RICHARD BURTON • PETER O'TOOLE
IN THE
HAL WALLIS PRODUCTION
BECKET

WITH
JOHN GIELGUD • DONALD WOLFIT • MARTITA HUNT • PAMELA BROWN

DIRECTED BY PETER GLENVILLE
SCREENPLAY BY EDWARD ANHALT
Based upon the play Becket by JEAN ANOUILH
Production Designer JOHN BRYAN

A PARAMOUNT RELEASE
It is almost 800 years since Thomas Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral. The face of the world of his day — the latter half of the 12th century — was changing rapidly in Europe as kings battled with kings and State warred against the Church. The medieval period was one of the most formative in the history of the continent and out of these struggles emerged the kingdoms of England and France.

Henry II and Becket stand out as dominant figures in the England of their time. The life-and-death conflict between the King and his Archbishop of Canterbury was the focal point in the chronicles of that age. Historians, biographers and dramatists have been intrigued by the relationship between these two men, which evolved from an association that was intimate and affectionate, to the bitter fight that led to the martyrdom of one and the scourging of the other.

Although their struggle was but one of many that occurred in England between Church and State over a span of several hundred years, it was its intensely personal and dramatic nature that brought it into high historical relief. Henry and Becket were fast friends before their views clashed on the relative importance of Church and State. And it was the real love Henry felt for Becket before the tragedy of their final enmity that makes their story so compelling and absorbing.

Prior to the conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066, there had been little friction between Church and Crown because of the Saxon Kings' devotion to the Church.

With the coming of the Normans, however, the King assumed control of the English Church. In time he was helped by Lan-Franc, Norman Archbishop of Canterbury, who established royal control. Bishops were forbidden to participate in civil courts though they sat on the King's Council. They received their appointments through the King and paid for them just as the knights did.

William Rufus, the Conqueror's son, went a step further: he seized church lands and revenues for the Crown. In 1100 he was succeeded by his second son, Henry I, who strengthened the dominance of the Crown. He created the office of Chancellor and made him responsible for all government records. During the civil war that followed the death of Henry I, when his daughter Matilda was fighting his nephew Stephen to gain the throne for her son Henry, the Court of the day still managed to keep its ascendancy over the Church.

Henry II, great-grandson of William the Conqueror, came to the throne of England in 1154 and ruled for the next 35 years. He reigned not only over England but also over half of France. In Becket's day the King of France was Louis VII.

The whole of Henry II's reign was occupied with uneasy peace and open war between the two kings, with Henry spending as much time subduing and conquering French cities as he did fighting against the Welsh and establishing his legal system in England.

Henry pursued the policy of strengthening the dominance of the Crown by carrying on the English custom of appointing high dignitaries of the Church without reference to the Pope in Rome. In this way Henry gave Becket, his friend, the post of Chancellor, and subsequently made him Archbishop of Canterbury.

Henry, who believed that Becket's friendship for him would be a guarantee for his acceding to his demands, soon found out his mistake. Almost overnight Becket became totally devoted
to the Church. He refused the King money from Church lands; he refused to allow priests to be tried by the King's officers. The climax was reached in 1164 when Becket refused to sign Henry's Constitutions of Clarendon — a list of all former laws which abrogated many of the privileges of the clergy. These Constitutions of Clarendon were a landmark in the history of English law and made impossible any compromise between Becket and the King, between King and Church.

Becket, to avoid arrest by the King, escaped to Europe and remained in exile for five years. On August 22, 1170, at the instigation of the Pope, Henry and Becket met in the Traitors Meadow, outside Freteval in France. Henry agreed to allow Becket to return to Canterbury, but refused him the traditional Kiss of Peace.

Returning to Canterbury on December 1, Becket again carried on in defiance of the King's wishes. Henry was provoked to fury by this behaviour. Four barons, who heard Henry rant and rave against the Archbishop, left Henry in France on December 25, 1170. Four days later they murdered Becket on the chancel steps of Canterbury Cathedral.

Henry's position was made so uncomfortable by the Pope's displeasure that he did penance in Canterbury Cathedral. He prostrated himself at Becket's tomb and submitted to scourging by the monks. He was absolved of any part in Becket's murder.

History is vague on what happened to the four barons who killed Becket. One version has it that Henry exiled them to the continent. Another version: they disappeared from the scene, taking refuge in various parts of Europe and within ten years all of them had died natural deaths.

Becket was canonized in 1172. Becket's remains were, in 1220, moved from his tomb in the crypt to the new Shrine in the Trinity Chapel. Meanwhile pilgrimages to his tomb were growing in popularity, reaching their peak about 1400, the age of Chaucer. The poet's "Canterbury Tales" had its genesis in these pilgrimages.

Henry II had no joy in his Eleanor nor in his four sons. Two of the boys died before Henry, and on his death in 1189, he was succeeded by his third son, Richard the Lion Hearted. This son, though a brave Crusader, did little enough for England during his reign, spending most of his time crusading and in prison abroad. Upon his death he was succeeded by his brother John. In 1215 John was forced by his barons to sign the famous Magna Carta, which secured the Church from royal intervention in the election of dignitaries.

Through the years, however, the struggle between the Kings of England and the Church in Rome continued. The climax was reached during the reign of Henry VIII, who ascended the English throne in 1509. The open break with Rome, hitherto threatened off and on, became a fact with the passage of Henry's Act of Supremacy in 1534, which repudiated entirely Papal authority, severed the English Church from Rome, and made the King the head of the new Church of England. Abbeys were closed and possessions taken over.

The shrine of Thomas Becket was removed from Canterbury in 1538, his bones scattered, his jewels taken by the Crown. Three hundred and sixty-eight years after the murder and martyrdom of Becket, the cause for which he fought and died was finally lost as the monarchy triumphed.

HENRY: "We must come to an understanding about who rules this kingdom, the Church or me."
THE STORY OF BECKET

King Henry II (Peter O'Toole) rides in procession to Canterbury Cathedral to do penance at the tomb of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (Richard Burton). Beside Becket's tomb the King takes off his cloak and, stripped to the waist, prepares to be lashed by monks in penance. As Henry talks softly to Becket, recalling their early friendship and adventures, the scene fades into the past and the early days of their friendship . . .

