

Christopher Fry

(1907 – 2005)

Biography



Christopher Fry, originally Christopher Harris, was born on December 18, 1907 in Bristol, Gloucestershire, England. He adopted his mother's surname after he became a schoolteacher at age 18, his father having died many years earlier.

Fry was an actor, director, and writer of revues and plays. He gained fame as a playwright for *The Lady's Not for Burning* (1948), an ironic comedy set in medieval times whose heroine is charged with being a witch. *A Phoenix Too Frequent* (1946) retells a tale from Petronius Arbiter. *The Boy with a Cart* (1950), a story of St. Cuthman, is a legend of miracles and faith in the style of the mystery plays. *A Sleep of Prisoners* (1951) and *The Dark Is Light Enough* (1954) explore religious themes.

After many years of translating and adapting plays—including *Ring Round the Moon* (produced 1950; adapted from Jean Anouilh's *L'Invitation du château*), *Duel of Angels* (produced 1963; adapted from Jean Giraudoux's *Pour Lucrèce*), and *Peer Gynt* (produced 1970; based on Johan Fillinger's translation of Henrik Ibsen's play)—Fry wrote *A Yard of Sun*, which was produced in 1970.

Fry also collaborated on the screenplays of the epic films *Ben Hur* (1959) and *Barabbas* (1962), and he wrote plays for both radio and television. His *Can You Find Me: A Family History* was published in 1978.¹

Christopher Fry died on June 30, 2005, in Chichester, West Sussex.

¹ "Christopher Fry", *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/221164/Christopher-Fry

Selected Materials Available at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Works by the Author

Plays (Print)

Fry, Christopher. **The Boy with a Cart: Cuthman, Saint of Sussex: A Play.** London: Frederick Muller, 1950.

BA Call Number: 822.91 F946b (B4 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

Fry, Christopher. **Christopher Fry Plays: A Sleep of Prisoners; The Dark is Light Enough; Curtmantle.** New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

BA Call Number: 822.914 Fry C (B1 -- Shadi Abdel Salam Collection)

Fry, Christopher. **The Lady's Not for Burning: A Comedy.** 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951.

BA Call Number: 822.91 F946 1951 (B4 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

Fry, Christopher. **A Phoenix too Frequent: A Comedy.** Illustrated by Ronald Searle. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

BA Call Number: 822 Fry P (B1 -- Shadi Abdel Salam Collection)

Fry, Christopher. **Plays: The Boy with a Cart; The First Born; Venus Observed.** Oxford Paperbacks 218. London: Oxford U. P., 1970.

BA Call Number: 822.914 Fry P (B1 -- Shadi Abdel Salam Collection)

Fry, Christopher. **A Sleep of Prisoners: A Play.** London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

BA Call Number: 822.91 F946 (B4 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

Fry, Christopher. **Venus Observed: A Play.** London: Geoffrey Cumberlege; Oxford University Press, 1950.

BA Call Number: 822.91 F946v (B4 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

Plays (Electronic)

Fry, Christopher. **The Lady's Not for Burning: A Comedy**. [2nd ed., rev.]. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950. Online e-book. Hathi Trust Digital Library (database). <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015005055804> [accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Fry, Christopher. "A Phoenix Too Frequent". **The Hudson Review** 3, no. 2 (Summer 1950): 165-202. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Fry, Christopher. **A Phoenix too Frequent: A Comedy**. Illustrated by Ronald Searle. London: Oxford University Press, 1959. e-book. Digital Assets Repository (database). <http://dar.bibalex.org/#BookDetailsByBibID-162582>

Fry, Christopher. **A Sleep of Prisoners: A Play**. New York: Oxford University Press, 1951. Online e-book. Hathi Trust Digital Library (database). <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015065960299> [accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Screenplays

Barabbas. Screenplay by Christopher Fry. Directed by Richard Fleischer. Produced by Dino de Laurentiis. N.p., 1961. Columbia Pictures, DVD. Burbank, CA: Columbia TriStar Home Video, [2002].

BA Call Number : DVD 1289 (B3 -- Arts & Multimedia Library -- Closed Stacks)

The Bible: In the Beginning. Screenplay by Christopher Fry. Directed by John Huston. Produced by Dino DeLaurentiis. N.p., 1966. DVD. Studio Classics. Beverly Hills, CA: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2005.

BA Call Number : DVD 1260 (B3 -- Arts & Multimedia Library -- Closed Stacks)

Translations

Giraudoux, Jean. **Tiger at the Gates**. Translated by Christopher Fry. London: Methuen, [1955].

BA Call Number: 842.912 G522t (B2 -- Special Collections -- Closed Stacks)

Articles

Fry, Christopher. "Comedy". **The Tulane Drama Review** 4, no. 3 (Mar 1960): 77-79. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Works about the Author

E-Books

Collins J. A. "Poet of Paradox: The Drama of Christopher Fry". In **Discovering Authors**. Detroit: Gale, 2003. e-book. Gale Student Resources in Context (database).

