1. What drew you to the role of Emma

She's flawed, complex, conflicted; a fascinating creation to interrogate and a gloriously challenging character to realise. I like challenges.

### 2. The play has betrayals on various levels, not just the most obvious one. What do you think the writer is intending the audience to discover?

If we're honest, we all live lives of compromise and betrayal. If we study our own conversations, our own attempts to navigate relationships we'll find countless examples. Truth is difficult and complex. All three characters betray themselves as often as each other, but I don't think Pinter is intending to make any moral or philosophical statements. He seems to be simply presenting the array of betrayals that exist in this triangle, the accidental, incidental, inadvertent, calculated, strategic, brutal, careless betrayals under the surface of each interaction between these characters. Yes, the infidelity in the play is extreme, but the characters' inability to speak as they feel, to explicitly acknowledge what they need or want, to sacrifice one thing for another, these are failings common to human kind. They expose the frailty of the human heart, the seduction of desire, the destruction of entitlement, the scarcity of emotional courage.

### 3. What are the challenges with your character?

I imagine they're similar for the three of us. The extraordinary challenge for me with Emma, is to uncover her subtext, to chart the mercurial shifts beneath her words, to identify what is truly driving her; and in playing her, keep what she wants concealed.

**4. The play runs backwards in time. How difficult is it as an actor to remain in the present tense and not be cluttered/persuaded by the ending?**

I'm so used to accumulating experiences during a performance that inform and drive the emotional and dramatic narrative. The challenge with this structure is to resist taking the emotional residue of a preceding scene into the next one, because they don't build or connect in a linear fashion. When moving back through time one effectively has to peel away a layer, rather than accrue anything. That's a hard trick to play on your psyche. I'm working at establishing clear internal starting points for each scene, fingers crossed that's successful!

**5. The pauses and silences are very important to the piece. What work do you do before entering the rehearsal room when thinking of these? And/or what do you do during the rehearsal period?**

Oh, they're tricky! And yet Pinter's use of pauses and silences is absolutely masterful, therefore requiring precise execution. I'm finding I need to study the script at home a lot more than I would normally. I may know the lines but I need to check on the placement of ellipses', pauses and silences, so as not to surrender to my own natural rhythms and impulses.

This script is more like a musical score in that way. In the room Geordie, (amongst other things) is really conducting the scenes, reminding us of the pauses and silences, as well as the unbroken back and forths which give potency to the quiet moments. We are all pursuing discipline in their execution without compromising truth of expression, because they reveal so much about the characters' internal struggles. It's a challenge, but very rewarding when we succeed!

**6. If you could give your character one piece of advice, what would it be?**

Be brave and explicit when discussing your needs.

## **NATHAN O'KEEFE - Jerry**

For State Theatre Company, Nathan's recent acting credits include *Masquerade* (Griffin Theatre Company/State Theatre Company), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Bell Shakespeare/State Theatre Company), *Hedda Gabler*, and the title role of *Pinocchio* (Windmill Theatre/State Theatre Company/Malthouse Theatre, 2012, Sydney Theatre Company 2014). Earlier this year, Nathan travelled to New York for the US premiere season of our touring co-production of *Pinocchio* at The New Victory Theater.



Other credits include *Talk to me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen*, *Hot Fudge*, *Ghosts*, *King Lear*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* and *Three Sisters* (State Theatre Company), *Thursday*, *The Hypochondriac* and *Harbinger* (Brink Productions), *this uncharted hour* (Brink Productions/State Theatre Company), *Man Covets Bird* (Slingsby), *I Am Not An Animal* (The Border Project), *Mr. McGee & the Biting Flea*, *Emily Loves to Bounce* and *Me & My Shadow* (Patch Theatre Company), *Plop!* season in New York and *Grug* (Windmill Theatre), *Checklist for an Armed Robber* and *Ruby Bruise* (Vitalstatistix), *Assassins* (Flying Penguin Productions) and many others.

Film and TV credits include *Alexandra's Project*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *The Thing About Dolphins*, *All Saints* and various commercials, films, short films and radio plays.

Nathan is an Adelaide Theatre Guide and Adelaide Critics Circle Award Recipient.

## **INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN**

### **1. What drew you to the role of Jerry**

I was fascinated by the impact of the affair for Jerry. He goes into this thing with all guns blazing, full of charm and promise, but once he is in it, he really doesn't know how to deal with it. He seems emotionally unprepared for any depth of relationship, but after seven years something has to deepen, or it dies.

### **2. The play has betrayals on various levels, not just the most obvious one. What do you think the writer is intending the audience to discover?**

There are so many layers to this play that I think almost everyone will take something personal away from it. People will relate to any one of the characters, while others will judge. Ultimately I think it boils down to the question of; was it worth it? Whatever the 'it' is.

### **3. What are the challenges with your character?**

Probably the greatest challenge in this play is the reverse chronological ordering. The play starts off with all the baggage and consequences of the previous nine years, and as the play progresses, we must remove emotional layers to reach the moment of where it all began.

### **4. The play runs backwards in time. How difficult is it as an actor to remain in the present tense and not be cluttered/persuaded by the ending?**

It is incredibly important to commit to every moment in the piece, and to know what has brought your character to this moment in time. Know what they want. And trust the work you've done in the rehearsal room.

### **5. The pauses and silences are very important to the piece. What work do you do before entering the rehearsal room when thinking of these? And/or what do you do during the rehearsal period?**

Whenever pausing or using the silences, the most important thing is to use them as active parts of the scene. I don't mean got for a walk or mime something, but if you simply do nothing, then it's dead stage

time. It's a chance for your character to gather thoughts, or calculate approaches, or settle a thought. You always have to keep the character alive.

## 6. If you could give your character one piece of advice, what would it be?

Consider how your choices will affect others, and ask yourself, is it worth it?



### MARK SATURNO - Robert

Mark is a graduate of the Centre for Performing Arts (AC Arts) and went on to work with Magpie and State Theatre Company before moving to New York City. He returned to South Australia in 2008 to run Longview Vineyard with his family and is thrilled to work at State Theatre Company when time permits.

For State Theatre Company, Mark's theatre credits include *Maggie Stone*, *Blasted*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, *romeo+juliet*, *Solstice*, *The Club* and *The Torrents*. Other theatre credits include *El Stupido's* and *Dance Hall MK.3* (Magpie Theatre), *Dark Heart* (Junction Theatre) and at the Australian National Playwrights' Conference.

On Broadway he has appeared in *The Retreat from Moscow* (Booth Theatre) and off-Broadway his performances include *Howard Katz* (Roundabout Theatre), *An Oak Tree* (Barrow Street Theatre), *John Ferguson* (Mint Theatre), *Comedy of Errors* (Classic Stage Co./Aquila Theatre), *Trainspotting* (Players Theatre), *Ancestral Voices* (Lincoln Centre Theatre) and *Gone Missing* (The Civilians, London & Brooklyn).

Regionally in the USA he has appeared in *Doubt*, *A Number* (Hartford Theaterworks), *I Am My Own Wife*, *The Tempest* (Pittsburgh Public), *Wintertime* (Long Wharf), *The Iliad* (Aquila Theatre), *King Lear*, *King John*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Shakespeare & Co.) and *Edward II* (Tremont Theatre, Boston).

His television/film appearances include *ANZAC Girls*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Changed Forever*, *Law & Order*, *All My Children*, *Spin City*, *PBS Great Books*, *My Normal*, *Heaven's Burning* and *Alchemy*.

