

Department of Theatre & Dance presents

Samuel Beckett's
*Waiting
for Godot*

*Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the
play's Paris premier in January 1935*

Directed by Ellen Mease

November 16-18, 2012 (8 p.m., Nov. 16-17; 2 p.m., Nov 18)
Roberts Theatre, Bucksbaum Center for the Arts



GRINNELL COLLEGE



This two-hour performance will run with one intermission.

Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. No flash photography permitted.



SAMUEL BECKETT'S

Waiting for Godot

Directed by Ellen Mease

I am interested in the shape of ideas even if I do not believe in them. There is a wonderful sentence in Augustine. I wish I could remember the Latin. It is even finer in Latin than in English. "Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume: one of the thieves was damned." That sentence has a wonderful shape. It is the shape that matters. —Samuel Beckett

Scenic Designer	Justin Thomas
Lighting Designer	Kent Cabbage '06
Costume Designer	Erin Howell-Gritsch
Technical Director	Erik Sanning '89
Stage Manager	Caleb Sponheim '15
Assistant Directors	Rachael Andrew '16
	Stephen Gruber-Miller '15

Produced by arrangement with Dramatists' Play Service, Inc.

Cast List

Estragon.....Jackson Menner '13
Vladimir Ian Saderholm '15
LuckyBen Charette '16
Pozzo Alex Bazis '14
Boy.....Julien Moisan

Act I A country road. A tree. A stone.

Act II Next day. Same time. Same place.

Special Thanks

Karen Hueftle-Worley, De Dudley, Jerry Crawford, CERA, Bob Groenendyk, Jackie Brown, Vince Eckhart, Claire and Philippe Moisan, Don Vandyke, Mike Hunter, Kate Baumgartner, Grinnell High School, Theatre 117 users.



With James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett was one of the twentieth century's most important and influential imaginative writers. Accomplished in both English and French, the achievement is even more remarkable. From 1930 until his death at age 83 in 1989 he labored to do more with less, or perhaps, as he might have said, less with less.

Beckett's four major plays have entered the canon of modern classics: *Waiting for Godot* (1953), *Endgame* (1956), *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) and *Happy Days* (1961). Less widely performed, the later short plays have also become iconic touchstones of post-modernity.

A general introduction to Beckett's aesthetics:

Beckett's amused scepticism about the limits of language and thought ("It's no use blaming words; they're no shoddier than what they peddle") prompted him, in the 1949 *transition*⁴⁹ series of conversations with Georges Duthuit on modern artists, to deplore those arts which never stir from "the field of the possible," those which pretend to be able, doing a little better the same old thing. In praising the pursuit of the impossible and a poetics of "insuperable indigence" in the Dutch artist Bram van Velde, Beckett in effect announced his own project: "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."

In all of his media work--for stage, radio, film, and television--he sought to understand the basic communicative principles of that respective art form, but unlike an artist like Joyce, who knew he could make words do anything he wanted, Beckett by the mid '40s realized that he needed to carve out his own way as a "non-can-er," a "non-knower." As he explained his revelation to his biographer, James Knowlson,

I realized that Joyce had gone as far as one could in the direction of knowing more, being in control of one's material. He was always adding to it; you only have to look at his proofs to see that. I realized that my own way was in impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than in adding.

Often directing his own plays, and thus revising the text and stage business during rehearsals, Beckett pushed to the limit the expressive languages of the stage, in dramatic juxtapositions of light and dark, sound and silence, motion and stillness. His haunted, closed-space worlds are visions vouchsafed to the mind's eye, the eye of imagination, memory, and desire, not the eye of flesh. In their study of the late prose and plays, *Frescoes of the Skull*, Knowlson and Pilling describe Beckett's stage images as heir to the cave-paintings of Lascaux, illuminated by the explorer's torchlight. Beckett described his explorations as "ontospeleology," in quest of first and fundamental things (*Frescoes*, xiii). An excavator of his own inner dark, Beckett discovered in the fitful glimmerings

of the imagination ghostly figures revolving their stories of evanescent and discontinuous being. As Didi and Gogo put it in *Waiting for Godot*, "to have lived was not enough for them, they have to talk about it." Beckett's spotlight theatre illuminates the disembodied remnants of our humanity.

The dramatic event common to most of these plays is the crisis of a consciousness forced to speculate on its own identity and situation in the near-absence of any determinate reality beyond its own inner workings, in poetically spare, well-worn routines of speaking, thinking and making do with the diminishing number of objects and props that remain in a world of ever-dwindling resources. Hence his dictum "Vaguen" as he rewrites: to de-specify both place and time (the coordinates by which we construct our sense of self and relationship with others), strip away concrete historical references, eliminate the moorings that might bind his creatures to a fixed and hence comfortably recognizable world. Especially in the late plays, spare dramas of ontological impasse (*Play*, *Not I*, *Footfalls*, for instance), the earth opens to abysses and out of the depths, a human consciousness grapples with Who now? Where now? What now? What possible action, initiative, or assertion, beyond the restless urge to make sense where possibly there is none to be made?

