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Waiting for Godot (2003)

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Waiting for Godot Playbill

Providence College

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blackfriars theatre

providence college

waiting

for godot

by samuel beckett

Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film Presents

Waiting for Godot

A Tragicomedy in Two Acts

by

Samuel Beckett

translated from the original french text by the author

Directed by
Mary G. Farrell

Scenic Design
Jeremy Woodward

Costume Design
Deborah Newhall

Lighting Design
Holly Ratafia

Technical Director
George Marks

Costume Shop Supervisor
Sue Spencer

Production Manager
John Garrity

Blackfriars Theatre
February 14-16 & February 21-23, 2003

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service

The Cast

Estragon.....Michael Propster
Vladimir.....Daniel Janeiro
Lucky.....Betsey Jensen
Pozzo.....Francis Poulin
A Boy.....Conor Tansey

Stage Manager.....Sarah Orr
Assistant Stage Manager.....Katie Hughes

Act I A country road, a tree, evening
Act II Next day, same time, same place

There will be one ten-minute intermission.

Patron Information

Refreshments will be sold before the performance and at intermission.

Proceeds support THE FRIAR'S CELL,
Providence College's student-run theatre group.



In order to avoid disrupting the performance,
patrons who leave the theatre after the show has begun
will be asked to view the remainder of the act
from the side balcony.



The taking of photographs during the performance is strictly prohibited.



Please mute all wireless communication devices
or leave them with the House Manager.



For your convenience, the River Avenue gate will be open
before and immediately after each performance.

Production Staff

Master Electrician. Lisa Zagarella
Light Board Operator. Spencer Crockett
Follow Spot Operator #1 Caitlin Robert
#2. Julie Caputo
Sound Operator. Dan Della Rocca
Set/Properties Running Crew. Adrienne Johnson
Wardrobe. Kaitlin Fluet
Costume Shop Crew. Jane Lewis, Sarah Orr,
Kathleen Seagriff, Melissa Snediker
Scene Shop Crew. Spencer Crockett, Lisa D'Alessandro
Miriam Darby, Patrick Donohue, Kimberly Dubuc,
Robyn Forcier, James Frascatore, Paul LaRochelle,
Elizabeth Larsen-Silva, Jose Moreno,
Kimberly Sagan, Jason Zybert
Box Office Manager. Elizabeth Delmage
Box Office & Publicity Assistants. Daniela Cosentini,
Shannon Gadoury, Kevin McHugh, Ann Royals
House Manager. George Spelvin
Ushers. Providence College Friars Club
Concessions. Friars' Cell
Poster Design. Chris Herron Designs
Press Photography Peter Goldberg
Archive Photography. Randall Photography

Special Thanks

Peter Garofalo
Providence College Security

Norma Kroll
English Department

Dr. Patricia Cichy
Music Department

Peter Hughes

Melissa Bowler

Visiting Artists

Deborah Newhall designs costumes for film, television, theater, opera and ballet. She has designed costumes for the Radio City Rockettes for the Grand re-opening of Radio City Music Hall, an NBC special. Deb's film projects include *American Buffalo* with Dustin Hoffman, *Monument Ave* with Denis Leary and Martin Sheen, *Jesus, Mary and Joey* with Olympia Dukakis and Jason Gedrick. Deb has earned two Emmy nominations for her work on the PBS children's program, *ZOOM!* She has designed for the Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Providence, and several regional theaters throughout the country. Her work has also been seen on television commercials for Adidas, Bose, Miller Beer, McDonalds, Hewlett Packard among many others. Deborah has also been an educator, having taught in the theater programs at Brown and Brandels Universities. Last season Deb designed the Costumes for the Blackfriars production of *Never the Sinner*. She enjoyed working with talented students and she's pleased to be back.