## INTERVIEW WITH MARK

### 1. What drew you to the role of Robert?

That ostensibly, he's the victim. He's the character who is on the receiving end of a double betrayal. Betrayed by his wife. Betrayed by his best friend. But he's not innocent in all of this and it's those grey areas, those complexities that make playing him such a challenge – and a treat!

### 2. The play has betrayals on various levels, not just the most obvious one. What do you think the writer is intending the audience to discover?

I think what interests me is the betrayal of self, which is at the heart of these characters, certainly Robert. I think that if they deeply feel that they haven't been true to themselves, then it's somehow easier to betray others and this then spreads like a virus; betraying your own beliefs, relationships, memory etc.

### 3. What are the challenges with your character?

Robert is very different to me! He's a very complex human being and plays his cards close to chest. Where I'm more of an open book, I think he may be the most un-readable character in the play, giving only minor clues away as to what he's feeling. There are very few moments where we see his guard slip.

He's very "buttoned up" in that typically English way and whilst that can be wonderful to play, an actor has to be careful to not make it too robotic.

**4. The play runs backwards in time. How difficult is it as an actor to remain in the present tense and not be cluttered/persuaded by the ending?**

It's REALLY hard! You have to be really specific and almost have to take each scene in isolation. In the lead up to rehearsal it's really helpful to arm yourself with as much knowledge as you can regarding all that has and will happen etc but be prepared to be able to strip all that away depending on which scene you're playing.

**5. The pauses and silences are very important to the piece. What work do you do before entering the rehearsal room when thinking of these? And/or what do you do during the rehearsal period?**

I just learn the lines as I would any other play and not heap too much onto the pauses etc. The pauses and silences are all in the playing so I've learnt not to give them too much weight until I get to the rehearsal room.

**6. If you could give your character one piece of advice, what would it be?**

Communicate! So much angst can be avoided with clear communication and the one thing these people don't do is open up and actually say what's on their mind.



Photos: © Shane Reid

# Plot

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*Betrayal* integrates different permutations of betrayal relating to a seven-year affair involving a married couple, Emma and Robert, and Robert's close friend Jerry, who is also married, to a woman named Judith. For five years Jerry and Emma carry on their affair without Robert or Judith's knowledge, until Emma, without telling Jerry she has done so, admits her infidelity to Robert, although she continues their affair.

In 1977, four years after exposing the affair and two years after their subsequent break up, Emma meets Jerry to tell him that her marriage to Robert is over. She then lies to Jerry in telling him that, last night, she had to reveal the truth to Robert and that he now knows of the affair. The truth however, is that Robert has known about the affair for the past four years.

# Synopsis

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The events in *Betrayal* occur over a period of 9 years.

**1977**

**Scene One: Pub. Spring.**

Emma and Jerry meet for the first time in two years after ending their seven year affair. Emma is now having an affair with Casey, an author whose agent is Jerry and whose publisher is her husband, Robert. Emma tells Jerry that she and Robert are getting a divorce, explaining that they were up talking all night. She found out that Robert has betrayed her with other women for years, and she revealed her affair with Jerry.

**Scene Two: Jerry's House. Later the same day.**

A distressed Jerry has invited Robert to meet with him, so he can discuss the affair. Robert reveals that in fact he learned about it four years ago, but has continued with their friendship. Robert is quite matter of fact about the affair and ends up consoling Jerry, who has become distraught at discovering how long his friend knew without confrontation.

**1975**

**Scene Three: Flat. Winter.**

It is the end of Jerry and Emma's affair. They rarely meet, as Emma is busy running an art gallery and Jerry is often out of the country for work. It is revealed that Emma hoped the flat would be more like a home, but Jerry never had this intention. They agree to give up the flat and go their separate ways.

**1974**

**Scene Four: Robert and Emma's House. Living room. Autumn.**

Jerry visits Robert and Emma at home. Robert knows about the affair, but rather than let Jerry know, he toys with him, trying to bait him into admitting the affair. Jerry is blissfully unaware and tells Robert that Casey, one of their writers, has left his wife and is living nearby. Jerry and Robert plan to play squash, but Jerry puts the plans on hold as he is visiting New York with Casey. The stress and tension of the situation leaves Emma upset.

**1973**

**Scene Five: Hotel Room. Summer.**

Robert and Emma are on holiday in Venice, intending to visit Torcello the next day. Emma is reading a book by Spinks, another author whose agent is Jerry and who Robert refused to publish. Robert has discovered that Emma has received a private letter from Jerry and indirectly questions her, until she admits they are having an affair.

**Scene Six: Flat. Summer.**

Emma has returned from the holiday with Robert in Venice. She has bought a tablecloth for the flat, trying to make it feel more homely. Jerry reveals that despite the affair he continues to lunch with Robert, not knowing that Robert has just discovered their betrayal.

**Scene Seven: Restaurant. 1973. Summer.**

Robert and Jerry meet for lunch where Robert gets drunk. Robert knows of the affair, but instead of addressing the issue he talks about how he hates modern novels, and that Emma enjoys Jerry's new discovery, Spinks. He then goes on to explain that Jerry and Emma have a lot in common. He talks of his trip and tells Jerry that he went to Torcello on his own and read Yeats, where he was happy.

**1971**

**Scene Eight: Flat. Summer.**

Emma wants to know whether Jerry's wife suspects his affair, before announcing to him that while he was in America, she became pregnant with Robert's child.

**1968**

**Scene Nine: Robert and Emma's House. Bedroom. Winter.**

During a party Jerry surprises Emma in her bedroom and declares his love for her. When Robert enters Jerry tells him how lovely his wife is and tells Robert he is his oldest friend as well as his best man.

# Characters

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Pinter's characters are complex, sophisticated and three-dimensional.

## EMMA

Emma is an art gallery manager, a mother and wife, married to Robert. She begins an affair with Jerry, which she continues without remorse for five years, until Robert confronts her. After this, she continues to stay married to Robert for another four years, before she discovers his infidelities and they separate. Her betrayal then shifts to Jerry, as she doesn't reveal to him that Robert knows until long after the affair.

Emma really wanted more out of the affair, setting the flat up as a 'home', bringing in personal touches, such as the Venetian tablecloth, but Jerry reminds her that his wife is in love with him. Emma's joy, guilt, anger, hostility, despair and sadness of her situation over the seven years of the affair are often wordless.

## JERRY

Jerry is a London literary agent and writer, who discovers writers' Casey and Spinks, both of whom are talked about in the play. Jerry's impulsive nature leads him to instigate the affair, betraying his best friend, Robert, and his wife, Judith. He is a hopeless romantic who falls in love with the idea of love. At first he tells Emma that he is in love with her, but later says that he 'adores' her.

Jerry doesn't release that he is manipulated by Emma and later Robert; being the last to know that Robert learned of the affair years earlier; making him feel foolish when he finds out. He is naïve to think that signs of the affair weren't noticed. When he talks of his wife, Judith, even at the end, he doesn't believe that she ever knew about the affair.

Jerry is the only character touched by guilt, and clueless confusion. He suffers great discomfort whenever his wife or children are mentioned.

## ROBERT

Robert is a publisher and Jerry's best friend, having known each other since their college days. Robert hates books, or *"To be more precise, prose. Or to be even more precise, modern prose."*

In Venice he plays detective, unravelling Emma's infidelity, without directly confronting her outright. Through this scene, he remains practical and logical and only gets upset when she says the single word 'Sorry'. He bitterly accepts his wife's infidelity and his best friends' betrayal.