Beckett notoriously refused to interpret his own work. He left that up to his audiences, and advised that we supply our own aspirin. Directing his own plays, he turned his actors to the tasks of making music and movement, using the formal media of the stage, verbal and visual, to give shape to the poetic ideas of the plays, through tightly structured echoes and rhythmic repetitions of musical phrase, movement pattern, gesture, posture and pose. The production notebooks and abundant rehearsal accounts attest to Beckett's disciplined efforts to make less more as he clarified his theatrical images. Rather than prescriptive, they are descriptive models of exacting practice. Beckett himself recognized that future productions "would have a different 'music' from his own." The notebooks prepare the way not for "dead museum pieces but living creatures." (But no gimmicks, as Beckett called efforts at explicitation/explication/explanation; under normal production circumstances, practitioners often don't have time to solve technical problems that will arise by surprise if they innovate beyond the "simple" precision of SB's own minimalist staging, complex enough.) In a world of information and image overload, we all stand to gain from the example of such patient elaboration and distillation. The plays, realized in the details of their formal abstraction, teach us to see not with the eyes of this world but the inner world of the mind, as we court the black vast and void, from *Godot's* final fraught silences and Krapp's "empty dream" to "the dying and the going" of the last *Breath*.



This production is based on the revised text of *Waiting for Godot*, published in 1992 as the first volume of *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*. It reflects the numerous cuts and changes Beckett made as he worked with existing French, English and German translations of the play to give some “shape to the confusion.” More importantly, the revised text reflects Beckett’s directorial decisions, evident in his detailed directorial notes for the 1975 German-language production at Berlin’s Schiller Theatre and his subsequent work with the San Quentin Drama Workshop’s *Godot* in 1984 and 1988, the year before Beckett’s death. Shorter, tighter, more theatrically dynamic, this was Beckett’s preferred version, though printed posthumously, with his permission.

In 1976 I served as assistant director for Alan Schneider’s sixth production of *Waiting for Godot* (seven his career total). Schneider was Beckett’s preferred American director, who survived the comic fiasco of the Coconut Grove *Godot* American premiere to direct all subsequent American Beckett premieres until his death in 1984 (hit by a motorcycle while crossing the road in London traffic to mail a letter to Beckett). That same year, I staged my first Grinnell *Godot* in Roberts. Chris Taylor was an incomparable Vladimir, a seedy perpetual philosophy grad with Chaplinesque gait. His companion, Eric Matchett, the volatile sadsack Estragon, was a galumphing clown. Lou Kersten as Pozzo surprised us all when he shaved his head for opening night. David Nicolson’s Lucky, in wildly distressed porter’s livery, was in his monologue the very picture of the prophet crying in the wilderness. As the Boy, Ben Connelly was all naïve innocence—the son of beloved colleagues Karen and Peter Connelly. Every production haunts a director; some ghosts are more memorably loveable. The opportunity to work with Beckett’s revised *Godot* in a full-scale production is a privilege occasioned by the upcoming 60th anniversary of the January 5th, 1953 Paris premiere, directed by Roger Blin with Beckett in attendance at most rehearsals. Another Grinnell pair of tramps, in this quintessential buddy play; another Pozzo and Lucky, passing by on their way to the fair; another Boy arriving each night with a message from Godot, the same message, the same Boy, but new like every new day, with no memory of the past. Heraclitus, Estragon’s preferred philosopher of flux (“Everything oozes. It’s never the same pus from one second to the next.”) said that you never step in the same river twice. Some waters are more familiar than others: recognizably *Godot*, but with different performers and different designers flowing fresh into channels whose contours themselves have changed dynamically over time.

Beckett identified Caspar David Friedrich’s painting “Two Men Contemplating the Moon” as the visual inspiration of *Godot’s mise en scène*. In this German Romantic nightscape, two travelers pause on a mountain trail to gaze at a sliver of waxing moon. That moon was a symbol of hope, the

Director's Notes

promise of Christ rising in a world whose every natural process was animate with divinity. One man casts his arm affectionately over the shoulder of the other. In *Godot*, the two inseparable tramps keep their twilight vigil under an indifferent heaven, expecting from Mr. Godot at best a warm place to sleep and food in their bellies (Godot could as well be “a pair of old Army boots” for Estragon’s aching feet). In Vladimir’s bemused reflections on the Crucifixion, the odds of salvation radically diminish: from the “nearly” even chance, 50/50, to 1 in 8, according to the discrepancies between the Gospel eyewitness accounts of those there “or thereabouts.” Estragon’s Act II boots are those he left behind in Act I: his feet have wasted, shrunk and dwindled overnight. The four main sections of Lucky’s great monologue prophesy the hard facts of entropy and three possible dooms: under an indifferent heaven, the traditional fiery apocalypse blasting hell to heaven; the wasting and pinning, shrinking and dwindling of the human species, despite the strides in nutrition and hygiene (“alimention and defecation”) and the practice of “sports of all sorts” (Victorian ruling-class physical culture); finally a dying planet, exhausted of light and heat, an abode only of stones, the “place of the skull” Golgotha writ large, like the rocky expanse of Connemara in the west of Ireland, its boulder-strewn wastes a graveyard of aboriginal giants. One of the most significant emotional through-lines of the play’s inner action traces Vladimir’s loss of heart (“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick”), evident when you compare his two scenes with the Boy and final exchanges with Estragon. In Act I he buoyed Estragon with the hope of a warm hayloft and something more than root vegetables for supper, the physical comforts incentive enough for keeping their appointment. By the end of Act II, it’s only fear that binds them to the spot: if they dropped Godot, he’d punish them. Melancholy futility finds its counterpart, however, in Estragon’s dropped trousers, a music-hall routine dear to Beckett. Like the tree’s meager efforts at seasonal change, there’s just enough energy for a rueful chuckle.