Thomas Becket, educated in England and Paris, has become archdeacon under the sponsorship of the Archbishop. He also becomes the boon companion of King Henry II in hunting, dining and enjoying the favours of pretty women. Becket, a pleasure-loving young man, is Henry's favorite associate on his expeditions and the two spend as much time in amorous adventures and hunting as in governing the country.

One of their adventures involves Henry with a farmer's daughter (Linda Marlowe). While Becket keeps guard and Henry is with the girl, the parents (Paul Farrell and Rose Howlett) wake up. Becket warns Henry and holds off the parents while Henry escapes through the window. Jumping on a single horse, the two young men ride back to Henry's castle.

The close friendship between Henry and Becket leads to angry murmurings at Court and within the Church. Henry summons a council to upbraid the Church for refusing to pay taxes
due to the Crown. The Archbishop of Canterbury (Felix Aylmer) argues with Henry as to the King's right to levy such taxes. He maintains that William the Conqueror, Henry's great-grandfather, had exempted the Church. But Henry is adamant.

Henry announces to his Council that he has decided to revive the office of Chancellor of England, and to entrust it to his loyal servant, Thomas Becket. Becket, like the gathered clergy, is stunned by Henry's proposal. The Archbishop, Becket's original sponsor and patron, watches the scene cautiously while Gilbert Folliot, Bishop of London (Donald Wolfit) shows open hostility. Henry gives Becket the Chancellor's ring — a ring with the Seal of the Three Lions on it — and says "I never did anything without your advice anyway. Nobody knew it, now everyone will, that's all." The King warns the Archbishop, "Don't rely on Becket to play your game. He's my man."

Henry, who does not quite understand his friend, and Becket, now Chancellor, continue their hunting and wenching. They take refuge in a peasant's hut during a thunderstorm. The peasant (Gerald Lawson) is terrified of the King and hides his daughter (Jennifer Hilary) under a pile of sacks. Henry uncovers the girl and suggests cleaning her up and taking her back to the castle. In an attempt to spare the girl, Becket asks Henry to give her to him. Henry agrees but asks Becket to return an equal favor one day. Becket promises but stays behind when the King leaves the hut to give the peasant money, and to assure him that the girl will not be taken.

Henry and Becket return to Becket's castle for a banquet attended by the King and his chief Barons (Niall MacGinnis, Christopher Rhodes, Percy Herbert, Peter Jeffrey). Becket introduces the Court to forks, imported from Italy. The Barons use the forks as weapons in drunken games until Becket explains their real use. Henry watches his clever but perplexing friend carefully.

During the banquet Becket retires to his private rooms with Gwendolen, his Welsh mistress (Sian Phillips). Even with Gwendolen, Becket is not completely happy and admits ruefully that "somehow I could never support the idea of being loved."

Henry interrupts their conversation to remind Becket of the favour he promised him in exchange for the peasant girl. He asks for Gwendolen, Becket, refusing to give Henry the satisfaction of knowing that he is offended and hurt, agrees because he has given his promise. Henry leaves them alone to say goodbye. Gwendolen leaves brokenheartedly and Becket is surprised when the peasant girl is escorted into his chambers by a palace guard. Behind her is the King. Henry gloats over Becket's discomfiture, waiting for his reaction. Becket, icily cold, dismisses the King courteously.

Henry descends to the courtyard where Gwendolen's barge is waiting. He discovers that she has killed herself rather than go with him. Distraught at the consequences of his action, Henry hurries back to Becket's room and begs him to send the girl away. When Henry expresses doubts about Becket's loyalty,
Becket assures him that so long as he must improvise his honor, he will serve the King faithfully.

The King and Becket now set out for the battlefields of France, where Becket treats with conquered town officials and conducts all of Henry's business, while the King makes love to pretty girls and depends on Becket for every decision.

Becket is attacked one morning in the King's camp by a young monk. Instead of having him executed, Becket sends Brother John (David Weston), whom he recognizes as his own ghost when young, back to England. Becket then goes to fetch Henry to escort him through the captured French town and finds the King in bed with his latest conquest — the prettiest French girl in the district (Veronique Vendell). Henry and Becket ride through the town to receive the keys of the city, and Becket has difficulty in leading the gay King past the many attractive girls in the crowds welcoming them. At the entrance to the Cathedral an emissary from England, William of Corbeil (Patrick Newall), is waiting for Henry with the news that the old Archbishop of Canterbury is dead.

Henry, in a burst of inspiration, announces that there is only one man who can be the next Archbishop — it must be Becket. Becket is appalled and begs the King not to make him accept. "I could not serve both God and you." The King replies that Becket is the only man he trusts, and imagines that all conflict between King and Church would be resolved if Becket held the Archbishopric of Canterbury. He insists that Becket leave at once for London, not realizing that this is to be their last friendly meeting.

Becket is ordained and consecrated as Archbishop in Canterbury by a reluctant and angry Bishop Folliot, who opposes the appointment with all his power.

Becket's way of life is now completely changed. He has given all his wealth to the poor and lives a Spartan, humble life with his monks. Folliot urges Becket to take the part of the Church against the Crown when a priest accused of a civil crime is taken before civil courts. Before Becket takes action, news comes of the priest's murder by Lord Gilbert's men.

Meanwhile, Henry finds life tedious without Becket constantly at his side. He quarrels with his wife, Eleanor (Pamela Brown), and his mother, Queen Matilda (Martiia Hunt), and desperately tries to reassure himself of Becket's love for him even though he is now Archbishop.

In the middle of a family quarrel during which Henry expresses his dislike for his wife and four sons, Brother John comes to him from Becket asking Henry to arrest Lord Gilbert and try him for the murder of the priest. Henry is hurt by Becket's curt message and hurries to Canterbury to see him. Becket and Henry face each other once more, this time more as antagonists than as close friends. Neither will give way: it is to be a fight between the rights of the Church and the supremacy of the Crown. Becket gives Henry back the Chancellor's ring and Henry leaves broken-hearted, saying: "Now I shall learn to be alone."
Henry plots with Foliot against Becket, and they decide to arraign the Archbishop for embezzlement of funds during his Chancellorship. Becket, though warned, proceeds to excommunicate Lord Gilbert. He is summoned to appear before the King's Council in Northampton.

While Queen Eleanor and his mother gloat over Becket's fall from favor, Henry is forlorn. When Becket arrives he turns the tables on the assembly by refusing to be judged by anyone other than the Pope. Henry gives orders that Becket is not to leave England, but with Brother John's help, the Archbishop rides away and sails for France.