Instead of confronting Jerry, he plays a game of cat-and-mouse, toying with Jerry, giving him hints to see whether he will also confess. The naïve Jerry however, never picks up on the comments and is devastated when he finds out that Robert knows of the affair, ironically ending up with Robert comforting him.

However, it is revealed that Robert has also been unfaithful, with Emma only finding out as the marriage crumbles. There is an undertone of violence in Robert's character, particularly in scene 2 when he reveals that he's hit Emma. *"It's true I've hit Emma once or twice. But that wasn't to defend a principle...I just felt like giving her a good bashing."*

## WAITER

The waiter serves Robert and Jerry when they meet for lunch. References are made to whether the waiter is the father or son and Robert increasingly becomes drunk and obnoxious.



Photos: © Shane Reid

# Structure of Play

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*The end precedes the beginning,  
And the end and the beginning were always there  
Before the beginning and after the end.  
And all is always now.*

*T.S.Eliot*

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The traditional structure for a story to follow is in chronological order; to start at the beginning and finish at the end. This has always been the natural course to take for storytelling, as it parallels the chronology of real life. This method parallels reality, unfolding until a conclusion is reached.

Pinter wrote *Betrayal* in reverse chronological order, starting with the end of the affair to the beginning, portraying a marriage, a friendship and an adulterous love affair. We meet Emma and Jerry two years after their affair ends, then over a period of nine years we move backwards in time, with each scene revealing a little more about the affair and the growing betrayal, ending when Jerry first declares his love for Emma.

When Pinter's stage version of *Betrayal* first appeared, back in the late 1970s, the reverse chronology was dismissed as a gimmick. But overtime the reversed structure was seen as a means of heightening multiple kinds of ironies, providing poignancy, and delivering the ultimate emotional impact on audiences.

This structure is the very heart and soul of the story in *Betrayal*. It enhances the themes of memory and regret, forcing the audience to be aware of the deceptions, vulnerabilities and consequences of the cheating right away. It means that the audience knows more about the unhappy romantic fortunes of Jerry and Robert and Emma at every moment, than they know about themselves; and are able to judge the characters according to what transpires in the future.

However, the actors have to remain in the present tense, uncluttered by the future, even though the future has already been shown to the audience.

Since *Betrayal*, Pinter's use of the structure of reverse storytelling has been used as a device in many movies and television series. Popular movies include; *Memento*, *Crash*, *American Beauty*, *Gandhi*, *Forrest Gump* and the *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. The American television series, *Seinfeld* also entitled one episode, *The Betrayal*. This episode was structured in reverse and paid homage to Harold Pinter, by featuring a character named Pinter.

# Themes

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Extramarital affairs and their effect on all parties involved are a recurring theme in Pinter's dramas. *Betrayal* narrates the events of an extramarital affair and shows loyalty, love and betrayal between people who care for each other.

## LOVE

Love stories have beginnings. Even sad love stories begin in gladness, when the romance and the world seem to be everything. Then inevitably everything changes. Think how much more tragic a sad love story would be, if you could see into the future, so that the first moments are covered in the shadow of eventual despair.

*Betrayal* is a love triangle story told backwards. It shows that the very capacity for love itself is sometimes based on betraying loved ones and ourselves. It's about how love works and the cost of loving someone to the degree that causes pain, but is still worthwhile.

Emma is in love with her husband when the affair starts with Jerry. She becomes a woman engaged in loving two people. As the affair continues she falls out of love with Robert and sees in Jerry a future, wanting to build a home with him. But affairs have endings too.

The men love two people, Emma, and as friends they love each other. Jerry is swept away with lust and initiates the affair with Emma, *"I adore you. I'm madly in love with you ..Your eyes kill me. I'm lost. You're wonderful."* He continues to be swept up in the romance and secrecy of their affair, but maintains the love that his wife, Judith has for him and tells Emma that he 'adores' her. At the end of their romance he says, *"I know what you wanted...but it could never...actually be a home. You have a home. I have a home. With curtains, etcetera. And children. Two children in two homes. There are no children here, so it's not the same kind of home."*

Robert loves his wife and remains in the dark about his wife's affair for five years. Robert's reaction is sometimes angry, sometimes formal, but always essentially cold and detached - the affair becomes a way for him to control both his wife and his best friend, Jerry. Possibly his motif stems from the fear of losing them. Maybe his love is more about not being alone.

## BETRAYAL

*"Pinter presents us with a symphonic structure of variations on the theme of betrayal that, ultimately, becomes an inquiry into the inextricable web of lies that constitutes the social relationships."*

– Martin Esslin.

The play portrays a series of painful betrayals. Some hidden, some revealed, and some uncertain. The affair of Jerry and Emma is hidden for five years until Robert discovers the truth and then neither Emma nor Robert let Jerry know that the affair has been revealed. Robert himself doesn't talk of his own betrayal with other women, until his marriage with Emma has reached an end.

Pinter juggles his three characters in all possible arrangements of the triangle, each betrayer becoming, in turn, the betrayed. Jerry betrays his best friend Robert, by seducing his wife, Emma; Emma betrays her husband, Robert and it is revealed that he has betrayed her; Emma and Robert betray Jerry, as neither one tells him of when Robert learned of the affair; Jerry betrays his wife, Judith; Emma betrays her husband and also her lover, revealing that she has become pregnant while Jerry was away; and she feels betrayed by both men because of their close friendship.

All of these betrayals take place without the raising of voices and without outward verbal expression of emotion. The most emotionally tense scenes are distinguished by understatement and indirectness and the increased use of pauses and silence.

In Scene 5 Robert learns that Emma has been having an affair with his best friend Jerry. Although this discovery doesn't lead to the immediate break up of their marriage, it is the revelation point of the most damaging and shocking betrayal. He torments the truth out of his wife, slowly, with "pause" and "silence," giving her opportunity to confess what he has suspected.

There are other more subtle references to the theme of betrayal throughout the play. Emma suggests that Jerry's wife Judith is having an affair; Robert has been betraying Emma with other women for years; the figures of Casey and Spinks, writers over whose literary merits Jerry and Robert squabble in their professional capacities haunt the play; Casey, who has left his wife, is *"Writing a novel about a man who leaves his wife and three children and goes to live alone on the other side of London to write a novel about a man who leaves his wife and three children."* (Later he becomes Emma's new lover); and Spinks has also written a book about betrayal, which Emma is reading in the hotel room in Venice when Robert discovers her betrayal.

### **POWER & GAME PLAYING**

Jerry thinks he has power because he's doing something illicit with his friend's wife, while the friend, Robert, knows he's in the right by not protesting out loud, and by withdrawing. In silence. By doing this and not confronting Jerry he holds power over both Emma and Jerry.

The relationship between Emma and Jerry is a game with an elaborate system of rules. These are especially necessary as clandestine lovers. There are both external rules, about how to keep it secret, and internal rules, about what is permitted within. Even after the affair is over, Jerry corrects Emma when she asks about his son, *"You remember the form. I ask about your husband, you ask about my wife."*

Although there is sexual attraction in Emma's affair with Jerry, it is an affair that is subject to mundane considerations, such as finding sufficient time and comfortable quarters for it. When it is no longer convenient, the affair breaks up. Familial, domestic and professional considerations have replaced the passion that once nourished their infidelity.