- 1906 Samuel Barclay Beckett born on Good Friday, April 13th, at Foxrock (south of Dublin), in the family home, Cooldrinagh (cool-dry-nah). Second son of William and Mary Roe (May) Beckett.
- 1911-16 Attends the Elsner sisters' private kindergarten and Earlsfort House School in Dublin, with elder brother Frank. With their father in the Dublin hills during the Easter 1916 Rising, the boys watch the city burn, shelled by British gunboats on the Liffey.
- 1920 Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. Cricket, rugby, tennis, boxing, golf. The only Nobel Prize winner to appear in the cricketers' bible, *Wisden*.
- 1923-7 Reads French and Italian at Trinity College, Dublin. First in class in Modern Literature, awarded Gold Medal. 1926 summer vacation bike tour of chateaux of the Loire.
- 1928 Teaches college for two terms in Belfast. Exchange lecturer at L'Ecole Normale Supérieure. Begins lifelong friendship with fellow writer Tom MacGreevy. Meets James Joyce. Visits cousin Peggy Sinclair and her family in Kassel, Germany, returning often in the next few years. Falls in love with Peggy.
- 1929 Publishes essay "Dante . . . Bruno. Vico . . . Joyce," part of a critical collection on *Finnegans Wake*.
- 1930 "Whoroscope," a poem on Descartes, first separately published work. Appointed assistant lecturer in French, Trinity College.
- 1931 *Proust*, his only major piece of literary criticism. Resigns lectureship at Trinity.
- 1932 Lives for brief periods in Kassel, Paris, London and Dublin.
- 1933 Death of Peggy Sinclair from tuberculosis (May). She will be the inspiration for the poignant memory of "the girl in a shabby green coat on a railway station platform" in *Krapp's Last Tape*.
Death of his father after a heart attack (June), attended by his sons and May.

Samuel Beckett: A Chronology

- 1934-35 Psychotherapy for mourning and melancholia in London with Dr. Wilfred Bion. Lives in Chelsea, World's End. Collection of comic short stories *More Pricks than Kicks* published. Begins first comic novel *Murphy*. Attends lecture by Carl Jung at the Tavistock Institute with Bion. Fascinated by Jung's diagram of the mind, a graduated series of concentric zones leading from the outer light of ego consciousness to the inner dark of the unconscious. In the same lecture, Jung spoke of a 10-year-old girl ailing for no apparent cause, lingering in a half-life because she'd never been properly born or individuated, psychically still immersed in childhood's archetypal dreams. Psychic half-life or existence-by-proxy will become a motif in the later prose and drama.
- 1936 *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates*, poems, published.
- 1937 Moves to Paris. Testifies in Dublin on behalf of his uncle, Harry Sinclair, at the libel trial of Oliver St. John Gogarty. Under cross-examination SB is discredited as "a bawd and blasphemer from Paris." The humiliating notoriety makes even more difficult the bohemian Beckett's relationship with his demanding mother May. Back in Paris SB enjoys a brief love affair with the American heiress and art collector Peggy Guggenheim, who lets him drive her sports cars.
- 1938 *Murphy*, first completed novel, published in London (after 42 rejections). Beckett is stabbed on the street in Montparnasse by a Parisian pimp named Prudent. The Joyce family doctor oversees his recovery. At the hospital SB receives a visit from Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil, against whom he'd played doubles on a Parisian tennis court years earlier. An accomplished pianist and seamstress, Suzanne will become his life partner for fifty years. Visiting his attacker, Beckett asked Prudent why he'd done it; the abashed pimp said, "I don't know."
- 1939 *Finnegans Wake* published. England declares war on Germany.
- 1940 Fall of France.



- 1941 James Joyce dies in Zurich. The friendship between the two writers had been strong through much of the '30s, until Joyce's daughter Lucia, increasingly unstable, conceived a passion for Beckett that he could not reciprocate. Her illness and unsuccessful efforts to treat her cast a dark pall over Joyce's last years
- 1941 Beckett joins the Resistance.
- 1942 Beckett's Resistance group is betrayed to the Gestapo. His writer friend Alfred Péron, who had recruited him into the cell, is arrested, though Péron's wife is able to get word to Beckett to flee. Beckett and Suzanne escape Paris, cross clandestinely into Vichy France, and arrive at Roussillon, near Avignon, where they remain during the next two years, Beckett working as a farm hand in exchange for potatoes and wine. Péron dies in 1945 as a result of internment at Mauthausen. Beckett looks after his widow and two sons. During this period Beckett writes the philosophical parody *Watt* (in English) and a set of poems in French.
- 1945 Beckett awarded the Croix de Guerre for his Resistance work. Works as a volunteer quartermaster and interpreter for the Irish Red Cross in the devastated town of St-Lô in Normandy.
- 1946 Writes four *nouvelles* in French, escaping his English mother tongue to write under the greater discipline of French, in order "to write without style."
- 1947-9 "The siege in the room," when he begins writing the trilogy of novels *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* in French. The *Unnamable* has since been critically identified as the foundation for all of Beckett's subsequent art. As a break from novel writing, he quickly writes *Waiting for Godot* (in French) in the last months of 1948, dating the completed script January 29, 1949.
- 1950 Death of Beckett's mother, after a long struggle with Parkinson's. Beckett in attendance at the Merrion Nursing Home. The memory will haunt *Krapp's Last Tape*, "mother at rest at last."
- 1951 *Molloy* and *Malone Dies* published in French.

