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Angels In America: A Gay Fantasia On National Themes: Part One: Millennium Approaches Part Two: Perestroika



Synopsis

HBO Films will present *Angels in America*, directed by Mike Nichols from Tony Kushner's own adaptation of his Tony and Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. The remarkable cast features Al Pacino, Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson, Mary Louise Parker, Jeffrey Wright, Justin Kirk, Ben Shenkman, Patrick Wilson, James Cromwell, Michael Gambon and Simon Callow. *Angels in America* is one of the most remarkable and celebrated plays of our time. Over 350,000 copies have been sold in paperback since their original publication in 1993. Praise for the play: "Angels in America is the broadest, deepest, most searching American play of our time." — Jack Kroll, *Newsweek* "A vast, miraculous play . . . provocative, witty and deeply upsetting . . . a searching and radical rethinking of American political drama." — Frank Rich, *The New York Times* "Something rare, dangerous and harrowing — a roman candle hurled into a drawing room . . ." — Nicholas de Jongh, *London Evening Standard* "Playful and profound, extravagantly theatrical and deeply spiritual, witty, and compassionate, furious and incredibly smart . . . It's impossible to imagine anyone captivated by the beginning not wanting — needing — to go back for the end." — Linda Winer, *Newsday* "An enormously impressive work of the imagination and intellect, a towering example of what theatre stretched to its full potential can achieve." — Clifford A. Ridley, *Philadelphia Inquirer* "Perestroika is a masterpiece." — John Lahr, *New Yorker*

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Customer Reviews

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* is that rare entity: a work for the stage that is profoundly moving

yet very funny, highly theatrical yet steeped in traditional literary values, and most of all deeply American in its attitudes and political concerns. In two full-length plays--*Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika*--Kushner tells the story of a handful of people trying to make sense of the world. Prior is a man living with AIDS whose lover Louis has left him and become involved with Joe, an ex-Mormon and political conservative whose wife, Harper, is slowly having a nervous breakdown. These stories are contrasted with that of Roy Cohn (a fictional re-creation of the infamous American conservative ideologue who died of AIDS in 1986) and his attempts to remain in the closet while trying to find some sort of personal salvation in his beliefs. But such a summary does not do justice to Kushner's grand plan, which mixes magical realism with political speeches, high comedy with painful tragedy, and stitches it all together with a daring sense of irony and a moral vision that demands respect and attention. On one level, the play is an indictment of the government led by Ronald Reagan, from the blatant disregard for the AIDS crisis to the flagrant political corruption. But beneath the acute sense of political and moral outrage lies a meditation on what it means to live and die--of AIDS, or anything else--in a society that cares less and less about human life and basic decency. The play's breadth and internal drive is matched by its beautiful writing and unbridled compassion. Winner of two Tony Awards and the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for drama, *Angels in America* is one of the most outstanding plays of the American theater. --Michael Bronski --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Angels in America has proved to be a watershed drama, the most lyrical and ambitious augury of an era since Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie*.” --John Lahr, *New Yorker* “A vast, miraculous play... provocative, witty and deeply upsetting... a searching and radical rethinking of American political drama.” --Frank Rich, *New York Times* “Daring and dazzling! The most ambitious American play of our time: an epic that ranges from earth to heaven; focuses on politics, sex, and religion; transports us to Washington, the Kremlin, the South Bronx, Salt Lake City and Antarctica; deals with Jews, Mormons, WASPs, blacks; switches between realism and fantasy, from the tragedy of AIDS to the camp comedy of drag queens to the death or at least absconding of God.” --Angels in America is the broadest, deepest, most searching American play of our time.” --Jack Kroll, *Newsweek* “Few plays have captured the spirit of an age more powerfully than *Angels in America*; and the passage of time has not clipped *Angels*’ wings.” --Paul Taylor, *Independent (London)* “Something rare, dangerous, and harrowing; a roman candle hurled into a drawing room.” --Nicholas de Jongh, *London Evening Standard* “Angels breaks all the rules to achieve

