



## **Tony Kushner in Conversation (Triangulations: Lesbian/Gay/Queer Theater/Drama/Performance)**

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In the Fall of 1992, *Millennium Approaches*, the first part of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, won England's prestigious *Evening Standard* award as the season's Best Play. By the Spring of 1993, *Millennium* had come to Broadway and won its highest honor, the Tony Award for Best Play, and the distinguished Pulitzer Prize for drama as well. Through its epic theatrical panorama of the intimate and political dynamics that arise when individuals, histories, and cultures intersect, *Millennium* captured the imagination and the conscience of all who saw it. Its ability to deeply move the audience in personal, communal, and political ways was admirably (and astoundingly) matched by the subsequent production of the play's second part, *Perestroika*, which brought Kushner yet another *Evening Standard* award and Tony Award for Best Play (1994). Tony Kushner has, almost overnight, become the premier American male playwright to "represent" the 1990s, as David Mamet and August Wilson dominated critical attention in the 1980s.

The phenomenally positive response to *Angels in America* was matched by the equally enthusiastic reception of its young, politically engaged playwright, who impressed journalists and scholars with his eloquent intellect, wit, and moral convictions. Kushner spoke for a younger generation of American artists and activists whose art is intimately connected to social vision and "revolutionary" possibilities in the public and private sectors. His role as a generational (read "national," "liberal," "socialist," "Jewish," "queer") spokesman has provided him with a public platform from which to address concerns that lie at the center of national debate. In a short time Kushner has captured and retained a nation's fascination, and his opinions are widely sought out on a wide range of topics. And, most often, the platform from which Kushner expresses his ideas is the personal interview, in which he boldly confronts Americans to rethink, even to reinvent, themselves as the Millennium approaches.

*Tony Kushner in Conversation* is the first book to compile Kushner's most significant interviews of the past decade, tracing his career from its early years to his maturing artistic and political visions. The collection includes pieces that first appeared in an amazingly broad range of periodicals as well as interviews not previously published, such as his appearance on PBS on The Charlie Rose Show.

In addition to *Angels in America*, Tony Kushner is author of *Slavs!* and is currently finishing work on *Henry Box Brown*, scheduled to have its world premiere at the Royal National Theatre in the summer of 1997.

Robert Vorlicky is Associate Professor of Drama at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University.

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