Holly Ratafia is a lighting Designer and Puppeteer. In the New England area she has frequently collaborated with contemporary choreographers, artists and directors such as Marjorie Morgan, of the Mobius Artists Group, Daniel McCusker, Brian Crabtree, Caitlin Corbett and Jody Weber. In Los Angeles she worked with Jude Narita, Guy Glarizzo, and May Sun. Holly designed *Motherlands*, at The Theatre Offensive, *Quilters*, directed by Kate Lohman for First Stage/ The Brown Summer Theatre, *And Then You Go On* (a compilation of the works of Samuel Becket performed by Bob Jaffe) directed by Peter Wallace at the Perishable Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival and continuing to the HERE performance space in New York City. Holly also studied Folkloristics and conducts workshops on integrating Oral History and Puppetry into the multicultural classroom to K-12 teachers. She has formerly served as Production Coordinator for Brown University's Theatre, Speech and Dance Department. She designed *Never the Sinner* last year and *Photographs from S-21* as part of *The Spirit of Cambodia...A Tribute* for Providence College.

Jeremy Woodward (*Scenic Designer*) designs scenery and puppetry for theatre, television, and outdoor spectacles, and is

very happy to be working at Blackfriars Theatre. He has worked extensively with Perishable Theatre, where he is resident designer and a curator of *Blood From a Turnip*, Rhode Island's finest late-night puppetry salon for adult audiences. Work at Providence theatres also includes Providence Performing Arts Center, Providence Black Repertory Company, Trinity Repertory Conservatory, Brown New Plays Festival, Alias Stage (now Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre), and All Children's Theatre. Original puppetry shows and spectacles include *FishCanoe*, commissioned by Waterfire Providence, and those created with collaborator Vanessa Gilbert include *Traffic in Memory*, commissioned by the Convergence Festival, *The Phrenologist's Dream*, and *The Lunchcart Circus*. His work as a puppeteer has taken him across the U.S., and to Canada, Germany, and Taiwan. Previously at the Blackfriars Theatre, Jeremy has designed for *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and *Never the Sinner*, also with Mary Farrell.



Samuel Beckett

Samuel Beckett was born south of Dublin, Ireland on April 13, 1906, and grew up in a Protestant, middle class home. He began his education at the Portora Royal School, where Oscar Wilde had studied, and later went on to Trinity College in Dublin. At Trinity, he received a B.A. in 1927 specializing in French and Italian. (Beckett would later write most of his great works in French.) The following year Beckett moved to Paris where he met fellow Irish author, James Joyce, whom he would always admire and revere. Beckett also traveled throughout Europe including Ireland, France, Germany, and England and wrote poems and stories along the way. He returned to Dublin in 1931 and achieved his masters degree and began to teach French at Trinity College. Beckett later resigned from his teaching position and devoted his life to writing and at about this time began psychoanalysis for his depression.

In 1937, he settled down in Paris and remained there throughout World War II. During the war Beckett joined a Resistance

network and lived in hiding for two and a half years while sought by the Nazis. In 1945, he returned to Paris and began his most productive period as a writer. Before this time, Beckett had published poems, collections of essays, and a novel but it was during this five year period that he created his best and most famous literary works. It was after the war that he wrote *Eleutheria*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, the novels *Malloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*, and *Mercier et Camier*, two books of short stories, and a book of criticism. Beckett's first real success as a writer came with *Waiting for Godot*'s premiere at the Théâtre de Babylone. This play brought him international fame and established him as one of the leading names of the theatre of the absurd. Beckett's position as a master dramatist was secured with his second great play, *Endgame*.

Samuel Beckett was one of the first writers of absurdist literature to win international fame and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969. He continued to write until his death in 1989, but toward the end of his life as the task of writing became more difficult, he remarked that each word seemed to him an "unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness".

- Elizabeth Delmage '04



"On the other hand, with regard to..."
(Act I, *Waiting for Godot*)

Samuel Beckett used the term "tragicomedy" to describe *Waiting for Godot*. As a prime example of theatre of the absurd, the phrase is apt, since the absurd can make us cry, or make us laugh. Often we describe an encounter with the unreasonable and conclude with, "I didn't know whether to laugh or cry." This quality of suspension between emotions is what Beckett recreates in *Godot*. We are appalled at the behavior of the characters, but we burst out laughing a few seconds later. The situation is unreasonable, but rational thought brings no relief.

