THE HEIDI CHRONICLES
by Wendy Wasserstein


3M, 5W

Comprised of a series of interrelated scenes, the play traces the coming of age of Heidi Holland, a successful art historian, as she tries to find her bearings in a rapidly changing world. Gradually distancing herself from her friends, she watches them move from the idealism and political radicalism of their college years through militant feminism and, eventually, back to the materialism that they had sought to reject in the first place. Heidi's own path to maturity involves an affair with the glib, arrogant Scoop Rosenbaum, a womanizing lawyer/publisher who eventually marries for money and position; a deeper but even more troubling relationship with a charming, witty young pediatrician, Peter Patrone, who turns out to be gay; and increasingly disturbing contacts with the other women, now much changed, who were a part of her childhood and college years. Eventually Heidi comes to accept the fact that liberation can be achieved only if one is true to oneself, with goals that come out of need rather than circumstance. As the play ends she is still "alone," but having adopted an orphaned baby, it is clear that she has begun to find a sense of fulfillment and continuity that may well continue to elude the others of her anxious, self-centered generation.

"... not many plays manage Heidi's feat of inducing almost continuous laughter while forcing the audience to examine its preconceptions ... It's the play of the season ..." — Variety

"... witty, hilarious ... not just a funny play, but a wise one ... I doubt we'll see a better play this season."

— The New York Daily News

"... a wonderful and important play."

— New York Newsday

"... the writing is emotional and heartfelt, rare qualities in today's trivial theatre, and all the more extraordinary when combined with perceptive characterizations and witty dialogue."

— BackStage
THE HEIDI CHRONICLES was first presented in New York City by Playwrights Horizons (Andre Bishop, Artistic Director; Paul S. Daniels, Executive Director) on December 12, 1988. It was directed by Daniel Sullivan; the set design was by Thomas Lynch; costume design was by Jennifer Von Mayrhoauer; lighting design was by Pat Collins; and the sound design was by Scott Lehrer. The production stage manager was Roy Harris; and the production manager was Carl Mulert. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

HEIDI HOLLAND ........................................ Joan Allen
SUSAN JOHNSTON .................................... Ellen Parker
PETER PATRONE ...................................... Boyd Gaines
SCOOP ROSENBAUM ................................ Peter Friedman
CHRIS BOXER, MARK, EASTERN BUNNY,
WAITER, RAY ......................................... Drew McVety
JILL, DEBBIE, LISA, HOSTESS .................... Anne Lange
FRAN, MOLLY, BETSY, APRIL ...................... Joanne Camp
BECKY, CLARA, DENISE ............................ Sarah Jessica Parker

The production subsequently transferred to the Plymouth Theatre, on Broadway, on March 9, 1989. The only cast change was Cynthia Nixon, who took over the roles of BECKY, CLARA, and DENISE.

THE HEIDI CHRONICLES was first performed in a workshop at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle, Washington, in April, 1988. The director was Daniel Sullivan. The cast was as follows:

HEIDI HOLLAND ................................. Lizbeth Mackay
SUSAN JOHNSTON ................................. Caroline Aaron
CHRIS, MARK, WAITER, RAY .................. Peter Lohnes
PETER PATRONE ................................. Jack Gilpin
SCOOP ROSENBAUM ............................... Alan Rosenberg
FRAN, LISA, APRIL ................... Gretchen Corbett
JILL, DEBBIE, MOLLY, PAULA ........ Susy Schneider
BECKY, CLARA, DENISE .............. Martha Plimpton
ACT ONE

Prologue: A lecture hall, New York, 1989
Scene 1: Chicago, 1965
Scene 2: Manchester, New Hampshire, 1968
Scene 3: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970
Scene 4: Chicago, 1974
Scene 5: New York, 1977

ACT TWO

All scenes take place in New York.
Prologue: A lecture hall, 1989
Scene 1: An apartment, 1980
Scene 2: A TV studio, 1982
Scene 3: A restaurant, 1984
Scene 4: The Plaza Hotel, 1986
Scene 5: A pediatrics ward, 1987
Scene 6: An apartment, 1989