

SARAH KANE

Playwright

Sarah Kane was born in 1971 and died in 1999. She wrote five plays and one screenplay. Despite initial critical hostility and outrage, her plays are now regarded as modern classics and have had hundreds of productions around the world.

Her first play, *BLASTED*, was produced at the Royal Court Theatre in 1995. Its innovative dramatic structure and uncompromising treatment of rape and the atrocities of war were too much for the critics and drew howls of derision from broadsheet and tabloid alike. Not since Howard Brenton's *ROMANS IN BRITAIN* had there been such a theatrical scandal, but not all reaction was negative, with support and admiration for the play coming from (among others) Edward Bond, Harold Pinter and Caryl Churchill.

Sarah Kane's second play, *PHAEDRA'S LOVE* (produced at the Gate Theatre, London, in May 1996) and her third, *CLEANSED* (which opened in the Royal Court Theatre's temporary home, the Duke of York's, in May 1998) received similarly unappreciative reviews in the UK, but elsewhere, especially in Europe, the plays' structural innovations, non-naturalism and dark humour were highly acclaimed.

Her screenplay, *SKIN* (produced by Channel Four/British Screen, directed by Vincent O'Connell) was first televised in June 1997. Like her plays, it was not without controversy: originally scheduled to be shown in the early evening, it was moved back at the last minute to 11:35pm due to television executives' concerns about its explicit depictions of racism and violence.

CRAVE, her fourth play, a Paines Plough and Bright Limited production, previewed at the Chelsea Centre Theatre, London, in August 1998, before touring to the Traverse Theatre (as part of the Edinburgh Festival), the Royal Court Theatre in London, then Berlin, Dublin and Copenhagen. The tide was beginning to turn: *CRAVE*'s poetry and experimental form received rave reviews at home and abroad.

Sarah Kane's final play, *4.48 PSYCHOSIS*, premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in June 2000. Its unique form and the honesty and success with which it communicates the experience of suicidal despair have made it one of her most praised and performed works.

All plays are published by Methuen Drama.

Casarotto Ramsay
& Associates Limited

Waverley House
7-12 Noel Street
London W1F 8GQ

T +44 (0)20 7287 4450
F +44 (0)20 7287 9128
www.casarotto.co.uk