Samuel Beckett: A Chronology

- 1953 5 January: World première of *En attendant Godot*, directed by Roger Blin, Théâtre de Babylone, Montparnasse. *Watt* published in Paris.
- 1954 Death of Beckett's brother Frank from lung cancer, Beckett caring for him.
- 1955 *Molloy* (English) published in Paris. First version of *Fin de partie* (*Endgame*) finished. First English production of *Godot* opens, taking the London theatre scene by storm.
- 1956 First American production of *Godot* opens in Miami, 3 January. A fiasco. Billed as the "laugh hit of two continents," it flopped with its Coconut Grove socialites. The New York production later that year, directed by Herbert Berghof, was a great success, income from box office and Grove Press script sales making Beckett financially independent for the first time in his life.
- 1957 World première of *Fin de partie*, in French, in London. *All That Fall*, radio play, broadcast on BBC Third Programme. San Francisco Actors' Workshop, under the direction of Herbert Blau, performs *Waiting for Godot* at San Quentin prison.
- 1958 World première of *Krapp's Last Tape* in London, with Patrick Magee. *How It Is* begun (completed 1960).
- 1959 Honorary degree from Trinity College, Dublin. Radio play, *Embers*, wins Italia Prize.
- 1961 World première of *Happy Days* in New York, directed by Alan Schneider. Married in civil ceremony to Suzanne, in Folkestone, Kent. Shares Prix International des Editeurs with Jorge Luis Borges. Inspired by the 1957 SF Actors' Workshop *Godot*, the newly-formed San Quentin Drama Workshop, directed by convicted armed robber Rick Cluchey, performs *Waiting for Godot* for San Quentin inmates.
- 1963 *Film* and *Play* finished. World première of *Play* in Germany, when Beckett begins to work closely with major productions of his plays.



- 1964 First and only visit to the U.S. to assist Alan Schneider in the making of *Film* with Buster Keaton.
- 1965 *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *Eh Joe* (television play) written.
- 1967 Glaucoma diagnosed. Directs *Endspiel (Endgame)* in Berlin.
- 1968 *Come and Go* (in English) première at Peacock Theatre, Dublin.
- 1969 Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Directs *Krapp's Last Tape* at Schiller Theatre in Berlin.
- 1970-71 Successful cataract surgeries. Directs *Krapp's Last Tape* in French in Paris.
Directs *Happy Days* in German in Berlin.
- 1972 World première of *Not I* at Lincoln Center, Jessica Tandy directed by Alan Schneider.
- 1973 London *Not I* with Billie Whitelaw, Beckett's favorite actress.
- 1974 *That Time* begun.
- 1975 Directs *Waiting for Godot* at Schiller Theatre in Berlin.
Directs *Not I* and *Krapp's Last Tape* in Paris.
- 1976 Directs première of *Footfalls* with Billie Whitelaw in London, on a double bill for his 70th birthday, with *That Time* directed by Donald McWhinnie. Directs *Footfalls* and *That Time* in Berlin.
- 1977 Directs teleplays *Ghost Trio* and *. . . but the clouds* in Stuttgart. Directs *Krapp's Last Tape* with Rick Cluchey in Berlin.
- 1977-80 *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said* (two novellas).
- 1978 Directs *Spiel* at Schiller Theatre and *Endgame* with Rick Cluchey in Berlin. Directs *Footfalls* and *Not I* in Paris.
- 1979 Directs *Eh Joe* in Stuttgart and Billie Whitelaw in *Happy Days* in London.

Samuel Beckett: A Chronology

- 1980 Directs Cluchey in *Endgame* at Riverside Studio, London.
A Piece of Monologue first performed in New York, with David Warrilow
- 1981 Writes and translates *Rockaby* and *Ohio Impromptu*. World première of both in America, directed by Alan Schneider. Begins *Worstward Ho*, the last of the late "trilogy" of novellas, including *Company* and *Ill See, Ill Said*.
- 1982 Writes and translates *Catastrophe*, performed at the Avignon Festival on behalf of Vaclav Havel, the imprisoned Czech dramatist and future president of the Czech Republic.
- 1983 Première of *What Where* in New York.
- 1984 Directs Cluchey's *Godot* in London.
- 1985 Directs revised *What Where* in Stuttgart.
- 1989 *Stirrings Still* published.
Death of Suzanne Beckett (July).
Death of Samuel Beckett from emphysema (December 22).
Burial in Montparnasse Cemetery with Suzanne.



A play that is striving all the time to avoid definition. –Samuel Beckett (SB)

One act would have been too little and three acts would have been too much. –SB

If I knew who Godot was, I would have said so in the play. –SB

I suppose Lucky is lucky to have no more expectations. --SB

Estragon is on the ground, he belongs to the stone. Vladimir is light; he is oriented towards the sky. He belongs to the tree. –SB

A music-hall sketch of Pascal's Pensées as played by the Fratellini clowns. –Jean Anouilh

A music-hall sketch of Cartesian man performed by Chaplinesque clowns. –Ruby Cohn

John Millington Synge, "The Vagrants of Wicklow":

In the middle classes the gifted son of a family is always the poorest—usually a writer or artist with no sense for speculation—and in a family of peasants, where the average comfort is just over penury, the gifted son sinks also, and is soon a tramp on the roadside. . . .