King Louis VII of France (John Gielgud) receives Henry's envoys, Foliot and the Duke of Leicester (Inigo Jackson), at Court and pretends to have no knowledge of Becket's presence in France. They leave and the French King summons Becket. Louis admits to Becket that his quarrel with Henry serves France well, and that he will guarantee Becket's safety while he makes his way through France to see the Pope.

In Rome, Henry's envoys precede Becket to an audience with the Pope (Paolo Stoppa), with Cardinal Zambelli (Gino Cervi) in attendance. The Pope then receives Becket in audience and suggests that he go into retreat in France. Becket, still accompanied by the faithful Brother John, goes to live in a French monastery.

King Louis arranges a meeting between Henry and Becket because the latter has persuaded him that a reconciliation would place Henry in Louis' debt, Henry and Becket meet on horseback on a lonely stretch of seashore, while their entourages wait some distance away. They talk of old times and of new problems. Becket will not give way so Henry, in a last attempt to win back his friend, agrees to allow Becket to return to England. Becket leaves, saying sadly: "I know that I shall never see you again."

Back in his French castle, Henry decides to have his son Henry (Riggs O'Hara) crowned as Henry III in order to avoid future disputes. Because he is still angry with Becket, who would by custom perform the coronation, Henry arranges for the Archbishop of York to officiate at the ceremony.

In spite of this petulant action against Becket, Henry still quarrels violently with the Queen on the subject of his friend. When his Barons describe Becket's triumphant arrival in England and his rapturous reception on his return to Canterbury, Henry once more is torn between his love and hate for Becket. Working himself into a towering passion, Henry cries out, "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" Henry falls half conscious at the banquet table and the four Barons leave silently.

In Canterbury, Becket anticipates action from the dissatisfied Court and Barons. While he is preparing to take Vespers, news is brought that armed men are trying to break into the Cathedral. Becket continues with the service, ordering a terrified monk to open the doors. The Barons enter and, after killing Brother John, who tries to defend Becket, they kill him.

BECKET ends with Henry lashed by monks at the tomb and then, vowing to seek out Becket's murderers, the King goes out to the people to proclaim that Archbishop Thomas Becket shall henceforth be honored and prayed to as a Saint. "Are you satisfied now, Thomas?" asks Henry, sadly, as he leaves his friend's tomb.

Henry accepts the keys to the conquered French town — a ceremony which Becket has arranged.
Henry decides to take Gwendolen, Becket's mistress, for his own.

Becket participates in the royal hunt.
Richard Burton’s portrayal of Thomas Becket is perhaps the first he has undertaken in motion pictures which compares with those great testing roles which earned him his reputation as one of the English-speaking theatre’s most gifted actors. His Coriolanus, Hamlet, Iago, Prince Hal and Henry V at London’s Old Vic are still considered among the finest and most exciting ever seen on the English stage.

"Until now," in director Peter Glenville’s judgment, "Burton has never appeared in a screen role that has tested his remarkable talent. He is really a big, strong instrument for great heroic roles and in BECKET his gifts are fully challenged."

Richard Burton was born in the small coal mining village of Pontrhydyfen in South Wales on November 10, 1925. He was the twelfth of thirteen children. Although his brothers all worked in the coal mines, as did his father, he gained a grammar school place and under the tuition of Philip Burton—a schoolmaster who later became the boy’s guardian and whose name he took—won a scholarship to Oxford.

While Burton was waiting for admission to Oxford he made his stage debut in the West End of London in Emlyn Williams’ "The Druid’s Nest."

At the University Burton attracted attention in a performance of "Measure for Measure" for the Oxford University Dramatic Society. He owed allegiance to the Royal Air Force, through which service he had been granted his scholarship and served for two years as a navigator.

Upon his discharge in 1947 he was given a contract by H. M. Tennant Ltd. and within a year he was an established theatrical star. In 1949 Burton made his film debut—as a Welsh shepherd-boy in "The Last Days of Dolwyn" with Emlyn Williams.

Following the pattern of most stage actors’ careers, Burton now divided his time between theatre and screen, always scoring as a serious player on the stage and never quite achieving the same eminence with his films. He had the distinction of starring in the first CinemaScope production, "The Robe," and his many film credits include "Now Barabbas," "Waterfront," "The Rains of Ranchipur," "Alexander the Great," "Seawife," "Bitter Victory," "Look Back in Anger," "The Bramble Bush," "Ice Palace," "Cleopatra," "V.I.Ps" and "Night of the Iguana."

On the New York stage Burton made an immediate impact when he appeared in Christopher Fry’s "The Lady’s Not for Burning" and again in Jean Anouilh’s "Time Remembered." In "Camelot" Burton scored a different kind of success in his first stage musical.

Richard Burton’s magnificent voice has been one of his principal assets in his “heroic” roles and its resonant tones were chosen, at Winston Churchill’s request, to record the commentary on "The Valiant Years." Burton’s voice was also heard on the commentary of the documentary "Tribute to Dylan Thomas" which won an Academy Award in 1963.

Burton, with his powerful figure, fine presence, blue-green eyes and forceful personality, is — whether he likes it or not — doomed to be a popular idol. The man is friendly, moody, boisterously extrovert in his enjoyments and deeply sensitive in his work. He reads omnivorously, was a great rugby football player, and takes to any sport, such as riding, easily; he has a good sense of humor and is an exceptional conversationalist.

Burton’s latest stage appearance is in the title role of John Gielgud’s Broadway production of "Hamlet."
Except in England, most audiences are unaware of the range and versatility of Peter O'Toole's talent. O'Toole did not spring up out of nowhere into the title role of "Lawrence of Arabia." A formidable reputation as a stage actor preceded his appearance as Lawrence. Such is his reputation and stature in the English theatre that when he completed Hal Wallis' production of BECKET he was asked by Sir Laurence Olivier — with all of England's acting talent at his disposal — to star in "Hamlet," the premiere production of England's new National Theatre.

The variety of roles Peter O'Toole has played is impressive. In his three years at the Bristol Old Vic, O'Toole appeared in 72 different roles, including a highly praised performance of "Hamlet" when he was 24. At 26, his performance as Shylock in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of "The Merchant of Venice" at Stratford-upon-Avon was acclaimed on the front pages of many London newspapers.