Jackie, Tucker. "Christopher Fry (1907-)". In **British Playwrights, 1880-1956: A Research and Production Sourcebook**, edited by William W. Demastes and Katherine E. Kelly. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996: 117-130. e-book. ebrary (database).

Styan J. L. "Christopher Fry". In **Discovering Authors**. Detroit: Gale, 2003. e-book. Gale Student Resources in Context (database).

Williamson, Audrey. "Christopher Fry". In **Discovering Authors**. Detroit: Gale, 2003. ebook. Gale Student Resources in Context(database).

Theses

Harriman, Lucas H. "Revisiting Christopher Fry: Sacred Temporality on a Modern Stage". Master's Thesis, Florida Atlantic University, 2004. e-thesis. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (database).

McTeague, Neal F. "The Little World of Christopher Fry: A Study of Some of the Allegorical Features of "The Lady's not for Burning"". Master's Thesis, University of Windsor, 1956. e-thesis. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (database).

Wyles, Barbara Ann. "Thematic Unity in the Plays of Christopher Fry". Master's Thesis, Duquesne University, 1971. e-thesis. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (database).

Articles

Adler, Jacob H. "Shakespeare and Christopher Fry". **Educational Theatre Journal** 11, no. 2 (May 1959): 85-98. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Arrowsmith, William. "Notes on English Verse Drama: Christopher Fry". **The Hudson Review** 3, no. 2 (Summer 1950): 203-216. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Braybrooke, Neville. "English Poetic Drama: T. S. Eliot and Christopher Fry: Their Recent Work". **The Irish Monthly** 79, no. 932 (Feb 1951): 78-82. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Disch, Thomas M. "Christopher Fry: An Appreciation". **Poetry** 166, no. 5 (Aug 1995): 280-288. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Fallon, Gabriel. "The Poet in the Theatre". **The Irish Monthly** 77, no. 916 (Oct 1949): 463-469. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Lecky, Eleazer. "Mystery in the Plays of Christopher Fry". **The Tulane Drama Review** 4, no. 3 (Mar 1960): 80-87. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Light, Timothy. "The Plays of Christopher Fry". **Academic Annual 新亞書院學術年刊** 1961, no. 3 (1961): 1-23. Online e-article. The University of Hong Kong Libraries. <http://sunzi.lib.hku.hk/hkjo/view/34/3400048.pdf> [accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Lutyens, David Bulwer. "The Dilemma of the Christian Dramatist: Paul Claudel and Christopher Fry". **The Tulane Drama Review** 6, no. 4 (Jun 1962): 118-124. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Redman, Ben Ray. "Christopher Fry: Poet-Dramatist". **College English** 14, no. 4 (Jan 1953): 191-197. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Spears, Monroe K. "Christopher Fry and the Redemption of Joy". **Poetry** 78, no. 1 (Apr 1951): 28-43. e-article. JSTOR (database).

Wiersma, Stanley M. "Christopher Fry's Definition of the Complete Pacifist in *The Dark is Light Enough*". **Ariel: A Review of International English Literature** 6, no. 4 (Oct 1975): 1-28. Online e-article. Synergies Prairies. <http://ariel.synergiesprairies.ca/ariel/index.php/ariel/article/view/1022/996> [accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Wiersma, Stanley M. "Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*". **Explicator** 37, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 29-31. e-article. Academic Search Complete (database).

Woodfield, James. " "The Figure of a Dance": Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*". **Ariel: A Review of International English Literature** 9, no. 3 (Jul 1978): 1-19. Online e-article. Synergies Prairies.

<http://ariel.synergiesprairies.ca/ariel/index.php/ariel/article/view/1257/1221>
[accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Obituaries

Billington, Michael . "Christopher Fry: Christian Humanist Playwright Who Brought a Spiritual Elan to the Drab World of Postwar Theatre". **The Guardian** (4 Jul 2005). Online e-article.

www.guardian.co.uk/news/2005/jul/04/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries
[accessed 5 Dec 2010]

"Christopher Fry". **The Telegraph** (4 Jul 2005).

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1493313/Christopher-Fry.html
[accessed 5 Dec 2010]

"Christopher Fry: Witty Playwright Whose Glittering Costume Dramas Offered an Escape from the Austerity of Postwar Britain". **The Times** (4 Jul 2005). Online e-article.

www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article540139.ece
[accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Nightingale, Benedict. "Christopher Fry, British Playwright in Verse, Dies at 97". **The New York Times** (5 Jul 2005). Online e-article.

www.nytimes.com/2005/07/05/theater/05fry.html?_r=1 [accessed 5 Dec 2010]

Web Resources

Thompson, Raymond H. "Interview with Christopher Fry". **University of Rochester. River Campus Libraries.**

www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/intrvws/fry.htm [accessed 5 Dec 2010]