In this life, however, there are many privileges. The tramp in Ireland is little troubled by the laws, and lives in out-of-door conditions that keep him in good humour and fine bodily health. This is so apparent, in Wicklow at least, that these men rarely seek for charity on any plea of ill-health, but ask simply, when they beg: 'Would you help a poor fellow along the road?' or, 'Would you give me the price of a night's lodging, for I'm after walking a great way since the sun rose?'

It need hardly be said that in all tramp life plaintive and tragic elements are common, even on the surface. Some are peculiar to Wicklow. In these hills the summer passes in a few weeks from a late spring, full of odor and color, to an autumn that is premature and filled with the desolate splendor of decay; and it often happens that, in moments when one is most aware of this ceaseless fading of beauty, some incident of tramp life gives a local human intensity to the shadow of one's own mood.

Critical Commentaries and Clues

Pascal:

We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and to fasten to it, it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes forever. Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclination; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses.

Proverbs: Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. But a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

The old Irish joke about the Englishman in the brothel:

An Englishman, having drunk a little more than usual, goes to a brothel. The bawd asks him if he wants a fair one, a dark one, or a red-haired one. The Englishman asks for a boy. The bawd, appalled, says "I'll call a policeman!" "Oh, don't, they're so aggressive!" the Englishman says.

James Knowlson, Introduction to the revised text of *Waiting for Godot*, Vol. I of the *Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, 1992:

Beckett commented that the key word in his theater is 'perhaps' and the *Godot* production notebooks direct our attention, first, to the radical uncertainty that characterizes the entire play. Beckett is quoted as saying, 'I think anyone nowadays who pays the slightest attention to his own experience finds it the experience of a non-knower, a non-can-er.' Estragon and Vladimir are certainly non-knowers and non-can-ers. They try or want to hang themselves; but they cannot [for lack of means]. They try to leave the spot; but they cannot, detained as they are by their hope that eventually Godot will arrive. Even at the end of the play, they do not leave the spot, although the Boy has told them that Godot will not be coming that night. They try—sometimes quite hard—to arrive at firm conclusions but any kind of reliable conclusion constantly eludes them. They are failed or foiled rationalists in that their efforts at reasoning lead only to uncertainty, disappointment or failure and their rational conclusions are no conclusions at all. They keep an all-important vigil, waiting for a meeting that is apparently all that matters to them. But it is an appointment that they think (though they cannot be sure) they also kept yesterday in a place which, again, they think (though they cannot be sure of this either) is the same as the spot at which they now wait. The



time for the meeting is, they think, Saturday, but, asks Estragon ‘very insidiously,’ ‘what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (*Pause.*) Or Monday? (*Pause.*) Or Friday?’—questions that provoke his friend, Vladimir, to gaze around ‘wildly,’ as if the date were somehow inscribed in the barren landscape.

This uncertainty characterizes every element of their vigil. They return in the second act to find that (they think) the shoes that Estragon left behind him have gone or at least that others (they think) have taken their place. But when Estragon seeks for epithets to describe his own boots he cannot remember their colour and it is with the greatest of difficulty that he confers on the present shoes an adjective that will serve to identify them in the future. A similar uncertainty surrounds their encounters with Pozzo and Lucky and with the Boy, who does not recognize them on either of his two visits.

Indeed, on each occasion, he claims that it is the first time he has been there. But scepticism is pushed to its very limit when Vladimir (employing an argument already voiced by the philosopher René Descartes in the *Meditations*) questions the entire distinction between sleeping and waking, implying that there may be no more reality in the experiences of the day than there is in the dreams or nightmares of the night. ‘Was I sleeping while the others suffered? Am I sleeping now? Tomorrow, when I wake, or think I do, what shall I say of today? That with Estragon, my friend, at this place, until the fall of night, I waited for Godot? That Pozzo passed, with his carrier, and that he spoke to us? Probably. But in all that what truth will there be?’

The questions accumulated here in Vladimir’s single speech are found scattered throughout the entire text of the play. For *Waiting for Godot* is not (in spite of efforts by some early critics to make it appear so) a philosophical tract which has been given a top-dressing of theatrical fertilizer. The essential qualities of uncertainty, ignorance and impotence that fill the lives of the characters emerge in the form of hundreds of questions that receive no answers—some of them indeed almost seem to expect none, since, although interrogatives, they are followed by no question mark. In a linguistic analysis of the play, it has been calculated that 24 per cent of the utterances are questions, while only 12 per cent are replies. And many that seem to take the form of answers are not this at all, since they leave the troubling problems that provoked the questions entirely unresolved. The same qualities of uncertainty and irresolution emerge in the form of stories that are never concluded, actions that are left deliberately unexplained and in the form also of concrete visual images that reveal man as essentially befuddled, disoriented, lost and bewildered.

Critical Commentaries and Clues

Ruby Cohn, *Just Play: Beckett's Theatre*:

The seed of *Godot* is Luke's account of the crucifixion, as summarized by St. Augustine ["Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned"]. . . . The two thieves are Vladimir and Estragon; the two thieves are Pozzo and Lucky; the two thieves are Godot's goatherd and his offstage shepherd brother. And Beckett shaped the play to reflect that fearful symmetry—in text and performance. There are two acts, one repeating the other. There are two couples, one contrasting with the other. Within the acts, within the couples, symmetries and oppositions occur.