Undoubtedly, film fans think of Peter O'Toole as Lawrence, but in point of fact it was a rather unusual and untypical characterization for him to give. The role of Henry II in BECKET is actually much closer to O'Toole's own flamboyant, extroverted, highly charged and emotional Irish personality.

O'Toole has described himself as "the George Arliss of the beat generation." He, in other words, thinks of himself as a character actor. But he is a character actor with a difference — he has the looks and physical attributes of a film star.

Peter Seamus O'Toole, son of Patrick Joseph O'Toole, was born in Connemara County, Galway, Ireland, on August 2, 1933. His father travelled wherever his turf accounting business took him, taking along his wife Constance (Scots by birth), Peter and Peter's older sister Patricia. O'Toole left school in Leeds at 14 and became an office boy on a local newspaper, the Yorkshire Evening News. He eventually became a reporter but he and the editor finally decided that his talents lay elsewhere. After two years in the Royal Navy as a signalman, decoder and encoder in the submarine service, O'Toole applied for and won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. The class of 1954 at R.A.D.A. produced at least four graduates who have gone on to notable stage and screen careers: Peter O'Toole, Albert Finney, Alan Bates and Richard Harris.

O'Toole made his West End debut in the musical "Oh Mein Papa." He followed this with a tour of the English provinces in "Holiday," in which a young Welsh actress, Sian Phillips, portrayed his sister. Peter and Sian — who portrays Gwendolen, Becket's mistress in BECKET — are married and have two daughters, the youngest born during the filming of BECKET.

O'Toole achieved star status with his second West End play, "The Long, the Short and the Tall." He was named "Actor of the Year" in 1959 and also won the Paris Theatre Festival Award. During the run of the play, O'Toole made his screen debut in "Kidnapped." He was then signed for "The Day They Robbed the Bank of England." He turned down several film offers for the chance to perform at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in three alternating Shakespearean roles: Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice," Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew" and Thersites in "Troilus and Cressida." Stratford's producer, Peter Hall, had thus made O'Toole, at 27, the youngest male star ever to appear at the celebrated theatre, following in the footsteps of such illustrious predecessors as Sir Laurence Olivier and Sir John Gielgud.

(Top) Henry interrupts his children at play. (Bottom) Henry is overcome by emotion when he hears of Becket's triumphant return to England.
(Above) Henry: "Thomas Becket, former Archbishop of Canterbury and martyred to the cause of God and the Church, shall henceforth be honoured and prayed to in this kingdom as a saint."

(Left) Henry and Becket feast together.
The story and stature of Hal Wallis, producer of BECKET, are best told by the record. In 27 years as a producer his pictures have won a total of 32 Academy Awards and well over 100 “Oscar” nominations for various achievements. Twice he has won the Irving Thalberg Award for the best production record of the year.

Wallis has long been recognized as one of the industry's top discoverers of talent. Among the now famous stars first introduced to the screen under his banner are Burt Lancaster, Jerry Lewis, Shirley Booth, Dean Martin, Kirk Douglas, Elvis Presley, Dolores Hart, Pamela Tiffin, Charlton Heston, Lizabeth Scott and Shirley MacLaine.

As executive in charge of production at Warner Bros. First National Studios, Wallis turned out many memorable pictures, including “The Life of Emile Zola,” “Louis Pasteur,” “One Way Passage,” “Dawn Patrol,” “Little Caesar,” “Five Star Final,” “I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang,” and “Gold Diggers of 1933.” In 1934-5 Bette Davis won the best actress award in Hal Wallis' “Dangerous” while two more Oscars went to “Midsummer Night's Dream.” The next year his winners were “Anthony Adverse” and “The Charge of the Light Brigade.”

In 1944 Wallis moved over to Paramount as an independent producer. Among his 400 films are numbered such classics and box-office winners as “Casablanca,” “The Maltese Falcon,” “This Is the Army,” “Air Force,” “Watch on the Rhine,” “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” “King's Row,” “Sergeant York,” “The Fighting 69th,” “Dark Victory,” “Dodge City,” “Four Daughters,” “Come Back Little Sheba,” “Rose Tattoo,” “Gunfight at the O.K. Corral,” “The Rainmaker.” Among his recent films are included “Summer and Smoke;” many of the Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis subjects.

Hal Wallis has that rare talent—the ability to make a success of a popular box-office story as well as a prestige picture. Probably no producer in Hollywood takes such an active part in every facet of picture making. He manages to keep his finger on every phase of production without losing sight of his over-all goal—fine movies and great entertainment.
Peter Glenville, director of Hal Wallis’ production of Becket, also staged the Broadway production of Jean Anouilh’s internationally acclaimed play, starring Laurence Olivier and Anthony Quinn. Glenville is descended from a long line of distinguished English and Irish thespians. He began his theatrical career playing his first leading role in London opposite Vivien Leigh in Shaw’s “Doctor’s Dilemma.” It was Tyrone Guthrie who sponsored his directorial debut at the Old Vic, putting Mr. Glenville in charge of eight productions, the first of which was the new director’s own adaptation of Turgenev’s novel, “Lisa.”

Following that highly successful season, Mr. Glenville quickly became one of London’s leading directors with productions including Huxley’s “Gioconda Smile,” Sartre’s “Crime Passionel,” Terence Rattigan’s “Adventure Story,” “The Browning Version” and “Separate Tables,” Graham Greene’s “The Living Room,” Saroyan’s “The Time of Your Life,” Tennessee Williams’ “Summer and Smoke” and Samuel Spewack’s “Under the Sycamore Tree.” Starring Alec Guinness, Mr. Glenville co-produced and directed “The Prisoner,” first as a play in London, later as a film. Shortly thereafter, the two again fused forces when Mr. Glenville wrote, directed and co-produced the English version of Feydeau’s “Hotel Paradiso” with Sir Alec starring.

In America, Mr. Glenville has directed, among others, “The Innocents,” “Separate Tables,” “Rashomon,” “Hotel Paradiso,” “Take Me Along” (his first musical assignment), “Becket” with Laurence Olivier and Anthony Quinn, “Tchin-Tchin” with Margaret Leighton and Mr. Quinn, “Tovarich” with Vivien Leigh and “Dylan,” with Alec Guinness. His films include “Me and the Colonel” with Danny Kaye, “Summer and Smoke” with Geraldine Page and “Term of Trial” with Laurence Olivier and Simone Signoret.

