THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE

FRAGMENTS 360°

A VIEWFINDER: Facts and Perspectives on the Play, Playwright, and Production
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### Notes
This play guide will be periodically updated with additional information. Play guide last updated November 18, 2011.

### Credits
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Fragments
from texts by Samuel Beckett

In Fragments, Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne interpret texts by Samuel Beckett, one of the greatest playwrights of the 20th century. Samuel Beckett was acclaimed in part for his incomparable concision, his unique mastery of the breathtakingly profound short work.

Fragments has been assembled from the following five Beckett shorts: Rough for Theatre I, Rockaby, Act Without Words II, Neither, Come and Go.

Together, the five works in Fragments form a unified whole. There is a kind of cumulative story in this collection, much of which is hidden, either whispered beyond our hearing, or evoked with the broadest brush strokes by characters that either speak in riddles or don’t speak at all. Ambiguity and uncertainty—going nowhere and everywhere fast—reign in this dramatic collection, inviting the audience to fill in the particulars, to supply its own insight. There is tremendous humor in Fragments—as there is in much of Beckett’s writing—which owes much to American silent and early talking films. And yet each piece amuses only those who can be tickled by insights into the foibles of what makes humans human.
Interpretations of the texts of Samuel Beckett can vary widely depending on the reader, the listener, or the watcher. Under Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne’s direction, the texts contain as much joy as despair and could be said to be less existential—as they are often called—and more elemental, vessels containing the distilled essence of humanity. The following brief interpretations, written by Charles Scott Jones, are examinations of the texts—the dialogue and stage directions—as Beckett wrote them; not as Brook and Estienne directed them. They are intended as an introduction to the themes of each short play; themes which may or may not be evident in Fragments.

Rough for Theatre I
Written in French in the late 1950s, first published in English translation 1976

In Rough for Theatre I, characters A and B can be regarded as warring natures within one human being or ages of human history. Wheel-chaired B is a representative of Reason, a tyrant seated on a rolling throne. His wheels imply the machinery of industry, and his stick, the tool of a monarch or dictator. He functions with the cooler observations of his eyes as opposed to blind A, who represents Desire. A’s playing of the fiddle and longing for his lost instrument, the harp, convey man’s Romantic nature. A remembers playing music for alms all day and being lifted from his stool by the hand of a woman. He yearns for romantic love. Their conflicting natures are a part of humanity just as much as sight and hearing.

Rockaby
Written in English in 1980

Rockaby embodies Beckett’s constant exploration of the liminal space between life and death. This short play contains a single, powerful image: the solitary figure of W rocking in her chair, in and out of the spotlight. W, an “old woman” dressed for her own funeral, is accompanied by V, a recording of her own voice that creates the text of the play, sums up her existence in a kind of poem. Significantly, W doesn’t blink, but opens and closes her eyes in a rhythm that fits the tempo and spirit of the poem. Her eyes stay closed more and more as her life becomes closed off. The movement of W’s eyes and eyelids on stage parallels the imagery of windows and blinds in the poem. And there is the going back and forth between the image on the stage and the figure in the poem, a psychological rocking of viewpoint that culminates with the woman in the poem descending a staircase to sit and become W in the rocker, her own other. The play concludes with the “she” in the poem and W on stage “rocking off” as the two of them become one, just in time to close their eyes for the last time.

Act Without Words II
Written, according to Beckett, at about the same time as Act Without Words I, 1956; Translated from the French by the author and first published in New Departures, 1959

Act Without Words II is a duel of mannerisms between two men who are unknown to one another. They are linked only by their changing dormant positions. The characters are A and B (not the same A and B of Rough for Theatre I). After A finishes his routine, he crawls back into his sack, this time to B’s left. After B finishes his routine, he crawls back into his sack, once more to the left of A. The play suggests that this slow-motion sack race will go on forever, a two-man migration across eternity.