Ideas of existentialism, emphasizing the unique individual in an indifferent universe, can be traced back to the 17th century French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, but came to prominence in

European literature and theatre after World War II. The horrors and destruction of the war, particularly in countries that had suffered greatly just a few decades earlier, raised questions about the existence of universal ethics, and the purpose of mankind in a world that seemed devoid of moral standards or order. Philosopher, novelist, and playwright Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) helped put the term existentialism into common use, and in the theatre, Eugene Ionesco (*Rhinoceros*, 1959) as well as Beckett are referred to as proponents of existentialist ideas. In the United States, existentialism in literature has been less direct, but can be found in the novels of Walker Percy and John Updike, and certain ideas show up in such varied writers as Norman Mailer, John Barth, and Arthur Miller.

Born near Dublin, Ireland in 1906, Samuel Beckett lived abroad after the age of 22, settling in Paris in the late 1930's. His decision to write *Godot* in his acquired language of French, may have been a deliberate choice to further discipline his minimalist language. The simplicity and repetition of the words throughout most of the play is thrown into high contrast when one of the characters, in the first act, bursts into a monologue of complex, semi-coherent, spoken thought, bringing to mind the writing of James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. If this is intended as a reference to Joyce (Beckett and Joyce were fellow ex-patriots in Paris), then it is also possible that writing in French was an homage to Beckett's adopted country, and Pascal's ideas of 300 years earlier.

When *Godot* first premiered in Paris at the Théâtre de Babylone in 1953, audiences were baffled. The play lacked plot development, and common sense, and had no clear-cut resolution at the end. Although there were comedic moments and clear vaudevillian references, it was not a comedy. This "strange little play" ran for 400 performances and received critical praise from other dramatists, including Thornton Wilder (*Our Town*, 1938), Jean Anouilh (*Ring Round the Moon*, 1947), Tennessee Williams (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1947), and William Saroyan (*The Time of Your Life*, 1939). Saroyan's comment on *Godot* was, "It will make it easier for me and everyone else to write freely in the theatre." In the United States, in 1957, the San Francisco Actor's Workshop mounted a successful production of *Godot* at San Quentin Penitentiary. Critics have speculated that the prison audience of over 1400 convicts understood that the play is about waiting - we wait for

dinner, we wait for news, we wait for our ship to come in. There is some despair, and some hope. This is life. If today does not bring what we wanted, then perhaps tomorrow will.

Fifty years after its premier, *Waiting for Godot* is now a classic, translated into more than 20 languages, and its author a Nobel Prize winner in 1969. The play remains an open-ended parable that puzzles audiences. The author himself refused to provide explanation or correct interpretation. Instead, *Godot* questions our habits, our relationships, and our purpose here on earth, but it underlines the humanity of the inquiry itself.

– Susan Werner



Excerpts from
Berkeley Inside Out: Existence and Destiny in
Waiting for Godot

Normal Kroll, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English, Providence College
Journal of English and Germanic Philology, October 1995

Samuel Beckett bases his representation of existence and destiny in *Waiting for Godot* on his revision of Bishop Berkeley's theory of God as the cosmic imaginer. Berkeley, an eighteenth-century immaterialist philosopher and Anglican churchman, argued that "*esse est percipi aut percipere*" (to exist is to be perceived or to perceive), with God the all-perceiver. He uses perceiving, in God's case, as the term for the comprehensive category of mental activities – from imagining to remembering and conceiving – and, in humankind's case, for activities shifted to the sensory realm. As Berkeley believed, human beings can see (or hear or touch) the world and its inhabitants and thus assume that everything is composed of matter. But minds actually perceive only mental images, so that humans could not experience the world if it consisted of anything but clusters of images or ideas... Berkeley's God conceives, (then) observes (the images) as they combine, and interact in his mind... Berkeley believed that destiny is generated by a disinterested metaphysical Mind who impersonally maintains the universe as a whole by observing it.