Educated at Oxford, Mr. Glenville is the son of Dorothy Ward and Shawn Glenville, well-known English actors, and grandson of Mary Glenville, noted actress of the Abbey Theatre.
JOHN GIELGUD  Born on April 14th, 1904, John Gielgud was educated at Westminster School and made his stage debut at the Old Vic Theatre in 1921. He quickly made his name as one of the foremost Shakespearean actors of the century and it was in Shakespeare plays that he appeared almost constantly until 1949, when he turned his considerable theatrical talents towards stage production and direction.

Gielgud's career now emerged combining the roles of actor, star and director of many outstanding plays, including “The Chalk Garden” and “Nude with Violin.” He directed the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1950 and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company's season in 1955, occasionally playing a role. He directed Graham Greene's “The Complaisant Lover” in 1959 as well as the “Ages of Man” Shakespearean readings in which he toured the British Isles and the United States. Later he directed “Much Ado About Nothing” in New York and returned to England for the Stratford Season in 1961. He starred in and directed “The Cherry Orchard” in 1962 and directed the West End production of “The School for Scandal.”

He made his screen debut in “The Good Companions” in 1932 and his other films include “The Secret Agent,” “Disraeli,” “Julius Caesar,” “Barretts of Wimpole Street” and “St. Joan.” His role of King Louis VII, the wily diplomat of Jean Anouilh's BECKET, is his first appearance on the screen in six years.

Gielgud was knighted in 1953 for his services to the theatre. He also holds the honorary degrees of LL.D. St. Andrew's University, and D.Litt. Oxford University. He directed Richard Burton in the Broadway production of “Hamlet” in the spring of 1964.

MARTITA HUNT  Born and raised in Argentina, where her father managed a large ranch. Returning to England with her parents when she was a teenager, she was intrigued by the stage and was accepted as a pupil by Genevieve Ward and Lady Benson. Her first professional acting was done with the Liverpool Repertoire Company, and she made her London debut in the London Stage Society production of “The Machine Wreckers.” For close to a half year she played a leading role in Somerset Maugham’s “Our Betters,” and followed this with a wide variety of roles with the leading companies in England. She was invited to join the Old Vic and appeared in an assortment of classic roles in “The Cherry Orchard,” “Three Sisters,” “Hamlet,” “The Sea Gull,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream and “The Merchant of Venice.”

At the same time she alternated in such modern scripts as “The Distaff Side,” “A Young Man’s Fancy,” “Autumn Crocus” and “The Dark Hour.” She scored a tremendous triumph as Miss Havisham in “Great Expectations” and repeated her role in the motion picture version of the Dickens novel. In 1948 she was the sensation of the Broadway season in Jean Giradoux's “The Madwoman of Chaillot.” Her film appearances include “The Sleeping Prince,” “Song Without End,” “Topaze,” “Hotel Paradiso” and “Lady Windermere's Fan.”
PAMELA BROWN  London-born, Pamela Brown has been for a number of years one of Britain's finest stage and screen actresses. She is equally well-known on Broadway where she has appeared in "Love for Love," "The Importance of Being Earnest" and "The Lady's Not for Burning." On the screen she has been seen in "I Know Where I'm Going," "Tales of Hoffmann," "Lust for Life," "Richard III" and "Cleopatra."

She was educated at St. Mary's Convent, Ascot, and was trained for the theatre at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She was 18 years old when she made her stage debut as Juliet in "Romeo and Juliet" at Stratford-upon-Avon. Her first London appearance was later that year in "The King and Mistress Shore." She was a member of the Old Vic company, and she has alternated classic roles with modern in "Hamlet," "Venus Observ'd," "King Lear" and "The Gioconda Smile." Before her present role in "Becket," she played in the television versions of Jean Anouilh's "The Rehearsal" and "Today's Caesar," with Jack Hawkins.

DONALD WOLFIT  Born in Newark, Nottinghamshire, England, on May 20th, 1902 and made his stage debut in 1920. His first appearance in London was with Matheson Lang in 1924. He made his film debut in 1934 in "Death at Broadcasting House."

Wolfit was actor, manager and stage producer of his own company from 1937 to 1959—playing and producing a classic repertoire. He returned to the Old Vic Theatre to star in "Tamburlaine" and "The Clandestine Marriage" and was knighted for his services to the stage. Among the many notable stage performances for which Sir Donald will be remembered — quite apart from his Shakespearean roles — are "His Excellency," "The Strong Are Lonely;" his "Oedipus" and "The School for Scandal" at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, where his company ran a season of classic drama in 1953/4. In 1947 he took his own company to New York's Century Theatre for a season of Shakespeare.

In spite of his intense concentration on theatrical roles, Sir Donald has found time for films and television. Among his films are included "The Ringer," "Pickwick Papers," "Prize of Gold," "Man on the Beach," "I Accuse," "Room at the Top," "The Rough and the Smooth."

From 1960 to 1962 Sir Donald and his wife, actress Rosalind Iden, went on a world tour of Shakespearean readings. His autobiography, "First Interval," has just been published.
THE FOUR BARONS NIALL MAC GINNIS
— Born and lives in Ireland and one of that country's most distinguished acting exports. Mac Ginnis, who gave up a career as a doctor for acting, has appeared in many plays in Dublin and in London and in very many films. These include "Luther," "Billy Budd," "Jason and the Golden Fleece," "Playboy of the Western World," "The Pride and the Passion," and "View from the Bridge." • CHRISTOPHER RHODES — In private life Sir Christopher Rhodes, Baronet, from the County of Norfolk in England where he was born and lives in the intervals between film and television work, Rhodes drops his title when he is acting. He attracted attention — all 6 ft. 4 in. of him — when he appeared as a P.O.W. in "The Colditz Story" and he has since played regularly in films and in television, where he is more often cast as the "killer" than as a victim. • PERCY HERBERT — Born in London in 1925, Percy Herbert made his film debut in 1955. His many important film parts since this date include those in "The Bridge on the River Kwai," "Tunes of Glory," "Guns of Navarone," "Mysterious Island" and "Mutiny on the Bounty." • PETER JEFFREY is under long-term contract to the Royal Shakespeare Company for whom he plays in the theatre almost exclusively. He was loaned to Hal Wallis for the role of one of the Murdering Barons. When Jean Anouilh's play "Becket" was first produced in London by the Royal Shakespeare Company, Peter Jeffrey played the important role of Folliot, Bishop of London — a role played in the film by Sir Donald Wolfit.