Neither
Written in 1976 after an encounter with American composer Morton Feldman, became the text of the opera Neither composed by Feldman

At first glance it seems an odd choice to include Neither in an evening of Beckett shorts. In a collection of existential sore thumbs, it sticks out as the sorest. But if it is true that “Beckett reputedly said that this was his ‘one’ text: unsayable, not located in self or in nonself, but in ‘neither,’”1 the poem is perfectly chosen to hold Fragments together. The unusual

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1 C. J. Adleman and S. E. Goontasri, eds., The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett
life that Beckett lived was as a kind of neither man. He was born and raised an Irishman but lived most of his life in France. He favored writing in his second language, French, and then translated his work into his native English. He excelled in academics but gave up the classroom and teaching to wander through Europe. His life and works reflect a constant going “to and fro,” a restless, maddening state of never quite arriving, “as between two lit refuges whose doors once neared gently close, once away turned from gently part again.”

Neither is characterless except in the theme that it poses: the ceaseless wandering of human consciousness between the self and non-self that finds safe harbor in neither.

**Come and Go**

Classified by Beckett as a dramaticule, written in English in 1965

The three women in *Come and Go* differ only by the color of their coats and slight variation in their utterances. They have monosyllabic names that are short for conventional names: Vi (iolet), Flo (rence), Ru (by). They demonstrate the adage “two’s company, three’s a crowd.” Their comic shuffling and whispering secrets about the missing third is augmented by Beckett’s gallows humor. “All Beckett lives are dyings, [and] some of the dying contrive to ignore the fact,” as Hugh Kenner states. Flo, Vi, and Ru speak of mortality in regards to the absent third (“Does she not realize? / Has she not been told? / Does she not know?”), though each of them at some point is the absent third, and each of them is dying. Kenner notes that in Beckett’s world women especially ignore that they are dying. The answering refrain of “God grant not / God forbid / Please God not” is a kind of punch-line to a joke that is mostly inaudible, but comic nevertheless because it hints at mortality’s secret; a secret that is both understood and denied.

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2 Defined as a tiny or insignificant drama


It would seem to follow that a modern playwright who de-emphasizes story or plotlines in his plays would emphasize character. With Beckett this is not the case. Beckett’s characters—in the short plays of Fragments, and in his later works—are not characters in the conventional sense. In 1988, East German playwright Heiner Mueller, once referred to as “a Beckett of the East,” explained, “Beckett’s texts come out of the experience of a history-less world. For his characters there was no history and there won’t be any.”¹ This thought is exemplified by Godot, Beckett’s most celebrated character, who never shows up to relieve the play’s expectant characters. But whether it’s the invisible presence of Godot or other of his many corporeal characters, Beckett peopled his drama with mythic types, beings whose nature is primordial rather than historical. In Waiting for Godot, Vladimir sums this up: “But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it our not.”²

When Alan Schneider, the director of the first American production of Waiting for Godot, asked what or who was meant by “Godot,” Beckett answered that if he knew about Godot he would have put it in the play.³ As if in search of Godot themselves, some scholars have noted similarities between Beckett’s Godot and the “Godeau” of Mercadet, a play written by French novelist and playwright Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850). Mercadet concludes with the arrival of its own much-awaited Godeau, who brings with him a huge fortune that saves his former partner from financial ruin. It is possible Beckett had Balzac’s Godeau—the savior who arrives just in time—in mind as the antithesis of Godot—the unknown someone who never arrives.⁴

Beckett does seem to have been influenced in a negative sense by Balzac; the result of which was a reaction to or rebellion against the methods of the classical French author. Even as a young writer who penned the story collection More Pricks Than Kicks (1934), Beckett chafed against the kind of fixed characterization he found in Balzac’s fiction, referring to the novelist’s characters as “clockwork cabbages.” He complained that Balzac could write the end to one of his novels after finishing the first paragraph because of the finite nature of the characters and his “absolute mastery” of the “chloroformed world.”⁵ Far from being particular and finite, inhabitants of Beckett’s dramatic works represent the human condition in its entirety. Their names or lack of names are indicators of the playwright’s design: to display rubrics of humanity in a state beyond social or historical circumstance.

Richard Gilman has suggested that Hamm and Clov of Endgame (1956) are not symbols of a social dynamic that must exist in all human relations, the one dominant and the other submissive, but “one consciousness or locus of being akin to the narrator in Beckett’s fiction.”⁶ In support of this is Hamm’s soliloquy: “Then babble, babble, words, like the solitary child who turns himself into children, two, three, so as to be together and whisper together, in the dark.”⁷ This idea of a child creating imaginary friends to play with is, in a sense, how all playwrights populate their plays. But Beckett takes this splintered, yet unified view of the human condition to the extreme in his short plays, which are peopled with experimental characters acting as facets of one consciousness.

