

CENTER FOR STUDIES IN BECKETT AND PERFORMANCE
and CSU Theatre presents:

THREE SHORT PLAYS/THREE SHORT SHOCKS*

WHAT WHERE
Samuel Beckett

NOT I
Samuel Beckett

SISTERS
Eric Prince

*shock –
a sudden or violent disturbance of thoughts or emotions.

Colorado State University
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

CSU Theatre presents

THREE SHORT PLAYS/THREE SHORT SHOCKS*

Directed by Eric Prince

Play 1:

WHAT WHERE by Samuel Beckett

Voice of Bam – Roger Miller

Bam – John Erickson

Bem – Jason Laub

Bim – Aron Villanyi

Bom – Evan Johnson

Play 2:

NOT I by Samuel Beckett

Mouth – Wendy Ishii

Auditor – James Burns

Play 3:

SISTERS by Eric Prince

Charley – Sophia Guerrero-Murphy

Elly – Kat Jaeger

Old Woman – Stephanie Salyers

Voice of Mother – Amy Scholl

***shock** – *a sudden or violent disturbance of thoughts or emotions*

Each play is a little over 15 minutes. We ask you to please remain seated during the brief changeovers. The entire run time should be one hour. The entrance into the studio theatre is also your primary exit.

This event is made possible with the support of the Lilla B. Morgan Memorial Fund, Colorado State University. The Center for Studies in Beckett and Performance exists solely because of the essential support and recognition from the Colorado State University Theatre Program, its dedicated faculty, staff and students.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

Play 1: *What Where* was written in French (*Quoi où*) in 1983 when Beckett was 76 years of age and proved to be the last work he was to write for the stage. Like his earlier short play *Catastrophe* (staged by the Center in 2007 and 2008) this short play has political undertones as four barely distinguishable figures exchange orders and questions on some unspecified series of interrogations. It is a play about totalitarianism on one level and on another an interrogation into language itself, just what it is that words can accomplish or fail to accomplish. Beckett closes cryptically with the words “make sense who may”.

Play 2: *Not I* was written in English in 1972 (later translated into French by Beckett as *Pas moi*). The play is a monologue spoken by a Mouth to a silent listening auditor. Mouth speaks of a child, born prematurely, abandoned by her parents, loveless, now seventy years old. Suddenly this old woman is overcome by trauma and darkness and finds herself speaking, words tumbling out, when she has been mute, speechless all her life. Now she pours out her story or confession:

*out . . . into this world . . . this world . . . tiny little thing . . .
before its time . . . in a godfor- . . . what? . . . girl? . . . yes . . .
. . . tiny little girl . . . into this . . . out into this . . . before her
time . . . godforsaken hole called . . . called . . . no matter . . .
. . . parents unknown . . . unheard of . . . he having vanished
. . . thin air . . . no sooner buttoned up his breeches . . . she
similarly . . . eight months later . . . almost to the tick . . . so
no love . . . spared that . . . no love such as normally vented
on the . . . speechless infant . . . in the home . . . no . . . nor
indeed for that matter any of any kind . . . no love of any kind
. . . at any subsequent stage . . . so typical affair . . . nothing of
any note till coming up to sixty when- . . . what? . . . seventy? . .
. . . good God! . . . coming up to seventy . . . wandering in a field . .
. . . looking aimlessly for cowslips . . . to make a ball . . . a few
steps then stop . . . stare into space . . . then on . . . a few more
. . . stop and stare again . . . so on . . . drifting around . . . when
suddenly . . . gradually . . . all went out . . . all that early April
morning light . . . and she found herself in the - . . .*

Play 3 : *Sisters* -written by Eric Prince- is one of a family of plays like his earlier *Séance* (staged by Fort Collins' Bas Bleu Theatre and featuring Wendy Ishii in 1997) which reflect in oblique ways Beckett's own stylistic temperament, one that is anti-realism and the limitations of realism, with a concern for the poetic as opposed to plots, characters and story-telling, and imbued with one's own ghosts, one's own suppressed biography. In this case I recall (vaguely) being a young child and my mother's twin sisters, the playful teenage aunts who used to baby sit me, and very much later in life my own two daughters, not twins but livewires in the seclusion of their childhood bedroom. But it's just fiction. As Beckett says – just play.