SIAN PHILLIPS, who appears as Gwendolen — Becket's Welsh mistress — in private life is Mrs. Peter O'Toole. She was born in 1933 on a farm in the almost unpronounceable Carmarthenshire village of Gwaun-cae-Gurwen in Wales. Educated at University College, Cardiff, Sian made her radio debut as an actress when she was only eleven. She continued her work in radio throughout her school days and a bursary from the Arts Council enabled her to enroll at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art from which she graduated, winning the George Bancroft Gold Medal as the best student of her class. Although Sian has made her name as a stage, T.V. and radio actress, her role in Becket marks her screen debut. Beautiful and intelligent — she has a degree in Philosophy — Sian Phillips speaks Welsh fluently.

DAVID WESTON — Born in 1939 and trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, he won the Rodney Millington Award in 1961.

While still at the Alley School in London Weston appeared in "Henry V" at the Youth Theatre. In the audience were Sir Ralph Richardson and Richard Burton, who went backstage to congratulate the young actor. Burton told Weston to pursue an acting career — advice which he took. On Burton's recommendation, he auditioned for the role of Brother John, Becket's companion and faithful servant. Weston has played extensively in repertory. His films include "Doctor in Distress" and "That Kind of Girl."
VERONIQUE VENDELL  MM, BB, CC and now VV. Henceforth Veronique Vendell must be included on the roster of double-initialled, alliterative screen personalities.

From a strictly dimensional standpoint, Veronique is easily the most formidable creature on the list. Her 38-23-37 proportions are excitingly distributed over a 5'8" frame.

Producer Hal Wallis picked Veronique from among several hundred applicants to make her English language screen debut in his production of BECKET.

She was born in Lodeve (Herault, France) on July 21st, 1942, and has played in three French films. In "Les Recontres" she has a principal role opposite Michele Morgan, Pierre Brasseur and George Fazetti.

FELIX AYLMER  One of the most remarkable actors on the British theatrical scene, he was born in 1889 and educated at Oxford University. He has been on the stage since he was twenty-one and his very many distinguished films include "Henry V," "Caesar and Cleopatra," "The Doctor's Dilemma," "Exodus," "Quo Vadis," "The Running Man," and "From the Terrace."

PAOLO STOPPA  One of Italy's foremost stage and screen stars, he has made more than 130 films since 1935. He has also appeared in some 30 stage plays.

Stoppa was born in Rome on the 16th of June, 1909, and has been active on the stage since 1929. In the autumn of 1945, after a period with Vittorio de Sica, Stoppa formed his own company with Rina Morelli and Luchino Visconti. The partnership made Italian theatre history by introducing works like "The Glass Menagerie," "Life With Father," "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "Death of a Salesman."

Among Stoppa's most significant Italian films are Rene Clair's "La Beaute du Diable," De Sica's "Miracle at Milan" and "Vannina Vannini," Visconti's "Rocco and His Brothers."

Stoppa's first appearance in an international film was in "The Leopard." His second part played in English was "Behold the Pale Horse" with Gregory Peck. He has won two "Silver Ribbons," the Italian Oscars, for his acting.

GINO CERVI  One of Italy's leading actors, he is perhaps best known abroad for his playing of the Communist Mayor in the "Don Camillo" series starring Fernandel.

Cervi was born in Rome in 1901. On the stage he is famous in Italy for his Shakespearean roles. He also played King Henry in the Italian production of "Becket" on stage.

Of his one hundred film credits, Cervi likes to remember his "Don Camillo" roles, "Romantic Adventure" and "Four Steps to the Clouds."
(Above) Henry: "Hold your tongue, priest. Don't ever insult him to my face."

(Right) York: "The King finds that there are large sums of money missing from the treasury during your administration as Chancellor."
THE MOOD OF BECKET

BY STEPHEN WATTS

On the chancel steps of his own cathedral on a December day in 1170, the Archbishop of Canterbury was murdered by four barons, carrying out what they believed to be the wish of their king when he muttered impatiently, "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?"

On a June day in 1963, the historic infamy was re-enacted at Shepperton Studios as the dramatic climax of Jean Anouilh's "Becket" with Richard Burton as the "meddlesome priest" and Peter O'Toole as the king who uttered the fateful words.

Anouilh's play, and the screen version of it being produced by Hal Wallis and directed by Peter Glenville (who staged the play in New York) is, of course, much more than a 12th Century murder in the Cathedral. It is a drama on two closely linked levels — church versus state, and the violent emotional relationship of two young men who traveled in a few years from the closest of friendships to deadly antagonism, each implacably convinced that he was right.

The first two things that strike the visitor to Shepperton are the dedicated excitement of the unit and the loving care with which the picture is being assembled; nowhere can be detected that familiar sense of "it's just another movie."

This unusual and stimulating atmosphere has grown steadily since preparations for the picture began in January. It has probably crystallized with the daily visual evidence that two stars — "100 per cent professional, classical actors," their director says — are bringing out the best in one another.

Burton and O'Toole, who had barely met before the film began, are the best of friends — strong, highly compatible personalities, with the same intense professionalism streaked with an antic sense of fun.

The other factor that binds the enterprise is physical, a shared wonder and pride in the marvel they have watched being created in the Cathedral set. Even the publicity man made a daily pilgrimage to the set during its 17 weeks of construction, not primarily for professional purposes but to see what new beauty of artifice had grown since yesterday. The set will be used for 10 working days to produce eight minutes of screen time.

Stage H at Shepperton is the largest in Europe. It was built at Denham by Alexander Korda for his H. G. Wells epic, "Things to Come," and removed piecemeal to Shepperton when Korda moved there. It is over 80 yards long and 40 yards wide and the Cathedral needs every foot of it. But what is more important than size is purpose. Apart from the murder, the Cathedral is the scene of Becket's consecration as Archbishop. Since the crux of the story is the change that comes over Becket, from playwright companion of the lusty king to dedicated man of God, the consecration is a vital scene. Glenville regards it as one of the opportunities to show on the screen what, in the theater, "happened in the intermission."