⁴ Eric Bentley, What is Theatre? (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 158.
For better or worse, Samuel Beckett has been aligned with absurdism since the Theatre of the Absurd as a category was popularized by Martin Esslin in his influential critical work of the same name. First published in 1962, *The Theatre of the Absurd* is a study of post-World War II dramatists living in France who wrote anti-logical plays that defied audience expectations. Its main figures are Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, and Arthur Adamov. Later, Esslin added Harold Pinter to his first tier of absurdist practitioners.

Esslin traces the origins of absurdist theatre to Albert Camus’s philosophical treatise, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), written during the Nazi occupation of Paris. Camus equates the human condition with the plight of Sisyphus, his relentless struggle to push a boulder uphill only to have it roll back down once he nears the top. In *Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus states:

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity.1

Absurdism’s alleged practitioners, however, did not enjoy the label. Ionesco complained that “absurd” was a fashionable term “vague enough to mean nothing anymore and to be an easy definition of anything.” He considered the world “not absurd, but incredible.”2 Adamov was even more adamantly opposed to the label and wrote, “Life is not absurd, only difficult, very difficult.”3 Beckett commented that the label was “about as vague as Cubism and Fauvism.”4 In general, the authors who were deemed absurdist felt that the Theatre of the Absurd was too broad and that it included just about any dramatist of the time whose plays were deemed anti-logical. Esslin, in the revised preface of the 1968 edition of *Theatre of the Absurd*, wonders if he should feel pride, or hide his head in shame.

Still, the label has become part of the popular vocabulary and it is useful. Marvin Carlson points out that Beckett, Ionesco, and the early Adamov were not united by a commonly held attitude toward existence, but by what they rejected in their stage practice: “the accepted conventions of the traditional French theatre, the emphasis upon the word, the linkage of cause and effect, a bias toward realism, and the psychological development of character.”5

Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano*, written in 1948 and produced two years later, was the first important absurdist play produced after the war and was directed by Nicholas Bataille at the Théâtre des Noctambules. Writing about the genesis of *The Bald Soprano*, Ionesco stated that he did not set out to be a dramatist. He set out to learn English and failed. And out of his failure, he wrote a play.6 Unlike the contrite Beckett who almost never gave interviews, Ionesco was...

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5 Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*, 412.
6 Ionesco, *Notes and Counter-Notes*, 181.
no stranger to expounding theatre theory. Commenting about his process as dramatist in 1954, he said his goal was to strip the action of “all that is particular to it: the plot, the accidental characteristics of the characters, their names, their social setting and historical background, the apparent reasons for the dramatic conflict.” Freed from the distraction of “social crust and discursive thought,” he could focus on “theatre from within.”

The most celebrated play in The Theatre of the Absurd is Waiting for Godot. Within five years of its modest beginning in 1953 at the small Théâtre of Babylone in Paris, it was translated into more than twenty languages and seen by more than a million spectators worldwide. In 1957 the San Francisco Actors’ Workshop performed Godot for fourteen-hundred prisoners at San Quentin Penitentiary. The director Herbert Blau, unsure of how the audience would receive Godot, introduced the play by comparing it to jazz, “to which one must listen for whatever one may find in it.” And, as Esslin details in the Introduction to The Theatre of the Absurd, the inmates immediately understood the play, having known so well what it was to wait.

What separates the work of Beckett, Ionesco, and Pinter are the plays’ hidden subjects and how the disparate subjects are manifested. At age eleven Ionesco wrote a play about seven or eight children who have tea together. After tea, they smash all the cups, then the plates, then all the furniture, and finally throw their parents out the windows. Ionesco admitted in an interview that this pattern of acceleration, proliferation, and destruction was a part of personal rhythm reflected in much of his work. In Pinter’s first play, The Room, he introduces the Kafka-inspired tension, the escalating fear between characters that is evident in much of his work. The subject of Beckett’s plays is perhaps best expressed as modern man’s collective identity crisis, the human compulsion for wandering and searching and not quite finding a place of relief. To some extent the methods of these playwrights have been absorbed into contemporary playwriting. Plays with the absurdist label are still popular today. Waiting for Godot, Pinter’s The Homecoming, and Ionesco’s Exit the King have all been on Broadway in recent memory.

