

## HUGH WOOLDRIDGE

Director and Writer; Lecturer and Workshop Leader

[www.hughwooldridge.com](http://www.hughwooldridge.com)

Hugh Wooldridge has produced, directed and devised theatre and television productions all over the world. He has taught and given master-classes in the UK, Europe, the US, South Africa and Australia.

He trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and made his West End debut as an actor in *The Dame of Sark* with Dame Celia Johnson. Subsequently he performed with the London Festival Ballet / English National Ballet in the world premiere production of *Romeo and Juliet* choreographed by Rudolph Nureyev. He then began his career as a professional theatre director.

At the age of 22, he directed *The World of Giselle* for Dame Ninette de Valois and the Royal Ballet. Since this time, he has designed lighting for new choreography with dance companies around the world including The Royal Ballet, Dance Theatre London, Rambert Dance Company, the National Youth Ballet and the English National Ballet Company.

He directed the world premieres of the Graham Collier / Malcolm Lowry Jazz Suite *Under A Volcano* and *The Undisput'd Monarch of the English Stage* with Gary Bond portraying David Garrick; the Charles Strouse opera, *Nightingale* with Sarah Brightman at the Buxton Opera Festival; Francis Wyndham's *Abel and Cain* (Haymarket, Leicester) with Peter Eyre and Sean Baker. He directed and lit the original Olivier award-winning *Jeeves Takes Charge* at the Lyric Hammersmith; the first productions of the Andrew Lloyd Webber and T. S. Eliot *Cats* (Sydmonton Festival), and the Andrew Lloyd Webber / Don Black song-cycle *Tell Me on a Sunday* with Marti Webb at the Royalty (now the Peacock) Theatre; also Lloyd Webber's *Variations* at the Royal Festival Hall (later combined together to become *Song and Dance*) and Liz Robertson's one-woman show *Just Liz* compiled by Alan Jay Lerner at the Duke of York's Theatre, London.

Whilst the Associate Head of Music for ITV's TVS, he was responsible for many music and light entertainment programmes including *The A – Z of Music* with Richard Stilgoe, and his own *Showcase* series. The latter featured, amongst others, Nigel Kennedy, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Paul Jones, Benjamin Luxon, Rod Argent, Teresa Cahill, Julian Lloyd Webber and Sarah Brightman.

In 1987 he co-produced with Liz Robertson and directed *An Evening with Alan Jay Lerner* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London with Placido Domingo and a host of stars, which raised funds for Cancer Research. This event was remounted in March 1988 at the Opera House, Manchester with Richard Harris. In October 1989, he wrote and directed *An Evening with Alan Jay Lerner* at the New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center starring Julie Andrews, Liza Minnelli, Robert Goulet, Sally Ann Howes, Rudolph Nureyev, Leonard Bernstein and many others.

Subsequently he has been responsible for numerous, major, fund-raising events including *The Night of 1000 Voices* at the Royal Albert Hall, London (1989 – 2016); *DANCEPOWER*, a celebration of World Dance for the Red Cross at the London Palladium; *Comedy Tonight* with the leading UK comic artistes at the Royal National Theatre for The Roy Kinnear Trust; *Around The World* at the Royal Albert Hall, London with Elaine Paige and Michael Flatley and his then, newly-formed, *Riverdance* making their first live appearance, for the Royal National Institute for the Blind; the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Red Cross with Dame Shirley Bassey; the Ira Gershwin Celebration at the Royal Albert Hall, London in aid of Mencap – *Who Could Ask for Anything More?*

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In New York he created and directed the inaugural *Bernard Jacobs Award for Excellence in Theatre* which was presented to James Nederlander. He directed the annual spectacular concert performances of *Jesus Christ Superstar* introduced by Sir Tim Rice at the Barbican Centre, London; the first European Tour of *The Rocky Horror Show*; and, as Jerry Zak's UK Associate, the long-running West End production of *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (the Prince of Wales Theatre).

He directed the workshop production of the screenplay of the Andrew Lloyd Webber film of *The Phantom of the Opera*; the live, stadium-event, version of BBC TV's *Robot Wars* also a full-scale revival of the Rice / Lloyd Webber musical, *Evita*, featuring a cast of 125 (Grand Theatre, Leeds), an international Millennium Musicals' Celebration for the Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchester (Gasteig, Munich); the UK Tour of the Rodgers and Hammerstein revue, *Something Wonderful*; Noël Coward, *The Centenary Celebration* (Savoy Theatre, London); a major revival of *Peer Gynt* for Orchestra, Chorale, Dancers and Acting Company in Chicago (the first such production since 1876); *Sondheim Tonight*, a Gala celebration of the music of Stephen Sondheim (Barbican Centre); *The Royal Anniversary Gala* celebrating the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Prince Philip (Royal Festival Hall); *Jack In Review* for Sir Cameron Mackintosh (London Palladium); the all-star Gala, *BAM Salutes Sondheim* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York; *The Richard Rodgers Awards* and *The 50th Anniversary Gala Concert* for the Civic Light Opera in Pittsburgh celebrating the talents of Mary Martin, Julie Andrews, Stephen Sondheim, Hal Prince and Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber; the international *Gala Concert For Hal Prince* starring Len Cariou in Munich, Germany (also available on CD).

Hugh Wooldridge created and directed the original UK and US productions of *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber* (also seen in the Prince Edward Theatre, London and the London Palladium; and the Irish, North American and Scandinavian productions); the U.K. Tour of *The Magic of the Musicals* starring Marti Webb (also seen at the London Palladium); the 20th Anniversary Tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar – In Concert* starring the original Jesus, Paul Nicholas, in England and two full scale, American productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar* which have toured throughout Europe; and the 150th Anniversary celebrations of Thomas Cook Ltd in the presence of the late Princess of Wales.