John Bryan, the production designer, made his first sketches for the Cathedral before he had read the script. He had, of course, done much research; his method was to "absorb, then re-create." His big problem was that nobody knows precisely what Canterbury was like in 1170. Its history is one of building, destruction and rebuilding. So the task was not one of reconstruction, but of creative designing. Eventually, with 500 drawings and blueprints, his art director, Maurice Carter, leading a team of 300 craftsmen, artists and craftsmen, went to work.

It was Bryan's plan to achieve something realistic yet "dramatized," with the detail as authentic as was humanly possible. This was part of a larger artistic intention — "to get away," he says, "from the feeling that one is simply looking on" — as is the case with so many "spectacles" — and, instead, to give a sense of participation, of being "a privileged person, sitting in on what's happening." Also, knowing who the two stars were to be, he had no fear of their being overwhelmed by his designs, "You can't overpower those two," he says.

BECKET is the biggest job even the experienced Bryan — he won an Oscar 16 years ago for his art direction of "Great Expectations" — has ever tackled. He and Carter have imbued their army of workers with their own enthusiasm, and
Bryan explains this by saying that men who are craftsmen at heart have seized the opportunity, rare in films, of fully extending their skills and taking a pride in their creations. One painter, surveying the growing Cathedral the other day, said quietly and sincerely to Bryan, “You know, I'll talk about this for the rest of my life.”

The artistic planning extends also to the costumes. Bryan decreed that the colors should be “earthy” for the English scenes, moving to pastels when the story switches to France, and “pure jewel-like colors” for the ecclesiastics. Margaret Furse, the costume designer, had to work against the historical fact that the 12th Century was a dull period for clothes. “Everything,” she says, “was variations on a square and the fabrics were coarse.” Again artistic license, marching alongside accuracy of detail, had to be the keynote.

Glenville's conception of the film is that the austerity of the theme — after all, Anouilh's sub-title of his play is “The Honor of God” — should be “punctuated with bursts of spectacle.”

Amid the richness of kings and courts, palaces and cathedrals, there is basically an adult, intimate drama of what the director calls “a friendship that went wrong” and a great, historical-political issue. He is emphatic that nothing will be sacrificed to “spectacle,” nothing done to try to make the film more “popular.” “We have not compromised at all,” he explains; “there is neither violence nor sentiment nor sex which isn't in the original. Even the slight cynicism of the ending, when you get the feeling that in making Becket a saint the king is well aware that it is a smart political move, is retained. I don't think there has been a spectacular film before with such a sophisticated story.”

This is only the second picture Hal Wallis has made in England. As his record shows, he likes to vary his productions widely and has mixed Jerry Lewis and Elvis Presley with serious works like “Come Back, Little Sheba” and “The Rose Tattoo.”

Glenville made another Tennessee Williams subject, “Summer and Smoke,” for him before tackling “Becket” on Broadway. Wallis saw the play several times and discussed with Glenville various combinations for the leading roles. It was felt that on the screen they should be, as they were in life, younger men. Wallis came to Europe and secured Burton, but when O'Toole was mentioned he was an unknown screen quantity, as “Lawrence of Arabia” had not yet been seen. After “Lawrence” the choice was obvious.

Burton regards Becket as the best acting opportunity he has had in films for a long time, but also as a challenge. “In the second half,” he says, “I have to be a holy man — a saint in the making. It is very difficult.”
Peter Glenville rehearses a scene with Burton and O'Toole on the beach of Northumberland.

Glenville sets up the scene of the meeting in the Council Chamber. O'Toole and Burton await their call.

The reconstruction of Canterbury Cathedral is one of the major wonders of BECKET. It is the largest single indoor set ever built in Europe.
MEMOS FROM A 12TH CENTURY COMMENTATOR

The Plantaganet Kings of England, of whom King Henry II played by Peter O'Toole in BECKET was the first, got their name from Count Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry's father. Geoffrey one day picked a sprig of broom and wore it in his helmet and became known as Geoffrey Plantaganet from the Latin name for broom, which is Plantago Genista . . .

The term "Peppercorn Rent" originated in the olden days when tenants often paid rent by handing over a pound of pepper — then one of the most precious commodities . . .

Football and other ball games were forbidden in the 12th Century by the King to encourage the sport of archery, because men trained in archery were more useful as soldiers . . .

London Mews were so-called because they originally housed hawks for hunting and the cry of these birds was like a cat meowing . . .

In the 12th Century when the King went hunting in the royal forests, he used greyhounds and wolfhounds, the former hunting by sight and the latter by scent. When Hal Wallis staged a hunting scene for BECKET he had to use racing greyhounds and pedigreed show wolfhounds because neither of these breeds are now used for hunting the fox or the stag. Modern greyhounds, and occasionally wolfhounds, are used for coursing hares . . .

There are now only four men in the whole of Britain who keep hawks for hunting. Roger Upton, who supplied hawks for hunting in BECKET, was afraid that his birds would not submit to being carried on horseback. Present-day horses are unused to them and Upton carries his birds hooded on his wrist but rides in a jeep when he takes them hunting . . .

A hawk is a generic term for the species and that a tiercel is a male bird and the falcon a female. Falcons are more commonly used for hunting . . .

When the King went to war in Becket's day — the 12th Century — he took 40 tons of goods with him including bedsteads, cupboards, chairs, kitchen equipment, curtains, rugs and lamps. Each Knight or Baron took with him between 5 and 15 tons of equipment according to his rank . . .

The existing Coat of Arms for the city of Canterbury differs from that of Becket's time, because in the 16th Century under orders from Henry VIII, St. Thomas was excluded, the shrine in Canterbury Cathedral was removed and all relics scattered. All that remains in the Cathedral are traces of stained glass and defaced murals in the Norman Crypt which still survives. A paving stone in what is now known as the Martyrdom in the Cathedral shows where Becket was murdered . . .