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Carlson, Theories of the Theatre, 412.
Esslin, Theatre of the Absurd, 19.
Esslin, Theatre of the Absurd, 235
The following quotes are selected perspectives on Beckett and his work from notable scholars and artists.

“Man would sooner have the void for his purpose than be devoid of purpose,” said Nietzsche, and he took it for granted that his readers would grasp the implication: in reality man just is devoid of purpose. The trouble is that while one can assent to that intellectually it is almost impossible to assent to it emotionally—which, of course, is what the aphorism says. Yet for the writer who truly does so, what is there left to do? To embody his insight in a work of art is to deny it even as he asserts it, since art means form and form means purpose. That has been the problem Beckett has struggled with from the beginning of his career.

(Gabriel Josipovici, reviewing WAITING FOR GODOT)

B. – I speak of an art turning from [the plane of the feasible] in disgust, weary of its puny exploits, weary of pretending to be able, of being able, of doing a little better the same old thing, of going a little further along a dreary road.

D. – And preferring what?

B. – The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.

(Samuel Beckett, “THREE DIALOGUES”)

The farther [Beckett] goes the more good it does me. I don’t want philosophies, tracts, dogmas, creeds, way outs, truths, answers, nothing from the bargain basement. He is the most courageous, remorseless writer going and more he grinds my nose in the s**t the more I am grateful to him.

(Harold Pinter, Letter to a Friend)

The opening line of [Come and Go] ‘When did we three last meet?’ recalls, of course, the meeting of the three witches in Macbeth. But Beckett’s three women look back on an unfulfilled past, as well as forward to a doomed future—their own rather than that of any other person in the drama. No particular period of past time is alluded to, although with their rather precise, archaic mode of speech and the somber uniformity and muted colouring of their drab costumes they seem like middle-class ladies from the recent past. Their names, Flo, Vi and Ru recall flowers (Flora, Violet and Rue), the latter reminding one of Ophelia’s madness scene with Laertes in Hamlet. Superficially they may make us think of the Three Graces as they link hands, but, more precisely, they resemble in appearance the three mothers in Fritz Lang’s M, a film much loved by Beckett.

(James Knowlson and John Pilling, FRESCOES OF THE SKULL)
The “more” is not just for the voice. [It’s] for the rocking as well. You want the “more.” The “more” is to get the rocking. I want to be rocked. I want to be lulled, because who is doing the rocking? Your memory. Your Mom. . . . the “more” is: I want to be rocked, by the voice and by the chair. I want to be rocked to sleep, rocked off to sleep, by this memory. The memory is going to rock me off. So you’re asking, the baby is saying, “Do this to me, don’t stop.” And it is getting a little bit less able, your voice—you—are being a little bit less able to do that each time.

(Alan Schneider, Directing Billie Whitelaw in Rockaby)

Economy—concentration upon essentials—is one of the hallmarks of supreme artistry. Throughout his life as a writer Beckett has striven to reach the utmost degree of economy and density. Dramatic forms of presentation tend to be more economical than mere narrative, for here the images, which need to be described in discursive prose, can be made concrete and instantly perceptible on the stage. Drama of the kind Beckett writes is poetry of concrete, three-dimensional stage images, complex metaphors communicable in a flash of visual intuitive understanding.

(Martin Esslin, “A Theatre of Stasis”)

Perhaps the most intense and personal writing of our time comes from Samuel Beckett. Beckett’s plays are symbols in an exact sense of the word. A false symbol is soft and vague: a true symbol is hard and clear. When we say “symbolic” we often mean something drearily obscure: a true symbol is specific, it is the only form a certain truth can take.

(Peter Brook, The Empty Space)
1960  Act Without Words II is performed at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.

1963  Act Without Words II is produced in French in Ulm-Donau, Germany, along with Act Without Words I, as Mimes 1 and 2. Deryk Mendel directs the German version of the two mimes, “Spiel,” and plays in both.