In *Godot*, Beckett asks what if the cosmic observer should opt to pay only minimal attention to his creation. (...) Berkeley felt that the order and continuity of the creation ... attests to God's absolute power. Very differently, Beckett locates Vladimir and Estragon in a universe plagued by disjunctions, a universe which serves as evidence that God's detachment has become so extreme that he seems virtually powerless. His failure is underscored by his name, *Godot*, a joining of God and -ot, the reductive French ending typical of nicknames. (*Editors note: Compare the affectionate term used in France for Charlie Chaplin, "Charlot".*) Yet *Godot's* inadequacy, not Vladimir's and Estragon's, is the cause of their plight.(...)

Perhaps because the action in the world of *Godot* is mental, many critics conclude that "nothing happens, twice." Yet the play's two-act structure is linear (like Berkeleyan images of time and space), not cyclical. So, the play's acts are parallel but different, with Vladimir and Estragon's encounters with Pozzo and Lucky offering (views) on fortune from dissimilar perspectives. In Act I, their meeting highlights the metaphysics of the universe...In Act II, the confrontation underscores the effects of such a metaphysics on human fortune as Lucky unluckily "*falls, drops everything and brings down Pozzo with him. They lie helpless among the scattered baggage*". For their part, Vladimir and Estragon must find the strength to prop up fortune, but cannot sustain its operations beyond their field of sight: Lucky and Pozzo collapse once again as soon as they move offstage.

For humans, imagining, intuiting, remembering, and perceiving require interacting with others, which explains why the play seems self-reflexive. *Godot* becomes a play within a play within a play, as if its world were a music-hall stage on which Vladimir and Estragon act out their roles for the audience, for each other, and for *Godot*. But they are actors (and even playwrights), not just spectators. For example, having engaged in a mock separation, they decide to "make it up".(...) Their comically exaggerated embrace stems not from some sort of ambiguous sexual attraction but from a desperate need for life-sustaining perceptions. The hug supplements their visual perceptions of each other with tactile ones and strengthens their hold on existence. (...)Yet, as humans, they remain limited, unable to make their world sufficiently coherent or full. (...)

Seeking help with his task of sustaining the other, Vladimir turns to the Gospels, a traditional source of solace, but is not

consoled. He broods over the accounts of the two thieves crucified with Christ - "One of the thieves was saved. (*Pause.*) It's a reasonable percentage". (...) Vladimir's second try at finding the key to destiny in the scriptural story turns the accounts into a performance, as if only by observing can anyone, including the evangelists, see the truth of things: "And yet...(pause)...how is it - this is not boring you I hope - how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there - or thereabouts - and only one speaks of a thief being saved...One out of four. Of the other three two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him...Why believe him rather than the others?" Vladimir is obsessed with the truth of the witnesses' reports. Witness means existence: the thieves were real if observed by others, just as Vladimir remains real when Estragon watches and listens to him. (...)

In *Godot*, perceiving becomes problematical when regarded as a way to figure out life and death. Although Vladimir hopes that one of the two thieves was "saved, " he corrects Estragon's "From Hell?" with "Imbecile! From death". This last becomes a categorical term for the loss not only of life but also of sensation and existence on earth. Death is as complicated a condition as life. Thus Vladimir moves to escape the possibility of death by demanding that Estragon "Say something" to him, adding, in desperation, "Say anything at all!" They need each other as actor and audience: As Vladimir fathoms early in the play, "It's too much for one man."



