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Samuel Beckett

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presents

The Nottingham Playhouse Company

in

Waiting for Godot

by **Samuel Beckett**

directed by Frederick Monnoyer

settings by Patrick Robertson

costumes by Rosemary Vercoe

First performance at Nottingham Playhouse on 26 January 1971

Theatre Director **Stuart Burge**


Administrator and Licensee **George Rowbottom**

The Nottingham Theatre Trust gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Arnold, and West Bridgford Urban District Councils.

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Samuel Beckett on *Waiting For Godot*

I suppose he's called Lucky because he's lucky to have no more expectations.

I'm not interested in any system. I can't see any trace of system anywhere'

Nothing is more real than nothing.

Q. Is Pozzo Godot?

A. It's implied in the text - but it's not true.

No symbols where none intended.

If the subject of my plays could be discussed in philosophical terms, there would be no reason for me writing them. They are self-explanatory.

Q. Who is Godot?

A. If I knew I would have said so in the play.

Frederick Monnoyer was born in the West of Ireland and began his career in the theatre working as an Assistant Stage Manager and playing small parts with the Taibhdhearc (Irish-speaking theatre) in Galway City. He has played at the Abbey Theatre and at the Gaiety and Olympia Theatres in Dublin. He was the prime mover in the formation of the Bally Conrea Players in Galway, where he first began directing, and he has done much experimental theatre work in the North of England. As well as working in journalism, he has also written extensively for radio. He is married and at present lives in Kingstown, County Galway.

There will be a discussion on *Waiting For Godot* in the Balcony Bar at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, 30th January. Tickets 10p (2/-).



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Waiting For Godot

Estragon	Donal McCann
Vladimir	Peter O'Toole
Lucky	Frank Middlemass
Pozzo	Niall Toibin
A boy	Daniel Figgis