1966  Come and Go is first produced as Kommen und Gehen, translated by Elmar Tophoven, at the Schiller-Theatre Werkstatt, Berlin.

1968  Come and Go is first performed in English at the Peacock Theatre, Dublin, in February, and then at the Royal Festival Hall, London, in December. 1976  Paul Joyce makes a film of Act Without Words II and titled it The Goad.

1977  Neither is set to music by Morton Feldman and premiered at the Rome Opera. It is first published in the program for that production.

1981  Rockaby is first performed in Buffalo, New York with Billie Whitelaw as W and V, directed by Alan Schneider, produced by Dan Labeille.

1986  Rough for Theatre I is staged as “Fragment for Theatre I” at the Magic Theater, San Francisco by S. E. Gontarski, with Tom Luce as B and Robert Wagner as A, in an evening of one-acters called The Beckett Vision.

Samuel Beckett was born in 1906 in the Dublin suburb of Foxrock, to a middle-class Protestant family of comfortable means. He attended the prestigious Portora Royal School and Trinity College, where he excelled in French and Italian, then taught briefly at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. There he moved in the circle of artists and writers around James Joyce and began writing prose and poetry. He traveled widely in Europe in the 1930s—including Germany under the Nazis—and ultimately settled in Paris for the rest of his life. In 1946, he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his work with the French Resistance.

Feeling that World War II had wasted his precious time and energies, Beckett withdrew into creative seclusion afterwards, producing a torrent of astonishingly powerful and original prose, including the introspective, formally challenging, darkly hilarious novel trilogy Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable. These books—written in French, in which Beckett said it was easier to write “without style”—were ignored or dismissed when they appeared, then later hailed as paradigm-changing masterpieces and literary landmarks.

Beckett first turned to drama as a break from the novel-writing he considered his real work, but it soon became much more than a sideline. The international success of Waiting for Godot—his play about two tramp-like characters filling time while waiting for someone who never comes, premiered in 1953—made him a public figure and ensured his continued involvement in theatre despite his shyness and distaste for publicity. He went on to refine his dramatic vision in Endgame, Happy Days, Krapp’s Last Tape and other plays that featured similarly derelict, castoff characters trapped in starkly desolate and symbolic situations. These works permanently altered the Western world’s perception of the nature and purpose of dramatic art. Beckett received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1969.

After the 1960s, Beckett pushed his exploration of theatrical minimalism still further. His later plays, such as Rockaby, Ohio Impromptu and Not I, are masterpieces of concision: short, intimate, starkly metaphorical works in which punctiliously sculptured stage images are juxtaposed with flows of words that bear richly ambiguous relationships to the images. In the same period, he experimented with precisely delineated, mysteriously cyclical movement patterns in works such as Come and Go, Footfalls and What Where. Beckett died in 1989, widely considered the 20th century’s greatest dramatist.
The following is a timeline of relevant events from the life of Samuel Beckett. Over the course of his life, Beckett was a prolific writer. Only a very select number of his publications have been included. From Jennifer M. Jeffers, ed., Samuel Beckett: A Casebook.

1906 Samuel Barclay Beckett is born to William Frank and Mary Roe Beckett at the family residence, Cooldrinagh, in Foxrock, South Dublin.

1923 Enters Trinity College, Dublin, where he majors in French and Italian.

1927 Graduates from Trinity in December with a B.A., first in class and awarded a Gold Medal.

1928 Teaches French and English for a term at Campbell College, Belfast; becomes lecteur of English at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris.

1930 The poem “Whoroscope” is published; returns to Trinity as a lecturer in French.


1933 Beckett’s father dies of a heart attack.

1934 Moves to London to write and seeks counseling for grief and depression. More Pricks Than Kicks published by Chatto and Windus.

1938 In Paris, he is stabbed in the chest by a pimp. Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil visits him in the hospital, and they start a serious relationship; the novel Murphy published by Routledge.

1939 England declares war on Germany.

1940 France falls to Germany.


1942 Beckett and Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil flee Paris and go into hiding.

1945 Beckett and Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil return to Ireland and join the Irish Red Cross; Beckett awarded the Croix de Guerre for his role in Resistance.