The production of his own Alan Jay Lerner revue, *The Night They Invented Champagne* was seen in Cape Town and Johannesburg; and the UK production re-titled, *Almost Like Being in Love*, performed a season at the Royal National Theatre, London with Sian Phillips, John Standing, Clive Carter, Anita Dobson and Anna Francolini. In 2008 he adapted with Tim Rice, and directed, *Chess in Concert* at the Royal Albert Hall with Josh Groban, Idina Menzel, Adam Pascal, Kerry Ellis and Marti Pellow ([www.chessinconcert.com/](http://www.chessinconcert.com/)). This was aired by PBS in the US and internationally in Spring 2010; in London and the UK, *Chess in Concert* was the first musical theatre concert to be shown in mainstream cinemas.

In May 2010, he devised and directed the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production of *The Night of 1000 Voices* featuring Kerry Ellis, Philip Quast, Adam Pascal and the Queen composer and guitarist, Brian May ([www.thenightof1000voices.com/](http://www.thenightof1000voices.com/)). This was repeated in 2012, introduced by Hugh Bonneville.

In the past few years Hugh Wooldridge has directed two all-star revivals of *Rebecca* for the Du Maurier Estate; the UK Tour for Bill Kenwright Ltd of *The Haunting*, an adaptation of short stories by Charles Dickens with Paul Nicholas, Sean Maguire and Charlie Clements, then with David Robb and James Roache and various ghosts; *ANTHEMS: The Concert* with Kerry Ellis, Brian May, Adam Pascal and Escala at the Royal Albert Hall – which won the Jo Hutchinson International WhatsOnStage.com Award for Best Solo Performance.

In 2012 he directed at the Royal Albert Hall an all-star version of the Jeremy Lloyd classic, *The Wonderful World of Captain Beaky and his Band*, for UNICEF with Sir Roger Moore, Vanessa Redgrave, Joanna Lumley, Alan Titchmarsh, Hugh Bonneville and many others and the Gala Celebration of the Original Calendar Girls, *Seasons of Love*, at the Royal Albert Hall for the benefit of Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research with John Alderton, Lynda Bellingham, Janie Dee, Patrick Doyle, Patricia Hodge, Tim Firth, Sue Holderness, Celia Imrie, Lesley Joseph, Willy Russell, Christopher Timothy, Stephen Tompkinson, Stilgoe & Skellern, Julie Walters and many more.

Between 2010 and 2012, Hugh Wooldridge was the Beatrice Carr and Ray Wallace Visiting Professor at the A. Max Weitzenhoffer College of Fine Arts based at the University of Oklahoma. Here he directed the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary production of his own *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, and the premiere of his own original musical revue, *There Is More To Love*, with all music written by Andrew Lloyd Webber. In 2013 he was a guest lecturer at Emory University. In 2015, he directed his own adaptation of *Under Milk Wood* at the British American Drama Academy (BADA).

In 2013/4 he directed the European and US production of *BelCanto* in conjunction with Luigi Caiola and the Luciano Pavarotti Foundation, Italy which was first seen at the New York City Center in November 2013 and subsequently in Naples, Rome and Paris and a European Tour.

In 2016, he directed a brand-new production of *Twist of Lemmon* at The Other Palace, London with Christopher Lemmon portraying his father, the great Jack Lemmon. In 2017 he conceived, wrote and directed an exciting new production for the Young Artists of America celebrating the songs of Tim Rice, hosted by Sir Tim, *The Circle of Life*, which was first seen at the Strathmore Center, Maryland, and was later aired on PBS in the US. This MPT programme was nominated for three local Emmy Awards – Best Artistic Program, Best Lighting and Best Direction. It won the Emmy for Best Lighting.

In 2018, aside from his international masterclass and teaching commitments, Hugh Wooldridge directed *Play on Words* – a celebration of PG Wodehouse and his fellow Wordsmiths on Broadway – with Hal Cazalet at Live at Zedel/Crazy Coqs and in New York and Mumbai; and another brand-new production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Teatru Astra, Gozo/Malta with David Michael Johnson playing Jesus, Rachel Fabri as Mary, Chris Grech as Judas; also featuring Roger Tirazona, Noel Galea and Chris Dingli.

In 2019, he produced and directed the all-star, *The Best of Rock Musicals*, hosted by Tim Rice, Christopher Biggins and Richard O'Brien at the Eventim Apollo, Hammersmith for the benefit of the the suicide awareness charity, The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust. [www.thebestofrockmusicals.com](http://www.thebestofrockmusicals.com)

During the pandemic of 2020, he produced and directed 28 short films about Osteopathy – *Discovering Osteopathy with Barrie Savory*, [www.barriesavory.london/video-series](http://www.barriesavory.london/video-series), and a season of new play readings, presented live and streamed globally from the Riverside Studios in London – *Riverside Reads*.

Most recently, in 2023, Hugh Wooldridge has directed *A Murder Has Been Arranged* for Bill Kenwright Ltd and written a play with music with Nicholas Bromley about a girl band, *Heads Up!* He continues with his teaching and masterclass commitments whenever possible and has just returned from a US Tour with Trevor Nunn, publicising their Shakespeare Marquee TV series, *A Man For All Time*.

Hugh Wooldridge is a member of The Dramatists' Guild (U.S.) and The Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (U.S.), and The Society of Directors (U.K.)

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