Robert's outburst to Emma when she suggests watching their squash game reveals the male rituals that are meant to exclude women from what is perceived as exclusive male terrain. Robert and Jerry have not played squash for a long time, with Jerry instead being engaged in betrayal, and Robert's rather fierce speech is meant to win him back as a partner in the male game. The same disjunction between affair-with-wife and squash-with-husband appears in Robert's disclosure about Casey, *"I believe he's having an affair with my wife. We haven't played squash for years, Casey and me. We used to have a damn good game."*

All three play the game of friendly chat while, at the same time, hiding their knowledge of the betrayal. While Emma is putting Ned to sleep, the two men launch into a verbal game of fatherly talk about the reasons for boy babies crying more than girl babies. Robert leads Jerry to give the answer, *"Boys are more anxious,"* about, *"leaving the womb and all that."* Robert replies, *"But what about girl babies? They leave the womb too."* This mock-serious conversation concludes with, *"It might have something to do with the difference between the sexes."* This seemingly trivial dialogue is manipulated by Pinter into a sophisticated game that discloses the tensions and conflicts that are being played out beneath the placid surface. This power-play by Robert undermines Emma's relationship to Jerry, leaving her upset.

Robert does not consider separating from Emma after he finds out she is having an affair with Jerry until four years later, when that relationship has formally come to an end. Instead, he plays his cards close, verbally controlling his wife and baiting Jerry. Their impending divorce is not depicted as excessively traumatic for either Robert or Emma, particularly as Robert has been having affairs of his own.

## COMMUNICATION

Part of the underlying problem in this play is lack of communication. This could be part of the English 'reserve' where restraint is admired and keeping the outwardly façade of 'everything's fine' is expected. It could be a sense of pride and keeping one's privacy, or it is about avoiding confrontation considering the possibility of losing a wife, lover or friend.

Each character is trying to reach another with words, but these words seem to betray them. Jerry is compelled to acknowledge to Emma that he's not ready to leave his marriage, because his wife, Judith loves him. Emma hears that clearly, but he means that he's not in a position to leave that marriage to come and make this relationship into perhaps another marriage. To make up for saying that, "*She loves me*", Jerry says to Emma, "*But I adore you.*"

Instead of discussing the end of the affair, Emma is quite matter of fact. She takes the decision to end the affair suddenly and abruptly, leaving Jerry in shock. Though Jerry does not seem happy with the decision, he does not oppose it. He lets her have her way, without making any fuss. Years later when he meets her again he becomes jealous of her new affair with Casey.

## THE ROLE OF THE WAITER

In the scene in the Italian restaurant, where Jerry and Robert have lunch, layers of betrayal, irony and tension build under their conversation. Robert knows of the affair. Pinter seems to make the most of the waiter's comic potential, while still exposing this tension between these once 'best mates'. The waiter being Italian, in an Italian restaurant in London is a stereotypical joke. There are a lot of ethnic restaurants, but such a broad caricature of Italian waiters, particularly where he is indistinguishable from his son, is funny. This segues into the topic of Emma's Italian and hence Robert recalls Venice, something the audience understands, but Jerry doesn't get.

JERRY: Is he the one who's *always* been her or is it his son?  
ROBERT: You mean has his son *always* been here?  
JERRY: No, is *he* his son? I mean, is he the son of the one who's always been here?  
ROBERT: No, he's his father.  
JERRY: Ah, Is he?  
ROBERT: He's the one who speaks wonderful Italian.  
JERRY: Yes. Your Italian's pretty good, isn't it?  
ROBERT: No. Not at all.  
JERRY: Yes it is.  
ROBERT: No, it's Emma's Italian which is very good. Emma's Italian is very good.  
JERRY: Is it? I didn't know that.

The scene continues with Robert becoming increasingly drunk, ending with an angry outburst to the waiter. The outburst seems excessive, but is really a displacement of his deep anger at Jerry.

# Metaphor

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## THE GAME OF SQUASH

The game of squash is mentioned several times throughout the play. For Robert, the game of squash is the ultimate sign of friendship, and something he gives up playing when he finds out that Jerry and then Casey are seeing his wife. Robert says to Jerry, *"I believe he's (Casey) having an affair with my wife. We haven't played squash for years, Casey and me. We used to have a damn good game."*

In Scene 4 Jerry comes over to see Robert. Robert knows of the affair and is toying with Jerry to get him to admit the truth. Jerry is blissfully unaware. Robert turns the conversation to the game of squash and the fact that they haven't played together for a long time,

ROBERT:     *When are we going to play squash?*  
JERRY:       *You're too good.*  
ROBERT:     *Not at all. I'm not good at all. I'm just fitter than you.*  
JERRY:       *But why? Why are you fitter than me?*  
ROBERT:     *Because I play squash.*

Emma feels excluded by the men's relationship and tries to interfere, suggesting that she take both Robert and Jerry to lunch after watching them play squash. Robert quickly chides Emma:

*"Well, to be brutally honest, we wouldn't actually want a woman around, would we, Jerry? I mean a game of squash isn't simply a game of squash, it's rather more than that. You see, first there's the game. And then there's the shower. And then there's the pint. And then there's lunch. After all, you've been at it. You've had your battle. What you want is your pint and your lunch. You really don't want a woman buying you lunch. You don't actually want a woman within a mile of the place, any of the places, really. You don't want her in the squash court, you don't want her in the shower, or the pub, or the restaurant. You see, at lunch you want to talk about squash, or cricket, or books, or even women, with your friend, and be able to warm to your theme without fear of improper interruption. That's what it's all about."*

To Emma, Robert is clearly referencing the affair and chastising her about taking this friendship away.

# Pinteresque

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*"No playwright has ever possessed a better ear for the way people actually speak than Harold Pinter."*  
- Roger Copeland

## PINTERESQUE

Pinter has been widely regarded as the most influential playwright of his generation. The terms; 'Pinteresque', the 'Pinter pause', the 'Pinter moment', and 'Pinterland'; is a testament to the impact of his innovative theatrical style. He is recognised for his innovations in dialogue, including the realistic rhythms of everyday speech; characterised by long pauses, non sequiturs\*, and silences, expressing failure of interpersonal communication; drawing on casual, colloquial, working-class speech patterns.

Critics have applauded Pinter's masterful use of pauses and silences saying, *"That his dialogue reveals the unconscious thought-processes of his character"* and *"His humour derives from his representation of the communication breakdowns that occur in everyday conversation."* However, other critics see his dialogue as, *"Meaningless and his characters unlikable and undeveloped."*

Pinter is also regarded as a master of atmosphere, characterised by the sinister or menacing tone beneath the interactions between his characters. Verbal abuse, psychological cruelty and the threat of impending or past violence is in the air as the characters engage in antagonistic power struggles.

This is evident in Scene 5 when Robert and Emma are on vacation in Venice. Robert tells Emma that there was a letter for her at American Express. Although Emma has reason to suspect that her affair with Jerry may now be known, she limits her responses. Robert bursts into a long speech about the character of Italians who would give a letter to someone other than the addressee. Pinter uses long speeches at points of distress for the characters; a torrent of words that don't address the issue, but dramatise it. The emotional burden of this speech aimed at the Italian character is really for Emma; however, if he unleashed an attack on Emma, she would respond emotionally, but instead this misdirected rage has no consequences.

The scene continues to build, allowing Emma several opportunities to tell Robert of the affair. Long pauses create tension as the audience anticipates a confrontation. When all obvious diversions between them have been uttered, the pauses become Silence.