Upcoming Events

Dept. of Theatre, Dance, and Film

The Murderers:
Agamemnon by Aeschylus
Electra by Sophocles
April 10 - 13

The Blackfriars Dance Concert
April 26-27

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for a contemporary adaptation of

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AGAMEMNON by Aeschylus &

ELECTRA by Sophocles

directed by John Garrity

Tuesday February 18 7:00 PM

Blackfriars Theatre

for more information, call John Garrity at 865-2219

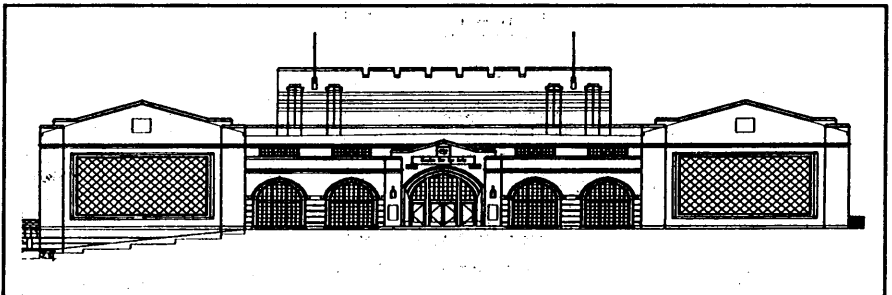
Providence College Plans New Center for the Arts

The performing arts are thriving at Providence College with steadily increasing student participation in Music, Theater, Dance, and Film programs and a new Music Education Degree Major. Currently, the spaces used for performance and practice rooms, classrooms, and related activities are scattered throughout the campus and are inadequate. To better accommodate this growing and important facet of the Providence College educational experience, the college has committed to build a major new campus facility...a Center for the Arts building. The proposed building will house the Department of Music and the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film and contain two 300-seat performance spaces, along with the full range of related teaching, rehearsal, and production facilities.

Dennis Keefe Associates of Boston, Massachusetts, the same architectural firm that designed the highly acclaimed St. Dominic Chapel, has been commissioned to design the building. Preliminary exterior and interior design plans have already been drafted and are under review by a special committee. The committee, which includes students, faculty, and staff is working with the architects to develop the final design for the 2.5 story, 54,400 square foot building.

The proposed site for the new building is the lower campus area along Eaton Street where outdoor tennis courts are now located. The main entrance of the center will open onto a new landscaped campus quad abutting Fennel Hall and Howley Hall. The back of the building will be parallel with Eaton Street. New parking areas will be clustered to maximize green space and incorporate existing trees. A total cost of \$17 million is anticipated for the project. Approximately \$4 million will come from the College's capital budget. The balance of the funding is being sought from individual, foundation, and corporate contributions and government grants. The groundbreaking and construction schedule will be dictated by the progress of assembling funding commitments for the project. It is hoped that work might begin before the end of 2003.

Fund-raising is already underway and commemorative opportunities are available. For more information contact Joseph Brum, Vice President for Alumni/Development at (401)865-2416.



Department of
Theatre, Dance, and Film
Faculty & Staff

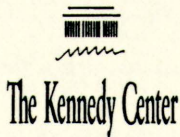
Kate Ambrosini.	Special Lecturer, Voice
Cheryl Barry	Department Secretary
David Costa-Cabral.	Associate Professor, Design
Mary G. Farrell.	Professor, Acting
John Garrity.	Associate Professor, Directing / Managing Director, Blackfriars Theatre
Fr. Kenneth Gumbert, O.P.	Assistant Professor, Film
George Marks.	Technical Director
Deborah Meunier.	Special Lecturer, Dance
Wendy Oliver.	Associate Professor, Dance / Chair, Dept. of Theatre, Dance, Film
Fr. Matthew Powell, O.P.	Associate Professor Theatre History and Literature
Kathleen Ridlon.	Special Lecturer, Dance
Sue Spencer.	Costume Shop Supervisor
Susan Werner	Blackfriars Theatre Secretary



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The Friars' Cell is the Student Operated Theatre of
Providence College



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XXXV

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KCACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KCACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KCACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2003.

Last year more than 1100 productions and 20,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to help college theater grow and to focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.