Act One

A country road A tree Evening

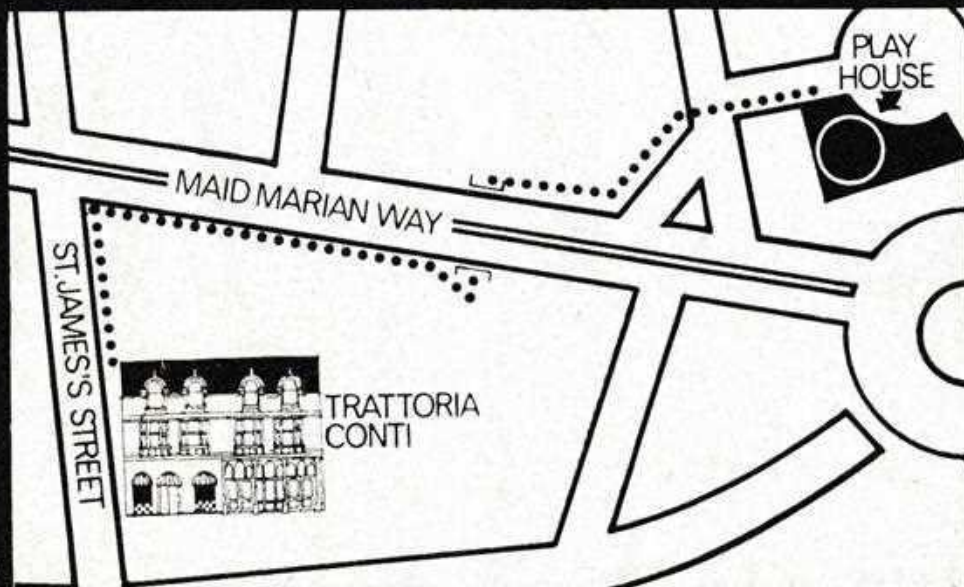
Act Two

Next day Same time Same place

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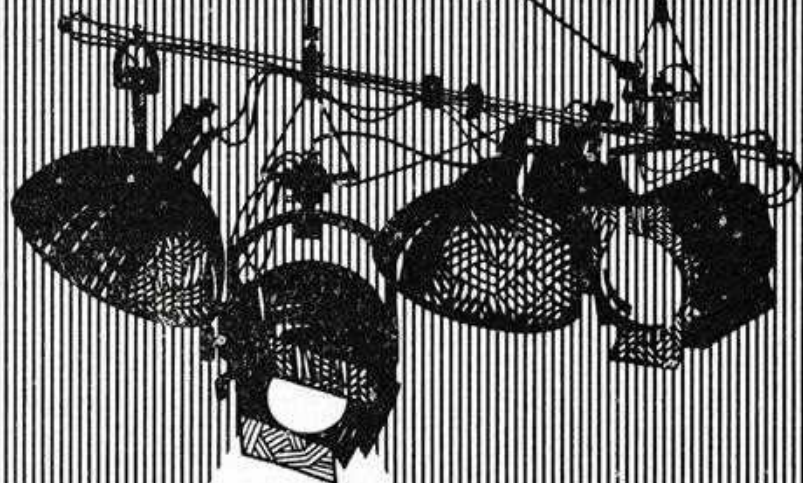
Peter Seamus O'Toole was born in Connemara, County Galway in 1932 and was living in Leeds when he got his first job, as an office boy for the Yorkshire Evening News, later becoming a reporter. After two years national service in the Navy, he won a scholarship to RADA and in 1955 he joined the Bristol Old Vic, where in three and a half years he played seventy-three roles ranging from Jimmy Porter to Hamlet and Baron Parsnip in *The Sleeping Beauty*. With this company he made his first London appearances, as Peter Shirley in *Major Barbara* in 1956, and the following year as Uncle Gustave in the musical, *Oh, My Papa*, at the Garrick. He was named Actor of the Year in 1959 for his performance in *The Long and The Short and The Tall*. At Stratford in 1960 he played Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*. In 1963 he played the title role in the world premiere of Brecht's *Baal* at the Phoenix Theatre and in October of the same year he played Hamlet in the National Theatre's inaugural production. He visited Nottingham in 1965 in David Mercer's *Ride A Cock Horse* which ran at the Piccadilly Theatre. His most recent stage appearances were in Dublin in 1969 in *Man and Superman* at the Gaiety and in *Waiting For Godot* at the Abbey.

After making his film debut in *Kidnapped* in 1959, followed by *The Day They Robbed the Bank of England*, he made the award-winning *Lawrence of Arabia* and then co-starred with Richard Burton in *Becket*. His subsequent films include *Lord Jim*, *What's New, Pussycat?*, *The Bible*, *How To Steal a Million*, *The Lion in Winter*, *Goodbye Mr. Chips* and *Murphy's War*.

Donal McCann studied at the Abbey School of Acting in Dublin. In 1967 he won the Best Actor Award for his performance in the title role of Shaw's *O'Flaherty, VC* at the Gaiety, Dublin. Later that year he appeared in *The Promise* at the Gate Theatre. He came to London with the Abbey Theatre Company in 1968 for the World Theatre Season at the Aldwych, playing Captain Molineux in *The Shaughraun*. In the same year he co-starred with Joan Greenwood at the Gate Theatre in the Dublin Festival production of Hugh Leonard's *The Au Pair Man*, which transferred to the Duchess Theatre. In 1969 he appeared with Peter O'Toole in *Waiting For Godot* in Dublin and last year played in Joe Orton's *Loot* at the Eblana Theatre. His films include *The Fighting Prince of Donegal*, *Sinful Davey* and he has just finished making *Philadelphia Here I Come* with Siobhan McKenna.

Frank Middlemass joined the Playhouse company in June 1968 to play Cokane in Michael Blakemore's production of *Widowers' Houses*, which visited the Edinburgh Festival and ran at the Royal Court. Last season his parts included Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, The Fool in *King Lear*, Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist* and Angelino in Christopher Fry's *A Yard of Sun*, subsequently visiting the National Theatre in the three latter productions. Earlier West End appearances include *Spitting Image* at the Duke of Yorks and *Little Boxes* at the Duchess. He was for some years with the Old Vic companies in London and Bristol and with them he toured extensively overseas. On Broadway he has played Polonius in *Hamlet*, Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet* and Pompey in *Measure For Measure*. He has recently been at Leeds Playhouse playing Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. His films include *Otley* and *Say Hello to Yesterday* with Jean Simmons.