Robert:        *Was there any message for me, in his letter?*  
                    *(Pause)*  
                    *I mean in the line of business, to do with the world of publishing. Has he discovered*  
                    *any new and original talent? He's quite talented at uncovering talent, old Jerry.*  
Emma:         *No message.*  
Robert:        *No message. Not even his love?*  
                    *(Silence)*  
Emma:         *We're lovers.*

Rather than erupt into a rage, Robert responds, *"Ah, Yes. I thought it might be something like that."* Emma then says *"I'm sorry."* To which Robert replies, *"Sorry."* In this moment the violent undertone of the scene briefly surfaces, as this response seems inadequate, given the magnitude of the offense.

*Definition - \*non sequiturs*

*A conclusion or statement that does not logically follow from the previous argument or statement.*

# Silences and Pauses

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*Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent*  
– Ludwig Wittgenstein

Playwright Harold Pinter is noted for his use of pauses and silences. Long, tense pauses between characters are a trademark of his plays, making audiences wonder what people do not, and perhaps cannot, say to one another. Actors and directors often find Pinter's 'pauses and silences' to be daunting elements of performing his plays. However, Harold Pinter has said directors should be free to cut his trademark pauses, saying, *"That while others detected disturbing undertones, he merely intended basic stage directions in writing 'pause' and 'silence'."*

American actors David Straihairn and Peter Riegert who worked with Pinter on his plays said, *"The natural pauses always seem to be right where he wrote them. His pause or beat comes naturally in the rhythm of the conversation. [As an actor] you find yourself pausing in mid-sentence, thinking about what you just said or are going to say."*

Pinter wrote 140 pauses into his work *Betrayal*, 149 into *The Caretaker* and 224 into *The Homecoming*. *Betrayal* uses these pauses and silences to ensure that his subtext is imbued with emotion, meaning, mystery and psychological depth. They become an important part of the language of the play. Pinter uses them when people have something that can't really be expressed, or in a moment of recognition about the reality of the situation; and they cue the actor that the real action of the play commences in these silences, highlighting the conflict between the characters.

The silence often represents climaxes of emotion usually with the most damaging information having just been introduced; either directly or indirectly. These gaps prevent the conflict from exploding and destroying the continuing relationships. Silence masks these unsated feelings, and create an opportunity for thoughts to process.

Pinter says, *"There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed. We have heard many times that tired, grimy phrase: 'failure of communication' and this phrase has been fixed to my work quite consistently. I believe the contrary. I think that we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid, and that what takes place is a continual evasion, desperate rear-guard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming. To enter into someone else's life is too frightening. To disclose to others the poverty within us is too fearsome a possibility."*

*I am not suggesting that no character in a play can never say what he in fact means. Not at all. I have found that there invariably does come a moment when this happens, when he says something, perhaps, which he has never said before. And where this happens, what he says is irrevocable, and can never be taken back."*

Scene 3 where Jerry and Emma end the affair also has many pauses. Acknowledging that they haven't used the flat in months, they agree to give it up, officially ending their seven-year affair. The difficulty of the break up is represented in the frequent silences which follows realisations that they had been very much in love, but are no longer.

In Scene 1 Jerry and Emma met alone for the first time in two years. They have a wistful attitude toward each other and their past affair. But this is disrupted by a memory, which recalls them to their former

intimacy. The memory of when Jerry picked up Charlotte in the kitchen, reminds them of their happiness, before Robert learned of the affair. This memory brings a painful silence.

The excess of talking or the 'torrent of words' demonstrates indirectness and understatement. For example when Robert talks to Emma of the letter at American Express he bursts into a long speech about the character of Italians. This long speech is extremely marked in the play and occurs at the point of maximum distress. As Pinter describe it, "*A torrent of words that are not addressing the true issue, but are dramatizing it nonetheless.*" This tirade is not aimed at the Italian national character, but is carrying the emotional burden aimed at Emma. But to express this rage in a confrontation would mean an emotional response from her, and the threat to the continuation of their relationship.

When he asks Emma why she is receiving a letter from Jerry – there is a pause. The indirectness of not talking about the obvious contributes to the rising tension. When Emma finally reveals that Jerry is her lover, Robert responds civilly, "*Ah. Yes. I thought it might be something like that.*" The strength of his emotion comes in silence.

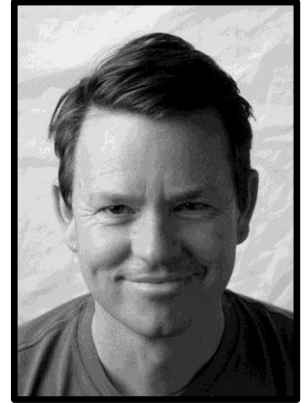
In Scene 7 Robert meets Jerry for lunch. This is an emotional scene for Robert, who has just learned that Jerry is having an affair with Emma, but Jerry does not know this. Robert's distress is shown in a wordy outburst, not about Jerry's affair with Emma, but about books and publishing. For Robert, this is all about Emma and Jerry. In Venice, Emma was reading a novel by an author named Spinks, whom Jerry discovered and Robert declined to publish. After noting his lack of judgement over Spinks, Robert goes into a tirade about how he hates prose, but that Emma and Jerry have so much in common. When Jerry dismisses this, he goes into a tirade against the waiter and the restaurant. By not confronting Jerry directly, he saves the friendship. So the silence is his way to manage the conflict and preserve the friendship. When Jerry realises something is wrong, Robert deflects from the issue and his attitude is mocked as one of 'inebriation.'

# Set Designer

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## GEOFF COBHAM

Geoff is State Theatre Company's Resident Designer and has worked as a Production Manager, Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Event Producer and Venue Designer.



His recent Set & Lighting Design for State Theatre Company include *Little Bird*, *The Seagull*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Kruetzer Sonata*. Other Set & Lighting Design credits include; *Nothing to Lose*, *Never Did Me Any Harm*, *Not In A Million Years*, *The Age I'm In*, *Already Elsewhere*, *Same Same but Different* (Force Majeure), *Construct* (Tanja Leidtke), *Ode to Nonsense*, *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*, *Wolf*, *Man Covets Bird* (Slingsby) *Fastest Boy*, *Emily Loves to Bounce*, *Me and My Shadow* (Patch Theatre), *The Flying Dutchman* (State Opera of South Australia)

His recent Lighting Design credits for State Theatre Company include *Masquerade* (Griffin Theatre Company & State Theatre Company), *Madame* (Torque Show, Vitalstatistix, State Theatre Company), *Othello*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *Babyteeth*, *Pinocchio* (Windmill Theatre and State Theatre Company), *Speaking in Tongues*, *romeo&juliet*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *Metro Street*, *The Goat*, *Night Letters*. Other Lighting Design Credits include *G*, *Vocabulary*, *Nothing* (Australian Dance Theatre), *Beetle Graduation*, *Skip Miller*, *The Hypochondriac*, *Drums in the Night*, *This Uncharted Hour*, *The Duckshooter* (Brink Productions), *Not according to plan*, *Impulse*, *Phillip Glass Trilogy*, *Quick Brown Fox*, (Leigh Warren & Dancers), *Salt*, *Landmark*, *Rebel Rebel*, *Starry Eyed*, *In The Blood* (Restless Dance Theatre), *Plop*, *The Wizard of Oz* (Windmill Theatre).

