

The Heidi Chronicles

Comedy/Drama

Full Length

3 men, 5 women: 8 total

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Tony Award, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the Drama Desk Award, the Hull-Warriner Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. A significant and celebrated play, which was first presented by Off-Broadway's Playwrights Horizons and went on to become a long-run Broadway success. Funny, touching, and written with rare grace and sensitivity, the play is a moving examination of the progress of a generation, from the socially and politically activist sixties to the success-oriented eighties—a time during which the status of American women underwent profound, and sometimes unsettling, change. "...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." —NY Daily News. "...a wonderful and important play." —NY 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.

Synopsis

The plot follows Heidi Holland from high school in the 1960s to her career as a successful art historian more than twenty years later. The play's main themes deal with the changing role of women during this time period, describing both Heidi's ardent feminism during the 1970s and her eventual sense of betrayal during the 1980s. Though most of the characters are women, there are two important male characters; Peter Patrone, a gay pediatrician who is arguably Heidi's best friend, and Scoop Rosenbaum, a magazine editor who marries and has many affairs, and with whom Heidi has a tense friendship.

Critical responses & cultural impact

[The New York Times](#) critic [Mel Gussow](#) wrote of the Playwrights Horizon production: "Ms. Wasserstein has always been a clever writer of comedy. This time she has been exceedingly watchful about not settling for easy laughter, and the result is a more penetrating play. This is not to suggest, however, that *The Heidi Chronicles* is ever lacking in humor."

Are modern day American women happy? Are their lives more fulfilling than that of women who lived before the [Equal Rights Amendment](#)? Have the expectations of stereotypical gender roles faded away? Is society still dominated by a patriarchal "boy's club"?

Wendy Wasserstein considers these questions in her Pulitzer Prize winning play, *The Heidi Chronicles*. Although it was written over twenty years ago, this drama still mirrors the emotional trials many of us (women and men) experience as we try to figure out the big question: What should we do with our lives?

The passage of time brings a new, not always welcome perspective to Wendy Wasserstein's Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatic comedy "The Heidi Chronicles" Asolo Rep. When it premiered on Broadway in 1988 (and at the Asolo in 1991) it was a contemporary

look back at the changing world of women, who began to demand more than lives as homemakers.

Today, it's a bit of history on top of history as we look back first to 1989, and then to the 24 years beginning in 1965 when Heidi Holland is a shy and insecure high school student about to discover the road to becoming an art historian and learn more about her potential. The decisions she made that were bold at the time seem more commonplace today.

Time also has altered how we hear or react to the central question in Wasserstein's mind — what happens to women who try to “have it all” and how do they cope if they never get it. It's still a relevant subject, but this time it plays as more of a dated joke.

[Tony Award](#)

- Best Play (winner)
- Best Actress in a Play (Allen) (nominee)
- Best Featured Actor in a Play (Gaines) (winner)
- Best Featured Actress in a Play (Joanne Camp)(nominee)
- Best Scenic Design (Thomas Lynch)(nominee)
- Best Direction of a Play (nominee)

[Drama Desk Award](#)

- Best New Play (winner)
- Outstanding Actor in a Play (Friedman)
- Outstanding Actress in a Play (Allen) (nominee)
- Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play (Joanne Camp)(nominee)
- Outstanding Director of a Play (nominee)
- Outstanding Set Design (nominee)

[New York Drama Critics Circle](#)

- Best Play (winner)