1946 Begins writing novels in French (Mercier et Camier).

1950 Beckett’s mother dies.

1952 En attendant Godot (Waiting for Godot) published by Editions de Minuit.

1953 Roger Blin directs the first performance of Godot at the Théâtre de Babylone.

The first English production of *Godot* begins in London.

*Godot*, directed by Alan Schneider, opens in Miami and half the audience walks out between acts; *Waiting for Godot* is published by Faber and Faber in London.

Beckett begins *Krapp’s Last Tape; Endgame* is performed at The Royal Court Theatre.

Moves to Boulevard St. Montparnasse, his Paris home for the remainder of his life.

Officially marries Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil; Co-winner of the Prix International des Editeurs (with Jorge Luis Borges).

Comes to New York City for filming of *Film* with Buster Keaton, directed by Alan Schneider.

Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Continues to write plays in English and French; directs for theatre and television.

Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil dies in July; Beckett follows her in December.
The follow firsthand accounts are found in Beckett Remembering / Remembering Beckett: A Centenary Celebration by James and Elizabeth Knowlson1 unless otherwise specified.

One day, George Plimpton, the editor of The Paris Review in New York, approached me to do an interview with Beckett for the series ‘Writers at Work’. He offered to send me to Paris. I told Plimpton that Beckett never gave interviews, and besides I would not want to impose on him with such a request. But the next day I wrote to Sam saying that even though I knew he would say no, I could not resist asking him since The Paris Review would pay all my expenses for one week in Paris, this way we could have a couple of good expensive meals with excellent wine at his favourite restaurant, and pretend to do an interview. Sam’s answer was only one line: “Dear Raymond, Sorry, I have no views to inter.”

—RAYMOND FEDERMAN IN THE EARLY 1970S

. . . evenings with Beckett were often lively, fascinating occasions. This was partly because he was so witty and could laugh at himself, as well as at funny things that occurred. I once knocked my empty glass off the table in the American Bar at the Coupole and, to my acute embarrassment, it broke into a thousand pieces on the tiled floor. “It’s not serious. The glass was empty at the time,” was Beckett’s speedy rejoinder.

—JAMES KNOWLSON

The two things he seemed most interested in, to do with me, were my (then) forthcoming child and my interest in tennis and golf. Whenever I mentioned any of these subjects, his face broke into a warm smile and my memory is that he nodded. . . .His eyes are the brightest blue with what I would swear are black crosses in the middle of them. . . .He said he had no children which was “fortunate for them.”

—MICHAEL RUDMAN

Some months before Samuel Beckett’s death on 22 December 1989, a story was circulating in Paris. An elderly woman points out an old gentleman she has sighted. “That’s Samuel Beckett,” she says to a friend, “the author of Waiting for Godot.” Beckett whose hearing is more acute than she presumes, answers from afar: “Yes, and I am still waiting.”

—ALAN ASTRO (UNDERSTANDING SAMUEL BECKETT)
ABOUT BECKETT

Beckett was a perfectionist, but can one be a perfectionist without an intuition of perfection? Today, with the passage of time, we see how false were the labels first stuck on Beckett—despairing, negative, pessimistic. Indeed, he peers into the filthy abyss of human existence. His humour saves him and us from falling in, he rejects theories, dogmas, that offer pious consolations, yet his life was a constant, aching search for meaning.

He situates human beings exactly as he knew them in darkness. Constantly they gaze through windows, in themselves, in others, outwards, sometimes upwards, into the vast unknown. He shares their uncertainties, their pain. But when he discovered theatre, it became a possibility to strive for unity, a unity in which sound, movement, rhythm, breath and silence all come together in a single rightness. This was the merciless demand he made on himself—an unattainable goal that fed his need for perfection. Thus he enters the rare passage that links the ancient Greek theatre through Shakespeare to the present day in an uncompromising celebration of one who looks truth in the face, unknown, terrible, amazing …

—Peter Brook
**THE PRODUCTION: CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM**