Bert States, *The Shape of Paradox: An Essay on Waiting for Godot*, 1978:

What made Beckett the ideal modern to write a play about humankind after "the Fall" is that his peculiar skepticism of all firm positions rescued him from both the artistic sin of faith and the shallowness of an easy despair. Which is to say that he chose Augustine's paradox of the two thieves and not the moralistic version in Luke in which salvation and damnation are distributed on the basis of conduct. Hence that fascinating sentence—*it is the shape that matters*—standing provocatively beneath the mystery of the Cross.

. . . If we were to condense *Godot* to a graphic illustration of itself it might resemble a highly successful Rorschach blot. . . I have in mind the simple wonder of the blot's appeal; like Found Art, it is unintentionally provocative; not a created object but a creative one, or better still, no object at all but a concatenation of possibilities, limited by nothing but the mind's capacity to endow shape with meaning.

. . . No sooner do we begin the play than we are in the presence of a massive duplicity which is at once the source of its peculiar openness and its resistance to interpretation. Everything has a way of meaning something and at the same time blurring any clear sign of representational intention.

. . . There is no processing consciousness which gives the text a final authority. Cain and Abel appear only latently, the code words of a certain rich history involving (if we pause to explicate) all sorts of thematic "shapes" relevant to the play: ownership of land, inhumanity, divine preferment and punishment, exile, wandering over the land, God's vengeful withdrawal from men's sight, etc. In short, there is a wave of unspecified meaning here and it produces, on its abrupt retreat, an undertow of the sort that one feels most powerfully in the presence of myth.

. . . The point about such images [Cain and Abel, Christ at the place of the skull, the tree, the "Tree" yoga exercise, "To every man his little cross," Vladimir and Estragon upholding both Lucky and Pozzo, hurt toe and able toe provoking meditations on the damned and the saved thieves, etc.] is that they do not attach descriptively to characters or situations. Once out of a character's mouth they hover in the air of the play nonreferentially, the property of the play's idea. . .



. . . In a text so spare, so cunningly random, everything is a lure. Well and good for Beckett to insist that there are no symbols where none are intended, but he himself (like a boy who failed to cry wolf) has set the conditions whereby all images, the more off-handed the more suspicious, loom as potential motifs in the grand design.

Charles Lyons, *Samuel Beckett*:

The absence of details that would place Beckett's tramps in a plausible or historically specific situation often causes audiences to perceive them as charged, symbolic figures, as twentieth-century everymen. However, Beckett has not eliminated the detail that would ground *Godot* in the conventions of realism in order to write an allegory that presents his characters within a clear philosophical or theological scheme. No key exists that will unlock the enigmas of this play, and Vladimir and Estragon do not form religious archetypes. While biblical imagery does play its role in *Godot*, that imagery does not form a coherent network of references to any clear statement. The religious images are there in the same function as the ill-fitting hats and boots, as the refuse of some earlier time, as part of the collection of 'things that are left' which these old men exploit in their desperation to find ideas, objects, words to fill the time.

The spectator's inability to order the various elements of this theatrical experience within a coherent and systematic interpretation that aligns with some existing intellectual system forces him to deal with the immediate experience as an image of reality in its own terms. The radical reduction of context in *Waiting for Godot* focuses the attention of the spectator on the following human problems:

- The failure of critical bodily processes, painful and difficult urination and defecation
- The perception of the body as a familiar but undependable machine
- The experience of being unable to identify the site in which one exists with a personal memory or sense of connection, seeing the self as an alien object in the space it inhabits
- The experience of being unable to locate oneself within a coherent and comprehensible chronology, realizing that any sense of the past may be, in itself, a fiction
- The experience of a complex disorientation that comes from recognizing that any activity engaged in must be supplied by one's own invention
- The recognition of one's dependency upon another human being and the simultaneous realization that this dependence is a trap that binds the self in habitual patterns of behavior from which it is impossible to grow free.

Pozzo: They give birth astride of a grave. The light gleams an instant. Then it's night once more.

Vladimir: Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the grave-digger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of our cries. (*He listens.*) But habit is a great deadener. (*He looks again at Estragon.*) At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is saying, He is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on. (*Pause.*) I can't go on! (*Pause.*) What have I said?

In one sense, Vladimir's soliloquy is a classic recognition speech which sums up the career in waiting exactly as the "When!" speech sums up Pozzo's career in becoming. But it is also close to what Northrop Frye calls the *Augenblick* of tragedy, that "crucial moment from which point the road to what might have been and the road to what will be can be simultaneously seen." . . . Vladimir fulfills Pozzo's thought not only in recovering his "grave" metaphor but in stretching his perception that life passes in "an instant" into something like a moral question. Here the important themes of the play (sleep, blindness, suffering, night, waiting, death, time) are drawn into an interrogative suspension. What is remarkable is the lucidity of mind with which Vladimir looks back upon "today" from the perspective of "tomorrow" (a complex act in this play) and searches its experience for a "truth." This is the only moment in the play when Vladimir speaks to and of himself in what we might call that past-future tense. It is, in fact, almost a Racinian speech in the sense that a character is contemplating his own destiny before it has been fully worked out. Here Vladimir, like Pozzo, stands outside himself, at a crossroad, a consciousness momentarily detached from the "habit" of the body, represented by the sleeping Estragon who serves, at this moment, as a condensation of the whole principle of waiting. Altogether, it is a daring speech, for this play, in coming so close to the point that there may be better ways of spending one's fraction of time on this bitch of an earth. —Bert States, *The Shape of Paradox*

