



## The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil (Modern Plays)

By John McGrath

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Strathoykel, Sutherland. "When the Sheriff and his men arrived, the women were on the road and the men behind the walls. The women shouted 'Better to die here than America or the Cape of Good Hope'. The first blow was struck by a woman with a stick. The gentry leant out of their saddles and beat at the women's heads with their crops." (John McGrath)

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## **The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil (Modern Plays) By John McGrath Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

arguably the single most important show in the whole history of Scottish theatre: important not only because of its angry, hilarious, brilliantly-researched political content, still almost frighteningly relevant today, but because its ceilidh form, and its passionate commitment to touring to communities large and small, galvanised an irreversible change in what Scotland thought theatre was, what it could do, and who its audience might be... John McGrath's great play will reach out to a new generation, and continue to evolve, develop, and live, along with the story of Scotland itself. Scotsman a spine-tingling call to arms that needs to be heard across the land right now. Herald There are no us-and-them divisions here, just the collective enjoyment of a spirited ensemble and the thrill of hearing truth being spoken to power. Guardian John McGrath's hugely important fusion of Highland ceilidh and old-fashioned Scots musical theatre ... remains alive and contemporary. As a play it has everything, and it throws it at you in generous handfuls; laughter, farce, drama, live song and dance, finely researched political intent. Independent John McGrath's landmark political drama The Times

#### About the Author

John McGrath was born in Birkenhead, Cheshire, in 1935. After national service and Oxford University, he wrote and directed for theatre and television, as well as writing for cinema. Early work included Z-Cars for BBC-TV (1962), Events While Guarding the Bofors Gun (1966) and the screenplay for Billion Dollar Brain (1976). In 1971, together with Elizabeth MacLennan, he co-founded the 7:84 Theatre Company, which divided into Scottish and English companies in 1973 with McGrath remaining as Artistic Director of both. During his career McGrath wrote over 60 plays, including Fish in the Sea (1972), The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil (1973), Blood Red Roses (1980), Border Warfare (1989), Watching for Dolphins (1992) and, most recently, HyperLynx (2001). He was twice Visiting Fellow in Theatre at Cambridge University. His previous books include A Good Night Out (1981), The Bone Won't Break (1990) and Six Pack: Plays for Scotland (1996). McGrath founded Freeway Films in 1982, for which he produced, amongst others, The Dressmaker (1985), Carrington (1995), Ma Vie en Rose (1997) and Aberdeen (2002). He also founded Moonstone International Screen Labs to support and promote independent European filmmaking. He received Lifetime Achievement Awards from both BAFTA (in 1993) and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain (in 1997), as well as Honorary Doctorates from the University of Stirling and the University of London. He died in 2002.

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