**CREATIVE TEAM**

**Peter Brook (Director)**

**Marie-Hélène Estienne (Director)**
has taken part in many theatre and cinema projects as an author and a production assistant. While a journalist at Le Nouvel Observateur and Les Nouvelles Littéraires, she became Michel Guy’s assistant, working on the programming of the Paris Festival d’Automne. In 1974, she worked on the casting of Peter Brook’s Timon of Athens. She joined C.I.C.T. in 1977 for Ubu aux Bouffes and has since been production assistant for all the Centre’s work. She was also Brook’s assistant for La Tragédie de Carmen and The Mahabharata and artistic collaborator for The Tempest. Impressions of Pelléas and more recently The Tragedy of Hamlet (2000). This collaboration developed to include dramaturgy for Woza Albert!, The Man Who, and Qui est là? She co-authored, with Peter Brook, Je suis un Phénomène, presented at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord (1998). She produced the French language adaptation of Le Costume (“The Suit”) by Can Thembo, created in 1999 at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord as well as Far Away, by Caryl Churchill in 2002. She collaborated on the directing and co-created with Jean Claude Carrière the texts for La Tragédie d’Hamlet (2002) and La Mort de Krishna. She recently created the French adaptation of Ta main dans la mienne by Carol Rocamora. In 2003, she wrote the theatrical adaptation of Le Grand Inquisiteur by Dostoievski and in 2004, Tierno Bokar from Amadou Hampâté Bâ’s works. She lately adapted to French the play Sizwe Banzi is Dead by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona.

**Philippe Vialatte (Lighting Designer)**
started at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in 1985 as a light operator on The Mahabharata, directed by Peter Brook. He assisted Jean Kalman for the light design of Woza Albert! and La Tempête, directed by Peter Brook. Since the creation of The Man Who in Paris in 1993, he has designed the lights for all the plays directed by Peter Brook in the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord: Qui est là?, Je suis un phénomène, Le Costume, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Far Away, La Mort de Krishna, La Tragédie d’Hamlet, Ta main dans la mienne, Tierno Bokar, Le Grand Inquisiteur, Sizwe Banzi Est Mort, Fragments, 11 and 12 and recently A Magic Flute. He follows all these plays on tour and in each space redesigns and adapts the light of each show.
THE PRODUCTION: CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

CAST

Jos Houben

studied at L’École Jacques Lecoq with Philippe Gaulier, Monika Pagneux and Pierre Byland. He is a certified practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method—Awareness Through Movement. An original member of Complicité, he co-created and performed in A Minute Too Late and collaborated on many other projects with Annabel Arden, Simon McBurney and Lilo Bau. Jos was a director and co-writer of cult comedy troupe The Right Size which has won Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Entertainment in 1999 and Best New Comedy in 2002) playing in the West End and Off-Broadway. For Thames TV he created and performed “Mr. Fixit,” a silent slapstick TV comedy for children. He was also creative director and associate producer for Ragdoll TV’s “Brum: The Magical Little Car.” He created and performed Quatre Mains, a theatre piece for four hands with Andrew Dawson. Jos collaborated with Greek contemporary music composer Georges Aperghis in Paris, collaborations including Commentaires, Zwiectlcht and Paysage sous Surveillance. Recently he directed for Theatre YBY in Salzburg, BPZoom in Paris, Les Flamiches Noires in Belgium. His Conference on Laughter tours the world (Argentina, Israel, France, Holland, Edinburgh Festival, London). Jos is a teacher, director, deviser and consultant with comedy troupes, opera companies, circus schools, international organisations, workshop festivals, dance schools, universities and magicians worldwide and since 2000 he has been a teacher at L’École Jacques Lecoq.

Kathryn Hunter

Born in New York, raised as a Londoner, Kathryn read French and Drama at Bristol University and went on to train at RADA with the inspirational Hugh Crutwell. Kathryn played Alan Ayckbourn farces in UK Rep before joining Chéreau Salmon in Common Stock and training in Grotowski-based techniques. She then joined Théâtre de Complicité devising Anything for a Quiet Life directed by Simon McBurney; Help I’m Alive, a Commedia dell’Arte creation; and Out of a House Walked a Man, RNT London. Other productions with Complicité include Foe, The Winter’s Tale and Durenmatt’s The Visit playing Clara Zachanassian (Olivier Award Best Actress). Favorite performances include King Lear directed by Helen Kaut Howsen, Richard III at Shakespeare’s Globe, Caryl Churchill’s Farce and Durenmann’s The Visit, Complicité include Out of a House Walked a Man, Help I’m Alive; with Steven Barron, Maria’s Child, The Lake and Doctor Who. He has performed in Beckett’s “Act Without Words” for Beckett on Film [Channel 4] directed by Enda Hughs. Marcello is the voice of Pingu in the animated series “Pingu.” His next project is Tell Them That I am Young and Beautiful, an evening of stories from around the world with Kathryn Hunter and writer Gilles Autrey for Prodo Productions at the Arcola Theatre London.