BIOS:

Eric Prince, Professor in Theatre, CSU, has published many essays on Beckett's theatre, including interviews with acclaimed performers and interpreters of Beckett, such as Billie Whitelaw, Sir Peter Hall, David Warrilow, Antoni Libera, Prunella Scales, Barry McGovern, and has directed many Beckett plays including: *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *Footfalls*, *Embers*, *Come and Go*, *What Where*, *Not I*, and *Play*. Prince has written fifteen plays, six of them staged with success at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Festival. Two of these plays, *Kafka's Last Request* and *Wildsea Wildsea*, also received the prestigious London Sunday Times Playwriting Award and Best Production Awards (both plays also being directed by Prince as British National Student Theatre Company productions) as well as being performed by some of England's leading professional small scale touring companies. Two more plays, *Red Roses* (staged by Bas Bleu Theatre, 2001) and *Love Is In The Air* were professionally produced in the UK by Sir Alan Ayckbourn's nationally acclaimed repertory company, The Stephen Joseph Theatre.

Wendy Ishii is the founding artistic director of Bas Bleu Theatre, Fort Collins, Colorado, which inventively staged Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* as the theatre's inaugural production in 1994. Ishii is also a master teacher of acting on the CSU faculty. Ishii has performed a number of important Beckett roles to regional and international critical acclaim, including Winnie (*Happy Days*), May (*Footfalls*), Ada (*Embers*), Mouth (*Not I*), and the female protagonist of the prose work *Ill Seen Ill Said* (directed by Laura Jones).

SAMUEL BECKETT

“No, I regret nothing. All I regret is having been born. Dying is such a long tiresome business I’ve always found.”

So, in a characteristically wry manner, Beckett sums up his view of life. Life is not a tragedy, because that would be far too grandiose a description for something so utterly absurd. Being born is just the first and the most significant of the many trivial errors that go to create the mess of our existence.

Beckett’s task as an artist was ‘to find a form to accommodate the mess’ and by doing so became probably the foremost writer of this century, the Picasso of the written word. He not only helped to transform the shape of the modern novel, he also created a theatre that has revolutionized our view of the contemporary stage.

Beginning in 1953 with *Waiting For Godot*, the play in which ‘nothing happens - twice’, Beckett again and again, in spoken theatre, mime, radio, film and television, showed beings at the extreme of existence, cast out from whatever paradise they might have once imagined themselves in, struggling to make sense of the little corner of life left to them: Hamm in *Endgame*, carrying out daily rituals as the world about him gradually winds down to total entropy; Kapp in *Krapp’s Last Tape* experiencing the remnants of a lost love through his thirty-year old tape recordings; Winnie in *Happy Days*, buried to her waist then to her neck in sand, but still gaily organizing her pathetic collection of possessions to fill out the time; the husband, wife and lover in *Play* trapped in urns reciting the story of their emotional triangle; and at the most extreme the disembodied gabbling mouth of *Not I*.

One might imagine that such gloom could be the product only of a massively depressive individual. In fact, Beckett was anything but. A keen sportsman and a sociable drinker, he spent his life quietly helping others and acting with unobtrusive courage (his work in the French Resistance earned him the Croix de Guerre). Above all, he enjoyed that marvelous Irish talent for not so much laughing at adversity as laughing with it. As Neil says in *Endgame*, ‘there’s nothing so funny as unhappiness’, and Beckett’s potentially despairing insights are overcome not only by the exquisite beauty of the form in which they are expressed but above all by the ‘pure laughter’ of someone who is too wise to despair.