Niall Toibin, a native of Cork and a former civil servant, worked for fourteen years with the Irish State Radio as actor, director, script-writer and television announcer before deciding to concentrate on the legitimate stage and television. In 1967 he created the role of Andy in Brian Friel's *Lovers* at the Gate Theatre in Dublin and after a successful run went straight into the Abbey Theatre production of *Borstal Boy*, Frank McMahon's adaptation of Brendan Behan's autobiography, in which he played the author. This broke all records in the seventy-year history of the theatre and subsequently toured Ireland. He repeated his performance in the Broadway production at the Lyceum Theatre last summer, when he won the Outer Critics' Circle Award for his performance. He is currently to be seen in David Lean's film *Ryan's Daughter*.



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Photographs by Allan Hurst

Programme Cover by Patrick Robertson

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Richard McDonnell

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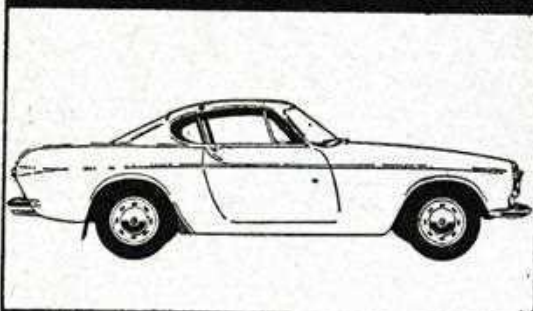
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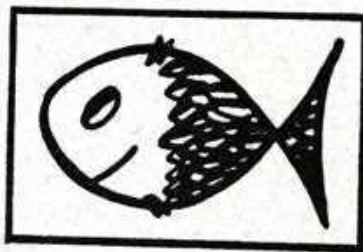
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CASA PUPO

Waiting For Godot

by Samuel Beckett
directed by Frederick Monnoyer

January 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 (eve)

February 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (eve)

The Rivals

by Richard Brinsley Sheridan
directed by Stuart Burge

Comic duels, planned elopements, mistaken identities and scheming servants all contrive to weave an enchanting tapestry of humour and fun in eighteenth century Bath. With Cherith Mellor as Lydia Languish, Constance Chapman as Mrs. Malaprop, Peter Whitbread as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Richard Wordsworth as Sir Anthony Absolute, Robert Swann as Captain Absolute, Christopher Bidmead as Faulkland, Barbara Ewing as Julia and Lois Baxter as Lucy.

February 10, 11, 12, 13 (mat & eve), 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 (mat & eve), 27 (mat & eve)

March 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 31

April 1, 3 (mat & eve)

The Birthday Party

by Harold Pinter
directed by Clive Donner

Stanley has escaped to the peace of a seaside boarding-house but his safety and his sanity continue to be menaced by mysterious persecutors. Pinter's first play, a comedy with overtones of horror. With Constance Chapman, Peter Whitbread, Richard Wordsworth, Alec Heggie, Lois Baxter and Wolfe Morris.

February 24, 25, 26

March 2, 3, 6 (mat & eve), 8, 12, 13 (mat & eve), 29, 30

April 2

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Tuesday 23 March

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Judgment day

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THERE IS something very remarkable about Frederick Monnoyer's production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* at the Nottingham Playhouse. What this is can be best suggested by saying that Peter O'Toole's Vladimir and Donal McCann's Estragon—but especially Peter O'Toole's Vladimir—are less tramps than judges: gentle judges, melancholy and resigned judges, but as inexorable as they are despairing.