He has produced many outdoor events and clubs for Festivals and received a Churchill fellowship in 2010 to study outdoor theatre in Europe. He has received the following awards; Ruby Award for Sustained Contribution, Sydney Theatre Award Best Lighting Design for *Never Did Me Any Harm*, Green Room Award Best lighting Design for *Night Letters*,

## INTERVIEW WITH SET DESIGNER

### 1. What are the challenges of designing for a piece such as *Betrayal*?

With any play that has been done many times it is always a tricky balancing act to find a new way to interpret the look and feel. We knew we did not want to create a naturalistic setting, so had the problem of creating a conceptual space that still allowed the audience to understand the locations. But, with all expressionistic set designs you still need to find a way to keep the actors as the primary focus.

### 2. Can you explain the concept of having the costumes on a revolving rack surrounding the action?

The trick of this play is that it starts at its end. Pinter plays with time and most of the play goes backwards in time. The revolving costume rack turns counterclockwise during the scene changes, literally unravelling time. It also serves as a distraction whilst we change furniture and costumes, so it is a functional scene change devise.

### 3. What is the meaning behind the tower of planks surrounding the action?

As the play goes on the surrounding, prison bars, bell jar, sundial of planks are revealed. They serve to heighten the way these characters are trapped by time and their actions. They also improve the acoustics of the venue and provide a great texture for lighting.

**4. As a Lighting Designer, what is the first thing you do when approaching a play?**

On a practical level, I find out how much movement there will be onstage eg. If the actors are going to roam around everywhere then you need to concentrate of large washes of light. If the play is quite still, like *Betrayal*, you can sculpt the space with specials. Conceptually you try to get to the heart of the play and work out how you can create a lighting environment that supports the emotional journey of the play; with colour, angle, haze, texture, etc.

**5. What are the essential elements from *Betrayal* that needed to be expressed in the design?**

Time and undercurrent of tension... the unspoken, the pauses say so much in this play. I really wanted to give an epic voice to the amazing tension that exists behind the words.

# Costume Designer

## **AILSA PATTERSON**

Ailsa completed the Bachelor of Dramatic Art in Design (NIDA) in 2003.

Set and Costume Design credits for State Theatre Company include *Beckett Triptych* (*Footfalls*, *Eh Joe*, *Krapp's Last Tape*), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hedda Gabler* (Associate Set Design), *In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play*, *War Mother*, *The Ham Funeral*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, *The Price* and *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Costume Design credits include *Little Bird*, *The Seagull* and *Three Sisters*.



Other theatre design credits include *Cranky Bear* (Patch), *Mouse, Bird and Sausage* (Costume Design, Slingsby), *Other Desert Cities*, *Seminar and Skylight* (Ensemble), *You, Me and the Bloody Sea* (Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2013), *Ode to Nonsense* (Costume Design, Slingsby/State Opera of SA, Shining City (Griffin Theatre Company), *Hansel and Gretel* and *La Sonnambula* (Pacific Opera), *Faustus and Madame Melville* (BSharp), *Vampirella*, *The Internationalist* and *Bone* (Darlinghurst Theatre), *A Couple of Blaguards* (Seymour Centre/Comedy Theatre), *Shifted* (Sydney Dance Company) and *Debris* (Old Fitz /Melbourne Fringe). Ailsa worked in costume on *The Straits* (ABC), *LAID* (ABC), *Underbelly — A Tale of Two Cities*, *Underbelly — The Golden Mile*, *Blue Water High*, *The Last Confession of Alexander Pearce*, *Ten Empty*, *The Boy from Oz Arena Spectacular*, *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert The Musical* and *High School Musical*.

Ailsa received the 2011 Mike Walsh Fellowship.

## **INTERVIEW WITH COSTUME DESIGNER**

### **1. What is the main challenge when preparing the costume design for *Betrayal*?**

The main challenge is to work out a fluid way for many quick costume changes to take place. It is important to represent the specified changes in year and season, whilst minimising the length of these changes. The costumes in this piece really provide the setting and warmth for each scene, because the physical set is so stark and stylized. The 'realness' of the characters comes from the detail and texture of the costumes.

Rather than plunging the audience into darkness and allowing them to disengage after each scene we are maintaining the visual connection and emotional involvement. To do this, we have devised a choreographed costume system that will occur during the scene changes, so that for example Jerry, played by Nathan, doesn't have to constantly leave the stage for costume changes. He will be the constant figure we watch as the set revolves, taking each new garment from the rack as they pass. To create this, the costume design mainly sees him changing his top half, adding or subtracting layers, showing changes in time and season.

### **2. What research into the 1970s did you do?**

I did extensive research into the fashion between 1968 and 1977. The changes in this time frame are subtle, but important to reflect. These three characters are at a time in their lives when they would have already established their personal sense of style. We wanted to portray that, while still indicating the changes in fashion of the time and perhaps indicating a slight maturity of style towards the later 70s. However, as the changes are so fast, we are not able to do complete costume changes for each scene; and we cannot alter the width of pants or extremity of collar, so we have to find the key moments to do these subtle shifts. The color and pattern of this era is also iconic and so important to locate each character's costumes quickly.

**3. Usually you design the set and costumes for a show. What are the challenges and benefits of working with a different designer on the one show?**

I am often the set and costume designer for a show, but for *Betrayal* I am working as the associate set designer and the costume designer. This means that I assist Geoff, our set designer, in developing his concept and portraying his design ideas.

We have been bouncing ideas off each other and developing the set and costume design in tandem to make sure the show has a cohesive style. The challenges of this process are to make sure communication is clear. This requires frequent exchange of visual references and building plans, so that the set model can be built to the most effective finish.

It is extremely beneficial to have another design eye and opinion at every stage of the process. It can make the process more rigorous, but in turn, produce results that otherwise may not have emerged. It also means that the set and costumes are going to be very complimentary, as they have been developed at the same time and as part of the same process. It can be challenging, when you are used to being the principal designer, to relinquish a certain amount of control, as you are not the final decision maker. However, Geoff and I have worked together quite a lot, and in conjunction with the director, Geordie, so we have developed a design language and a process that works for us over these many collaborations.

# Set & Costume Design

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## SET DESIGN

*Betrayal* starts in 1977 and moves backwards in time over nine years. There are nine naturalistic scenes with eight unique locations including; a lounge room, an apartment, a restaurant and a bar. The design focuses on keeping these sparse, so that the audience can concentrate on the people and their relationships.

The back of the set is surrounded by tall planks, encasing the actors and scenes in a type of inescapable tower. Lighting is projected through and around these planks, often creating long shadows, like a sundial, referencing the element of time. The lights become key to the setting, noting the seasons and time of day. Throughout the journey of the play, more lights are removed, until there is nothing left, stripping back the layers.

On the inside of this tower, is a moving clothes rack, representing the circular nature of going back in time. Having the clothing displayed helps shows the history of the affair as all costumes come from this rack, as well as having a practical use as there are many quick changes. The floor is made of black rounded velvet, giving a feeling of being on a void.

The scenes are very static, with either; sitting and talking or standing and talking, so it requires minimal furniture. Much of this furniture has been made multi-purpose, so that a bed can become a bar, or a table etc. Projected on the wall at the back are the dates from the stage directions, something that Pinter requests.

## COSTUME DESIGN

The challenge with the costumes was to move through the nine years without mocking the fashions of the time. Most people's fashion changes subtly over the years and so a gentle nod to the seventies style was used. Also, there are quick scene changes, with some characters having little time to move into each scene, requiring changes to be flexible.

Jerry is a literary agent. He mainly wears suits, which become more sophisticated as the years progress. As Jerry is onstage throughout most of the play, his changes are subtle, with mainly the top half changing. He wears a suit for work; a coat in winter; a jumper in the autumn and a relaxed shirt in summer.