From Beckett's book on Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*:

Memory and habit are attributes of the Time cancer. . . . The laws of memory are subject to the more general laws of habit. Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities, the guarantee of a dull inviolability, the lightning conductor of his existence. Habit is the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. Breathing is habit. Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world



being a projection of the individual's consciousness (an objectivation of the individual's will, as Schopenhauer would say), the pact must be continually renewed, the letter of safe-conduct brought up to date. The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day. Habit then is the generic term for the countless treaties concluded between the countless subjects that constitute the individual and their countless correlative objects. The periods of transition that separate consecutive adaptations (because by no expedient of macabre transubstantiation can the grave-sheets serve as swaddling-clothes) represent the perilous zones in the life of the individual, dangerous, precarious, painful, mysterious and fertile, when for a moment the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being.

Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies*:

The better late than never thanks to which true men, true links, can acknowledge the error of their ways and hasten on to the next, was beyond the power of Macmann, to whom it sometimes seemed that he could grovel and wallow in his mortality until the end of time and not have done. And without going so far as that, he who has waited long enough will wait forever. And there comes the hour when nothing more can happen and nobody can come and all is ended but the waiting that knows itself in vain.

Cast

Alex Bazis (Pozzo) is a third-year Theater major from Boone, Iowa. He was previously in the Grinnell College production of *Moving On*. He enjoyed playing the part of Pozzo and will miss getting to eat chicken on stage every day.

Ben Charette (Lucky) is a first year from Tipton, Iowa. Though this is his first Grinnell performance, in high school he acted in seven full-length plays as well as several one-acts. Still undecided in his major, Ben is considering English with a focus in creative writing.

Jackson Menner (Estragon) is a senior Philosophy major from Grinnell, Iowa. He has acted in past Mainstage productions at Grinnell College, and has also worked with the Grinnell Community Theatre in a number of different capacities. Jack ran varsity cross-country for his first three years and now manages the radio station.

Julien Moisan (The Boy), 12, has studied acting under Caitlin Beckwith-Ferguson and improvisational strategies with John Stark. He appeared as a monkey in the Missoula Children Theater's production of *Robinson Crusoe*, and as a wolf in The Grinnell Area Arts Council Production of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. He's an avid soccer player, writer, and artist.

Ian Saderholm (Vladimir) Ian Saderholm is a second-year intended Theatre major from Berea, Kentucky. In addition to over 20 pre-college productions, here at Grinnell he has taken part in *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Broken Mirrors*, and last year's one-act festival. This marks his first major role on Grinnell's main stage.

Crew

Mary Adams (Assistant Stage Manager) is a second-year intended French and Theatre double major from DeKalb, Illinois. This is her third production at Grinnell and first foray into the world of stage management, with previous credits including *Naked* and *Now You See Me*. She is also currently directing a one-act play for the festival at the end of the semester. She hopes you enjoy the show.

Fiona Byrne (Run Crew) is a first-year intended computer science and Spanish major from Portland, Oregon. This is her first production at Grinnell.

Prisca Kim (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first year from Diamond Bar, California. She performed in one production during high school. She has enjoyed her experience being part of crew and has learned a lot from working with such great people.



Carly Riley (Wardrobe Crew Chief) is a senior in Studio Art with a concentration in Environmental Studies from Poteau, Oklahoma. She has worked in the costume shop at Grinnell for two years.

Caleb Sponheim (Stage Manager) is a second-year Psychology and Neuroscience Major from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Involved in many Grinnell College productions, with *Godot* he debuts as stage manager.

Hannah Storch (Wardrobe Crew) is a first-year intended English and History major from Albany, New York. After working on productions in her high school, this is her first show at Grinnell.

Zoe Wolter (Light Board Operator) is a first-year undecided major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She's run lights and stage managed for various productions in high school. This is her first show at Grinnell.

Production and Design Team

Rachael Andrew (Assistant Director) is a first year and prospective Physics and Theater major here at Grinnell. She hails from Platteville, Wisconsin where she has worked with Platteville Community Theater both on the stage and off. She has also worked with University of Wisconsin Platteville's Heartland Festival. She hopes you enjoy the show.

Kent Cabbage '06 (Lighting Designer) is designing professionally for Grinnell for the first time and he's thrilled to be here. As a student, he started learning lighting with productions for GIMP, Belly Dance, Emanate, and various other student teams. Since earning his Grinnell B.A. in Theatre and an M.F.A. in Lighting Design at Ohio University, he has designed for Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs, New Jersey Shakespeare Theater, Skylark Opera, and a concert for Andrew Bird. He designs regularly for Seattle Shakespeare Company and is the resident designer for Theater Off Jackson. Last summer he represented America at the 2011 Prague Quadrennial International Competitive Design Exposition and became a 2011 Fulbright finalist in lighting design. He often assists at regional theaters including the Guthrie, ACT, and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and assisted on *The Scottsboro Boys*, which was nominated for twelve Tony Awards including lighting. His website can be seen at kentcubbage.com

Production and Design Team

Stephen Gruber-Miller (Assistant Director) is a second-year intended English major. He has previously acted in *You Can't Take It With You* and *Julius Caesar*. This is his first experience assistant directing and he would like to thank his friends, especially Grant, his high school director and mentor, for encouraging him to try something new.