the astonishing integrity of its vision…It is a play that has remained utterly of-the-moment.~•~–Jeremy Gerard, Bloomberg“The most influential American play of the last two decades.~•~–Patrick Healy, New York Times“That Angels came so close to the burning heart of the Zeitgeist left Kushner fearing he would never get there again. But in fact he has been there so often that he seems to have passed right through it…Angels, so much a cry in the dark about AIDS when it was written, seems now to be as much about the Earth~•~s potentially fatal illness as gay men~•~s.~•~–Jesse Green, New York“The greatest American play of the waning years of the twentieth century.~•~–Chris Jones, Chicago Tribune --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is one of my favorite plays of all time. All of the characters are as memorable as hey are distinct, and you truly feel yourself become immersed in the storyline. Heck, I read the whole 7 hour play in 1 afternoon. I just couldn't put it down! Kushner's author's notes are well worth reading as well, as I found them to be very interesting and it helped to put the setting of the play into perspective. With it's perfect balance of humor, fantasy, and hard-hitting drama, it is definitely a must-read for anyone, regardless of their interest in theatre.

One of the top 3 gay and AIDS related films of all time... The roster of star power is unmatched, really, while the direction by Mike Nichols is stellar! Al Pacino has, in my opinion, delivered the absolute best performance of his career while filming this made-for-TV (HBO) film, while Meryl Streep and Emma Thompson have outdone themselves as they each play 3-4 different roles in the same movie... Of outstanding quality was also Patrick Wilson's performance who masterfully managed to walk the line mixing good looks with brilliant acting... Of course, all this cinematic marvel would have never taken place if it hadn't been for Tony Kushner's brilliant script! This film, projected in two parts, is a must-see for everyone out there... Especially since it is somewhat based on real events and characters...

Kushner's play, more than being one of the great jewels of American drama, succeeds at achieving the great promise and potential of drama as a genre, to become a sacrament of empathy, an experience of cathartic compassion. The distinction between art for rat's sake and its social purpose, as well as the false dichotomy of truth and beauty, are subsumed in the fires of emotional and intellectual passion of this "play."

One of the great American plays (well, two unless you take it as a whole). I don't think I've read anything as broad in its vision and as well written as *Angels in America*. Go out of your way to read this!

After watching the *Angels in America* DVD, I wanted to see how it was originally as a play, and it does not disappoint. In many ways, I think it's a better experience reading this play than it was to see it on my tiny television. *Angels in America* is essentially a theatrical work, and the miniseries came off just as that, a filmed stage play, especially in Part 1: *Millennium Approaches*, so that it seemed really static, even with, if not because of, Mike Nichols' direction. It was, on the other hand, tremendously faithful to the play script. As far as I could tell, not a word was changed. Part 2: *Perestroika*, however, had a few changes from the script to screen, and those changes worked well, making the filmed version far more dynamic than Part 1. There's some additional backstory that got dropped in the translation, but the spirit is very much the same. Ultimately, I recommend that you watch the DVD to get an idea of the characters' mannerisms and the staging, then read the script to fully appreciate the poetry of Tony Kushner's language. Buy it and love it!

This is a brilliant play. I had only ever seen the HBO miniseries before, but this is the full play as it originally was produced on the stage. You get so much more of the story out of this version, although the miniseries is still great. If you are looking for a play that deals with the problems of the HIV/AIDS epidemic without turning to *Rent*, this is a great option. Truly a masterpiece of theater. I am using this in my Women and Religion class for a paper I am writing discussing the popular images of Mormon women, particularly Harper, Hannah, and the Mormon Mother.

Got for class, an important read.

The use of queer and religious themes to theorize America, or at the very least, say something about the country, is compelling and dramatic. Sometimes the play gets lost in itself, and it falters for it, but otherwise it's very good, even if it's long.

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