Humankind may be in a mess, but its ability to keep on trudging through the mess and even keep smiling while doing so, is remarkable. Paradoxically, Beckett is a great humanist, celebrating the quiet courage of the human spirit. There’s no point in waiting for Godot, but at least the appointment has been kept. As the concluding words of Beckett’s novel *The Unnameable* have it ‘where I am, I don’t know, I’ll never know, in the silence you don’t know, you must go on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on.’

Scenic Design by Maggie Seymour
 Costume Design by Kat Springer
 Lighting Design by Meghan Gray
 Sound Design by Nicole Newcomb
 Hair and Makeup by Kat Springer
 Production Stage Noelle Dingman
 Assistant Scenic Design Brittany Lealman
 Assistant Lighting KC Cseresnyes
 Assistant Production Stage Manager Amy Mills

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager Jimmie Robinson
 Technical Director Cory Seymour
 Costume Shop Supervisor Sandra Frye
 Master Electrician Meghan Gray
 Scene Shop Technician-Props Annaleigh Timmerman
 and Scenic Painting
 Scene Shop Technician-Scenery Seth Walter
 Costume Shop Technician Kimberlee Singler
 Director of Marketing & Publicity. Jennifer Clary
 Events Manager Eileen Krebs

TECHNICAL CREWS

Light Board Operator Tim Werth
 Sound Board Operator Alex Romberg
 Prop/Stage Crew Rebekah Mustain
 Charge Artist Annaleigh Timmerman
 Wardrobe Supervisor. Jessica Alvis
 Wardrobe Rebecca Doyle
 Carpenters Tommy Adams, Bryan Connolly, John Erickson,
 Breanna Haner, Tsukky Nguyen, Machel Selken,
 Kat Springer, Michael Toland, Taylor Webster, Paul Vargo,
 Anthony Vessels, Aron Villanyi
 Assistant Master Electrician Matt Bauman
 Electricians. Morgan Dingle, Krissi Miller, Parker Stegmaier
 Scenic Artists Hannah Baldus, Aubrey Beck, Margot Girerd-Barclay,
 Kaylen Higgins, Kaitlyn Jaffke, Amy Mills, Richie Muller,
 Rebekah Mustain, Bonnie Prewitt, Tim Russell, Tory Sheppard
 Costume Construction Jessica Alvis, Sarah Bendix, Meghan Connor,
 Allison Fletcher, Meg Loughman, Caitlin Melby,
 Sophia Murphy, Nicole Newcomb

THE CENTER FOR STUDIES IN BECKETT AND PERFORMANCE

The Center for Studies in Beckett and Performance has no office or building and no real budget to speak of, but it has many achievements to record. The Center exists simply as the creative and scholarly outcome of a small number of theatre faculty who share an abiding fascination for Beckett's plays, some of the most compelling and deeply poetic works to be written for the stage. More words and critical commentaries have been written on and about Beckett than any other playwright, with the sole exception of Shakespeare. Our Center here at CSU appears, however, to be the only one of its kind in the United States or Europe. Our primary mission is not to continue adding to library bookshelves that groan beneath the weight of so much intellectual and worthy endeavor, it is simply to give to Beckett's plays new life and new audiences. Theatre in performance, is an art form that as Beckett once said of life can only "live the space of a door that opens and shuts". The work of this Center, established in 2002, happens solely because it exists as an integral feature of the Colorado State University's Theatre Program and of its College of Liberal Arts.

THE CENTER'S MISSION

The Center serves to promote the creation and documentation of practice and performance of the theatre of Samuel Beckett and of new work that, similarly to Beckett, seeks to challenge the boundaries of contemporary theatre practice.

The Center encourages interdisciplinary partnerships, artistic collaborations and performance opportunities and actively works to sustain visibility and recognition of Beckett's works both as significant art and as living contemporary performance.

<http://www.theatre.colostate.edu>

CSU Theatre presents

Arthur Miller's

ALL MY SONS

Directed by Morris Burns
December 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11 at 8PM
and Sunday, December 5 at 2 PM
University Theatre, UCA

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