Erin Howell-Gritsch (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for over 100 productions, beginning with the Des Moines Ballet in 1989. She has designed costumes at Grinnell College since 1999, where she is the resident costume designer, and has taught Introduction to Technical Theatre and Costume Design. She has also taught at Cornell College, where she designed productions of *Polaroid Stories*, *Story Theatre*, *Tartuffe* and *Our Town*. Erin's work has also been produced at the University of Iowa (Theatre, Dance, Playwright's Festival, and Black Action Theatre), Riverside Theatre, RT Shakespeare Festival, and RT Young People's Company, Graffiti Theatre, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, and Hurley Dancers. Erin holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design from the University of Iowa and a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University.

Carly Lowe '12 (Fifth-year Intern) loves working in the scene shop and has been involved in a number of productions at Grinnell, including *Stovepipe*, *The Pillowman*, *100 Nights' Dreams*, *Women of Troy*, *Sunday in the Park with George* and most recently *hand to mouth*.

Ellen Mease (Director) directs and teaches European dramatic literature, criticism, theory, and theatre history from the Greeks to Beckett and Stoppard. She also teaches interdisciplinary Humanities classes on ancient Greece (HUM 101), Roman and early Christian culture (HUM 102), and medieval/Renaissance culture (HUM 140). On Grinnell's London program in 2003 and 2010 she taught courses on plays of ideas, Samuel Beckett, and the 19th c. English "Age of Revolution." In Florence 2006-07 she taught courses on Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the Florentine Golden Age/Italian Renaissance. During the Beckett centenary in 2006, she served as festival dramaturg for Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre's BeckettFest, when she also directed *Krapp's Last Tape*, *A Piece of Monologue*, *Play* and *That Time*. In 2008 she was the dramaturg for PICT's complete cycle of the plays of John Millington Synge, when she also directed his last play, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*. Apart from most of Beckett's plays, directing credits also include Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Arcadia*, *Travesties*; *Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Cherry Orchard*; *Peer Gynt*, *Doll's House*, *Lady from the Sea*; *As You Like It*, *12th Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. She directed Brecht's *Galileo* in spring 2009, for the 400th anniversary of Galileo's sighting of the largest moons of Jupiter. Recent acting credits include Dysart in *Equus* (2000) and the Donne scholar in *Wit* (staged reading). B.A., Drama, Vassar; M.A. Drama, U. Va.; Ph.D., Drama and Humanities, Stanford.



Erik Sanning '89 (Technical Director) is a 1989 graduate of Grinnell College. He spent the first two years after graduation working as the Technical Director/Lighting Designer for Ballet Iowa. In the summer of 1991, Erik was able to return to Grinnell as the resident Technical Director for the Theatre Department. In addition to his work with the Theatre Department, he is also one of the founding members of Grinnell Productions, a semi-professional theatre company that was based here in Grinnell. Erik has also been a member of IATSE, the professional stagehands union, since 1990.

Justin Thomas (Scenic Designer) is assistant Professor of Theatre & Design whose most recent work has been produced by the Volkov National Theatre (Yaroslavl, Russia), the American Film Institute, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Arden Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Round House Theatre, Olney Theatre Center for the Arts, Happenstance Theatre, the 21st Century Consort, the Washington National Cathedral, the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Rorschach Theatre Company, Imagination Stage, The Festival Playhouse, Potomac Theatre Project, Daniel Phoenix Singh/Dakshina Dance Company, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and the University of Maryland Opera Studio. As an educator, Thomas has worked for Grinnell College, American University, University of Maryland, Villa Julie College, and the Olney Theatre Institute. Thomas holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatrical Design from the University of Maryland.

Production Staff

Assistant Stage Manager Mary Adams '15
 Prisca Kim '16

Light Board Operator Zoe Wolter '16

Wardrobe Crew Chief Carly Riley '13
Wardrobe Crew Hannah Storch '16

Run Crew Fiona Byrne '16

Poster Photography Justin Hayworth
Poster Design Larissa Degen
Program Design Stephanie Micetich





ADMINISTRATION

Production Stage Manager

Brenna Ross '13

FRONT OF HOUSE

Front of House Manager

Abbi Butterfield '13

Front of House Staff

Anna Banker '15	Abbi Butterfield '13
Kate Doyle '13	Alex Krempely '13
Mackenzie Higgins '15	Ana Novak '14
Shawn Peters '14	Anthony Wenndt '15

COSTUME STUDIO

Costume Storage Coordinator

Alice Nadeau '13

Stitchers

Devon Gable '15	Shannon Kelly '13
Alice Nadeau '13	Maria Richardson '15
Carly Riley '13	Brenna Ross '13

SCENE SHOP

Properties Storage Coordinator

Brenna Ross '13

Scene Shop Staff

Addie Asbridge '13	Leslie Bean '13
Ben Doehr '15	Adam Glassman '13
Alex Hsieh '14	Nora Kostow '13
Brenna Ross '13	Ian Saderholm '15
Caleb Sponheim '15	Kathryn Vincent '13
	Colin Wong '14



Dance Ensemble/Activate

Small Elephant Stories

directed by Celeste Miller

Falconer Gallery

December 7 & 8 - 6:30 PM

December 9 - 2:00 PM