The English language was nearly forgotten after the Norman Conquest because everyone spoke French and wrote in Latin.
CAST

Thomas Becket . Richard Burton
King Henry II . Peter O'Toole
King Louis VII of France . John Gielgud
Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London . Donald Wolfit
Queen Matilda . Martita Hunt
Queen Eleanor . Pamela Brown
Pope Alexander III . Paolo Stoppa
Cardinal Zambelli . Gino Cervi
Brother John . David Weston
Archbishop of Canterbury . Felix Aylmer
Henry II's Barons .
  Niall Mac Ginnis
  Percy Herbert
  Christopher Rhodes
  Peter Jeffrey

Robert de Beaumont, Duke of Leicester . Inigo Jackson
Gwendolen . Sian Phillips
French Girl . Veronique Vendell
Old Peasant . Gerald Lawson
Peasant's Daughter . Jennifer Hilary
Bishop of Winchester . John Phillips
Bishop of York . Frank Pettingell
Bishop of Chichester . Hamilton Dyce
Farmer's Daughter . Linda Marlow
William of Corbeil . Patrick Newall
Prince Henry . Riggs O'Hara
Brother Philip . Geoffrey Bayldon
Pope's Secretary . Graham Stark
French Tailor . Victor Spinetti
Girl on Balcony . Magda Knopke

PRODUCTION

Producer . Hal Wallis
Director . Peter Glenville
Screenplay . Edward Anhalt
Production Designer . John Bryan
Editor . Anne Coates
Musical Score . Laurence Rosenthal
Conductor . Muir Mathieson
Cinematographer . Geoffrey Unsworth
Assistant to the Producer . Richard McWhorter
Production Manager . Denis Holt
Art Director . Maurice Carter
Costume Designer . Margaret Furse
1st Assistant Director . Colin Brewer
Sound Mixer . Buster Ambler
Camera Operator . Ernest Day
Set Decorator . Robert Cartwright
Set Dresser . Patrick McLoughlin
Chief Make-up . Charles Parker
Make-up . William Lodge
Hairdresser . Eric Allwright
Wardrobe Master . Joan Smallwood
Wardrobe Mistress . Evelyn Gibbs
Scenic Artists . Ferdinand Bellan
Simpson Robinson
Continuity . Phyllis Crocke
Stills . Robert Penn

Panavision® and Technicolor®

Based upon the play "Becket"
by JEAN ANOUILH
as translated by Lucienne Hill and produced
upon the New York stage by David Merrick

A Paramount Film Service & Keep Films Co-Production
A Paramount Release
EDWARD ANHALT  Screenplay
Anhalt, who adapted Jean Anouilh's BECKET for the screen, is an Academy Award winner, having gained the accolade for his story, "Panic in the Streets." He is one of the busiest writers for motion pictures. He has sole screenplay credit on "The Young Lions," "In Love and War," "The Restless Years," "A Matter of Conviction" and "The Sins of Rachel Cade." He has collaborated on the screenplays of "Member of the Wedding," "Three Lives," "Not as a Stranger" and "Pride and the Passion."

In addition to BECKET, he has scripted for Mr. Wallis "A Girl Named Tamiko" and "Wives and Lovers." He has also written the screenplay of "Boeing-Boeing," which Mr. Wallis will produce in 1965, and with Alan Weiss he did "Girls! Girls! Girls!" He is responsible for the original script of "Roustabout."

JOHN BRYAN  Production Designer
Though an independent producer for ten years, John Bryan found the opportunity to design BECKET irresistible.

His career in films began as an assistant art director on such outstanding films as "The Ghost Goes West" and "The Shape of Things to Come." He was the art director on "Pygmalion," "Major Barbara," "Caesar and Cleopatra," "Oliver Twist" and "The Magic Box." He won an Academy Award in 1947 for the art direction of "Great Expectations." Bryan became an independent producer in 1951 and these credits include "The Card," "The Million Pound Note," and "The Horse's Mouth."

LAURENCE ROSENTHAL  Composer
Laurence Rosenthal composed the scores for both the Broadway and screen productions of BECKET. Among his musical scores he numbers those for "The Miracle Worker," "Requiem for a Heavyweight" and "Raisin in the Sun."

MARGARET FURSE  Costume Designer
Margaret Furse, who created the costumes for BECKET, is one of the top designers in films today. Her first credit of note was "Oliver Twist" and she has also designed costumes for "No Highway," "Inn of the Sixth Happiness," "Kidnapped," "Sons and Lovers" and "The Horsemen." Her latest three assignments have been for Walt Disney on "The Prince and the Pauper," "The Castaways" and "Tomasina."

GEOFFREY UNSWORTH  Cinematography
Geoffrey Unsworth, who photographed BECKET, was born in Manchester, England. He is rated as one of Britain's leading color photographers. He has many major lighting achievements to his credit, including "The Purple Plain," "The World of Suzie Wong," "Northwest Frontier," and "Tamahine."

Archbishop Thomas Becket is murdered by Henry's Barons.
Jean Anouilh is not the first famous dramatist to be intrigued by Becket. Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote a play about the martyred Englishman, and T. S. Eliot tackled the same subject matter in “Murder in the Cathedral.” But Anouilh’s “Becket,” on which the Hal Wallis screen production is based, has met with greater success in more parts of the world than those of his predecessors. It has been produced in France, the United States, England, Germany, Italy and other countries, and it has served to enhance the reputation of the playwright who is considered the foremost practitioner in the French theatre. By actual count, he is the most produced of all living playwrights.

In the United States Anouilh is no stranger to the theatre-goer. Several of his plays have been done on Broadway and have toured the country, and among these, in addition to “Becket,” are “The Lark,” “The Waltz of the Toreadors,” “Ring Around the Moon,” “Legend of Lovers,” “Antigone,” “Mademoiselle Colombe,” “The Fighting Cock” and “The Rehearsal.”

“Becket” had its world premiere in Paris on October 8, 1959, at the Theatre Montparnasse-Gaston Baty and was staged by Roland Pietri and Anouilh. Bruno Cremer played Becket and Daniel Ivenel was King Henry II.

The first production in English, from the translation by Lucienne Hill, was at the St. James Theatre in New York on October 5, 1960. Sir Laurence Olivier was cast as Becket and Anthony Quinn as the King in this David Merrick production, which was staged by Peter Glenville, who also directed the screen version.

Towards the end of the play’s run Olivier switched to the part of the King and Arthur Kennedy played Becket.

On July 11, 1961, came the London production at the Aldwych Theatre, with Christopher Plummer as the King and Eric Porter as Becket. It was presented by London’s Royal Shakespeare Company and was directed by Peter Hall.

To sum up the general critical consensus of opinion on “Becket”: It is emotionally stirring, theatrically exciting; a stunning drama of contrasts in its medieval setting and modern ideas; witty, original and impressive.