Marcello Magni

Born in Bergamo, Italy, Marcello studied at DAMS of Bologna University then moved to Paris where he started his theatrical formation. Having graduated from L’École Jacques Lecoq he continued his studies with Pierre Byland, Philippe Gaulier and Monica Pagneux. He is an actor, director, movement director; he has taught at L’École Jacques Lecoq and leads workshops internationally. Co-Founder of Complicité in London in 1983, he worked with the company for 25 years. Collaborator in A Minute Too Late; More Bigger Snacks Now; Anything for a Quiet Life; Please, Please, Please; Help I’m Alive; Out of a House Walked a Man; The Visit; The Winter’s Tale; Street of Crocodiles; and Foe. He developed a curiosity for the world of masks and Commedia dell’Arte and he performed in plays by Marivaux, Mollière and Ruzzante. Recently he performed in Italy his solo show Arlecchino, originally created in London and performed at BAC in collaboration with Jos Houben and Kathryn Hunter. Marcello met and worked with Mark Rylance in The Merchant of Venice at Shakespeare’s Globe; with Hideki Kaut Howsen in King Lear and The Rose Tattoo; Young Vic and Theatre Clwyd; with David Glass in L’Enfants du Paradis; with Jack Sheppard in The Honest Whore and with Nancy Meckler in Mother Courage for Shared Experience; and directed Pinocchio at the Lyric Theatre London. Marcello has created and collaborated with Kathryn Hunter in productions of Aristophanes (The Birds), Shakespeare (The Comedy of Errors), Tennessee Williams (The Rose Tattoo) and Bertolt Brecht, and has directed her in Lee Hall’s Spoonface Steinberg. Films include Nine directed by Rob Marshall, The Adventures of Pinocchio with Steven Barron, Maria’s Child, The Lake and Doctor Who. He has performed in Beckett’s “Act Without Words” for Beckett on Film [Channel 4] directed by Enda Hughs. Marcello is the voice of Pingu in the animated series “Pingu.” His next project is Tell Them That I am Young and Beautiful, an evening of stories from around the world with Kathryn Hunter and writer Gilles Autrey for Prodo Productions at the Arcola Theatre London.
FURTHER EXPLORATION: RESOURCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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About Theatre for a New Audience

Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, the mission of Theatre for a New Audience is to develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classic drama. Theatre for a New Audience produces for audiences Off-Broadway and has also toured nationally, internationally and to Broadway. We are guided in our work by five core values: a reverence for language, a spirit of adventure, a commitment to diversity, a dedication to learning, and a spirit of service. These values inform what we do with artists, how we interact with audiences, and how we manage our organization.

Theatre for a New Audience Education Programs

Theatre for a New Audience is an award winning company recognized for artistic excellence. Our education programs introduce students to Shakespeare and other classics with the same artistic integrity that we apply to our productions. Through our unique and exciting methodology, students engage in hands-on learning that involves all aspects of literacy set in the context of theatre education. Our residencies are structured to address City and State Learning Standards both in English Language Arts and the Arts, the New York City DOE’s Curriculum Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theater, and the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Begun in 1984, our programs have served over 122,000 students, ages 9 through 18, in New York City Public Schools City-wide.

A New Home in Brooklyn

After over 30 years of being an itinerant theatre, Theatre for a New Audience has broken ground on a new home in the BAM Cultural District in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. Scheduled to open in fall 2013, our new home will be a place to gather, learn and explore. In it, we will be able to expand our education and humanities programs to include activities on weekends, after-school and during school vacations for students; as well as lectures, seminars, workshops, and other activities for artists, scholars, adults and families.
Theatre for a New Audience’s Humanities programming receives support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in these programs do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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