Robert is a publisher, and a less suave dresser than Jerry. He wears a check shirt and jacket, flared pants and a cardigan when relaxing at home. The main change is his outfit in Venice, with a lightness of colour and texture, wearing linen pants. He also becomes more sophisticated over the years, wearing a full suit when he meets up with Jerry.

Emma changes the most through the fashion and style of the era. She has a bohemian 'arty' feel in her clothing. She wears dresses, skirt or jeans and a summer crocheted dress for the scene in Venice. In the apartment she adds an apron, a symbol of domesticity. Her clothing becomes more professional as she progresses in her career.



Drawings: © Ailsa Paterson

# Interesting Reading

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## English Reserve

The English have always been known for their reserved nature and social interactions. They are generally more distant and restrained than Americans and Europeans, and may not initially appear to be as open or friendly. Social relationships are hard to build, being monitored by strict social etiquette that has come from the country's culture.

In England, politeness, reserve, and restraint are admired. They are not animated when they speak, keeping conversation civil. They also apologise often, do not create a scene and confrontation is considered inappropriate. Criticism is also voiced in an indirect way; you have to read between the lines to understand what they mean.

In general, in their social interactions, the British value two things: privacy and courtesy. The British respect and expect privacy – they don't ask personal questions, such as where a person lives or what a person does for a profession or job, and don't talk about money. Even close friends do not ask pointedly personal questions, particularly pertaining to one's financial situation or relationships.

To sum up, carrying oneself in a seemly manner, playing fair, being polite, and not being pushy, are characteristics that the British are renowned for and pride themselves on.



It is a part of English hypocrisy — or English reserve — that, whilst we are fluent enough in grumbling about small inconveniences, we insist on making light of any great difficulties or griefs that may beset us.

(Max Beerbohm)

izquotes.com

## BIOGRAPHICAL PLAY

*Betrayal* was inspired by Harold Pinter's own long clandestine affair during his first marriage to actress Vivien Merchant, with BBC report, Joan Bakewell, whose husband, the radio and television producer Michael Bakewell, was Pinter's friend and professional colleague. Below is an article written by Joan Bakewell about their affair.

## My affair with Harold Pinter

Joan Bakewell

I have it in front of me now. It is an airmail letter addressed to me c/o American Express, Bocca da Piazza, Venice. The letter is from Harold Pinter. It is the first of many in a relationship that was to last some eight years. Each letter was sent c/o a sympathetic friend who could be relied on to keep our secret. Just such a letter was to be the focus of the plot of one of his most celebrated plays, *Betrayal*.

The play portrayed many of the events of the affair between us, with an accuracy verging on the literal. At the time when he first sent me the script, I was deeply distressed to have our private affair so glaringly presented on stage. In the years since then, I have come to regard it as a brilliant exposition of loyalty, love and betrayal between people who care for each other.

Some things stay the same: men and women have always fallen passionately in love. But the world in which they live and are judged changes. In many senses, this is now a period play. Not only are the settings and locations different, but social attitudes have changed, too. The 1960s were a different world – and Sixties London was a good place to have an affair. They were giddy times, and the city's young people were buoyant with a creative optimism that made people inclined to smile rather than frown. And people always smile on lovers. For some seven years, Harold and I met easily and often in London's pubs and cafés. I sped around London happy as a lark in my first car, a Morris Minor, finding no traffic jams and few parking restrictions. We were so in love we felt it was worthwhile to dash across London to spend half an hour in each other's company.

This would be trickier now, not because we might be recognised, but because the technology has changed. We made our clandestine arrangements in snatched moments from our homes or public telephones. The play refers to "*the pip, pip, pip phone calls*" made from a pub. There were no mobile phones, phone bills weren't itemised, no ring-back facilities, no texting, no Twitter, no Facebook – all of which can ambush today's lovers. Our plans left no trace.

The friendship between Robert and Jerry didn't exist in my relationship. My husband, Michael was a BBC radio producer who admired Harold's work and sought to promote it within the BBC script department and went on to direct it on radio. We both knew Harold and his actress wife Vivien socially – we dined in each other's homes, sent holiday postcards, our children went to each other's parties.

There are other similarities from the play. Michael and I holidayed in Venice right through the Sixties, and many letters flew back and forth. Harold and I had a flat in Kentish Town. We chose it because at that time the place was rundown and not the sort of place where we were likely to bump into friends.

Emma's life was very much that of a woman of the Sixties, she is basically a housewife with a small child. As I was. I had married at 22 to someone who had been a fellow student at Cambridge. At the time, the theories of the psychologist John Bowlby were all the rage: that small children needed a close bond with their mothers; otherwise they would grow up damaged. So, once my daughter was born when I was 25, I gave up any idea of working. The concept of a career simply didn't arise. I would be a wife and mother. But I was also a Cambridge graduate. I got restless for some life of the mind. I began to do a little broadcasting here and there but not much. And I began going along to Michael's rehearsals.

Emma develops a career of her own and Jerry too becomes busy, often in America. It is how the affair petered out in my own life. I got my break in a BBC television programme called *Late Night Line Up* in 1965. Running a family, an affair and a career was exhilarating but in the end unmanageable. As Jerry indicates in the play, how can they meet when Emma's not free in the afternoons and he's in America? We gave up the flat. We brought the affair to an amicable end.

What seems so odd today is that for seven years the affair remained largely secret. Slowly a number of people came to know - what with flats and phone calls, letters and close friends - but there was no gossip that reached the press. There was something different about life then. People had a sense of the right to privacy that the rise of celebrity seems to have been eroding ever since.

In fact, it was Harold himself who made the whole thing public. In the mid-1990s, with Harold's consent, Michael Billington embarked on a biography. Harold rang and asked me to talk to him. So I did. Harold and I were each happily re-married by then, but continued to be good friends. He felt that the passing of time had made things less explosive. He was wrong: when the biography was published in 1996, the revelations were seized on and made much of by the press. From then on, it was public knowledge.

Our friendship survived and shifted in the long years that followed. He was always wonderful company, a great wit and story-teller, a source of quotations, ideas and laughter. He sent me the scripts of each new play as it was completed. Above all, we remained concerned about each other's lives. When I remarried in 1975, Harold, who had just separated from his first wife Vivien, came along to the party and was the last guest to leave. On my wedding night, we sat drinking - just the three of us - until two in the morning.

Then in 1982 when Vivien died - of alcoholism at the age of 53 - he asked me if I would go along to her funeral. There were only a few of us, but it was a beautiful and thoughtful occasion. I was, then and always, pleased to be his friend.

## Harold Pinter, Playwright of the Pause, Dies at 78

December 26, 2008

By Mel Gussow and Ben Brantley

Harold Pinter, the British playwright whose gifts for finding the ominous in the everyday and the noise within silence made him the most influential and imitated dramatist of his generation, died of cancer on Wednesday. He was 78 and lived in London.

In more than 30 plays — written between 1957 and 2000 and including masterworks like *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming* and *Betrayal* — Mr. Pinter captured the anxiety and ambiguity of life in the second half of the 20th century with terse, hypnotic dialogue filled with gaping pauses and the prospect of imminent violence. The adjective 'Pinteresque' has become part of the cultural vocabulary as a byword for strong and unspecified menace.

An actor, essayist, screenwriter, poet and director as well as a dramatist, Mr. Pinter was also publicly outspoken in his views on repression and censorship, at home and abroad. His political views were implicit in much of his work. Though his plays deal with the slipperiness of memory and human character, they are also almost always about the struggle for power.

The dynamic in his work is rooted in battles for control, turf wars waged in locations that range from working-class boarding houses, *The Room* to upscale restaurants, *Celebration*. His plays often take place in a single, increasingly claustrophobic room, where conversation is a minefield and even innocuous-seeming words can wound.

In Mr. Pinter's work "*words are weapons that the characters use to discomfort or destroy each other*," said Peter Hall, who has staged more of Mr. Pinter's plays than any other director. But while Mr. Pinter's linguistic agility turned simple, sometimes obscene, words into dark, glittering and often mordantly funny poetry, it is what comes between the words that he is most famous for. And the stage direction "pause" would haunt him throughout his career.

Intended as an instructive note to actors, the Pinter pause was a space for emphasis and breathing room. But it could also be as threatening as a raised fist. Mr. Pinter said that writing the word "pause" into his first play was "a fatal error." It is certainly the aspect of his writing that has been most parodied. But no other playwright has consistently used pauses with such rhythmic assurance and to such fine-tuned manipulative effect.

Though often grouped with Beckett and others as a practitioner of Theater of the Absurd, Mr. Pinter considered himself a realist. In 1962 he said the context of his plays was always, "*concrete and particular*."

Beginning in the late 1950s, John Osborne and Mr. Pinter helped to turn British theatre away from the gentility of the drawing room. With "*Look Back in Anger*," Osborne opened the door for several succeeding generations of angry young men, who railed against the class system and

an ineffectual government. Mr. Pinter was to have the more lasting effect as an innovator and a stylist.

The playwright Tom Stoppard said that before Mr. Pinter: *"One thing plays had in common: you were supposed to believe what people said up there. If somebody comes in and says, 'Tea or coffee?' and the answer is 'Tea,' you are entitled to assume that somebody is offered a choice of two drinks, and the second person has stated a preference."* With Mr. Pinter there are alternatives, *"such as the man preferred coffee but the other person wished him to have tea,"* Mr. Stoppard said, *"or that he preferred the stuff you make from coffee beans under the impression that it was called tea."*

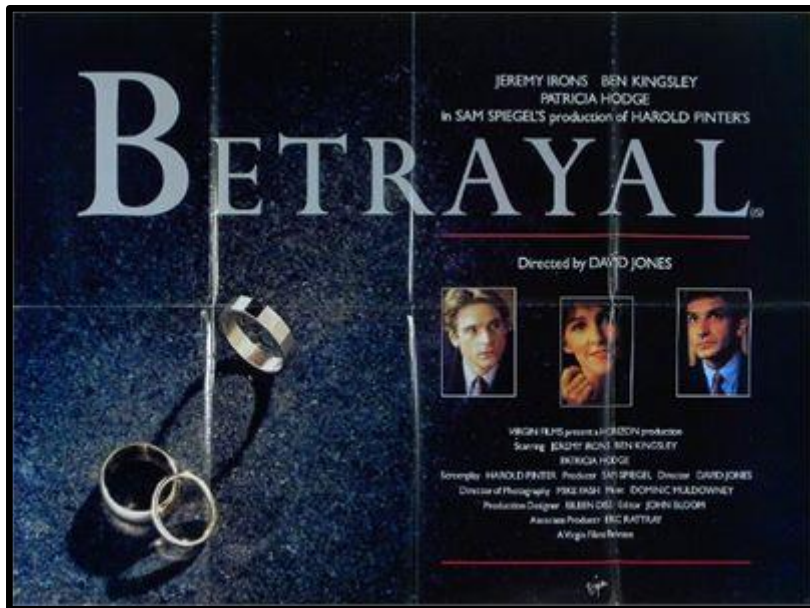
As another British playwright, David Hare, said of Mr. Pinter, *"The essence of his singular appeal is that you sit down to every play or film he writes in certain expectation of the unexpected."*

In December 2001, during a routine medical examination, he was found to have cancer of the esophagus. In January 2002, while undergoing treatment, he acted in his brief comic sketch *"Press Conference"* at the National Theater.

In 2006 he appeared in a weeklong, sold-out production of Beckett's one-man play, *"Krapp's Last Tape,"* at the Royal Court Theater.

Full transcript; <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/26/theater/26pinter.html>

# Film



The 1983 film *Betrayal* is an adaptation of Harold Pinter's 1978 play. Directed by David Hugh Jones, it starred Jeremy Irons as Jerry, Ben Kingsley as Robert and newcomer, Patricia Hodge as Emma.

The movie is told mostly in encounters between two of the characters; all three are not often on screen together. These people are smart and verbal and they talk a lot -- too much, maybe, because there is a peculiarly British reserve about them that sometimes prevents them from quite saying what they mean. They lie and they half-lie.

The performances are perfectly matched. Ben Kingsley plays Robert, the publisher, with such painfully controlled fury that there are times when he actually is frightening. Jeremy Irons, as Jerry, creates a man whose desires are stronger than his convictions. Patricia Hodge, as Emma, loves them both and hates them both and would have led a much happier life if they had not been her two choices.



# Marketing & Design

Look at the following poster / book cover designs for various *Betrayal* productions. How does each design represent the play and its characters? Having seen the play, which poster clearly reflects the story and which poster appeals to you as an audience member? Discuss.

**TASK:** Design a poster or book cover that depicts the play you would produce and describe the marketing concept behind your choice.



## Debate

1. This play doesn't work in an American or Australian culture. Discuss.
2. Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* tensely delves into the intricate world of marriage and infidelity. Is monogamy natural? Discuss

# Essay Questions

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## ENGLISH QUESTIONS

1. Talk about the play's structure, how it begins with the conclusion. How does this help the audience understand the play? Why do you think Harold Pinter wrote the play in this style?
2. Choose two movies or plays that follow this reverse structure. Compare the style of writing and how the themes are heightened. Critically discuss the style as a technique for writing.
3. Were the seeds of the fading love between Jerry and Emma and the unravelling of Emma's marriage with Robert already there in that first encounter that concludes *Betrayal*? Discuss
4. Discuss the undertone of violence in the script. Which character demonstrates this most? Give examples from the play.
5. Discuss whether you believe the context of the play.
6. What is the significance of the conversation in Scene 3 between Robert and Jerry, about male and female children? Why do you think this is included in the play?
7. Discuss the atmosphere that the pauses and silences create and whether they are essential to the play.

## DRAMA QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the use of the revolving costume rack. How well does this design element work in practical terms and well as metaphorically?
2. Look at the lighting design of *Betrayal*. Discuss whether the diminishing of lights through the play, reflects the themes in the play. What other lighting techniques are used to show the changing of time?
3. What elements of the play would make this a good movie? Perhaps an extension activity could be to watch the movie of *Betrayal*.
4. Choose one of the three characters and write a monologue one year after Robert and Emma's divorce.
5. Write a scene between Jerry and his wife, Judith; or between Emma and Casey.
6. Discuss the character of the waiter and the reason why this character is included.
7. Write one of the incidental characters into one of Pinter's scenes. How does this change the mood of the scene?
8. How does the set design establish the world of the play, in terms of location and atmosphere?
9. What transformations take place within the characters through the journey of the play? How do the actors express these changes?

	production elements	performance elements
strengths		
impact on audiences		
weaknesses		

design role	technique	What did this contribute to the performance?
lighting	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	
music	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	

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## PHOTOS

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