I have not known this effect in any previous production. One feels it increasingly during the first act, and the first half of the second, and after Pozzo's harrowing cry of "They give birth astride of a grave" it becomes overwhelming. From that point onwards the production moves towards a tragic close that is as beautiful as it is terrible. The extraordinary quality of these last few minutes is that though they are totally unforgiving they have neither vain resistance nor futile anger. They are permeated by a spirit of grieved and hopeless acceptance. This is Mr Beckett's outlook upon life, and it is different from mine. But it gives a theatrical experience of unparalleled poignancy.

The first thing that one notices about Mr O'Toole's incomparable Vladimir is the eyes. They gaze sadly at immense distances out of a haunted and famished face. They are searching for unreachable horizons, and they are destined to see only cruelties, afflictions and sorrows. We have known from the beginning that Vladimir is not a man of action. What everybody remembers about the play is that Vladimir and Estragon never do anything: they just wait and wait for a Godot who never comes. But before this astonishing performance I had not realised the cardinal importance of the fact that Vladimir and Estragon are spectators. Vladimir has eyes; his eyes see; and what they see is Pozzo and Lucky. It is more significant that Pozzo and Lucky come than that Mr Godot does not: except that, in the most real and philosophic sense, in Mr Beckett's view, Godot comes with them. His hand is everywhere. It is by him that Pozzo is blinded, and Lucky rendered dumb.

Whether Godot is God or not is really beside the point in this production. In the last incredibly beautiful meeting between

Vladimir and the boy (played with heartrending innocence by Daniel Figgis) who looks after Mr Godot's goats, it is made perfectly clear that Godot is to be identified, even if he is not God, with what until comparatively recently most people, following Blake, thought to be God. When the boy says that Mr Godot has a beard, and that it is white, Vladimir shudders: his exclamation, "Christ have mercy on us," is one of horror and terror. In his own mind the identification has taken place, and the awful vision of this play, which Mr Beckett must have written in profound gloom, bitterness, and compassion, as well as inspiration, is that Christ will not have mercy on us.

For Vladimir has seen what has happened to Pozzo and Lucky, separated only irrelevantly by the distinction between master and servant, but united physically by the rope that binds them, and spiritually by the vindictiveness with which they are blasted. The two things that remain with one out of this production (which until it closes next Saturday makes Nottingham the theatrical capital of England) are Pozzo's anguished protest, which Niall Toibin makes memorable again as Peter Bull made it memorable in 1955; and the fact that whenever Mr O'Toole looks at Lucky or Pozzo, he is utterly (and indeed magnificently) appalled. The tremendous impact of this production is the very opposite of the words of Christ: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Mr O'Toole, Mr Monnoyer, Vladimir, Beckett, will never forgive Mr Godot, for he does know what he does.

Mr Beckett in his stern Protestant upbringing once had faith, and has since lost it. It is curious that the only other living dramatist who is capable, like Mr Beckett, of writing in prose that is comparable with the Church liturgies in their splendour should be Henri de Montherlant, who has always revered the ceremonies and grandeur of Christianity, but has never believed. This division in Montherlant's mind gives to his work a unique quality, revealed at its highest intensity in his "La Ville dont le prince est un enfant," which, it will be announced tomorrow, comes to Peter Daubeny's World Theatre Season at the Aldwych next March. Its production, by Jean Meyer, is one of the most striking that Mr Daubeny has brought to London; it has been running in Paris for several years. M. de Montherlant forty years ago visited an abbey which in the strictness of its discipline and the fulfilment of its duties was a model to all France. Its abbot was an unbeliever "one hundred per cent." An atheist priest was, says M. de Montherlant, "un sujet fait pour moi, qui sens le christianisme et qui n'ai pas la foi."

Montherlant has written twice of this man; in 1969 in a novel, "Les Garçons," and before that in the play that Mr Daubeny is bringing to London. Its third act is of an exaltation that makes it justly one of the most admired in French literature. It is a conversation between the priest and the Superior of the religious college in which he teaches, and in the background the audience hears the unearthly voice of a child singing the leit-motif of Qui Lazarum resuscitasti. It is fascinating to compare this in its spiritual effect with the famous lyrical antiphonies of the passage beginning "All the dead voices" in "Waiting for Godot," which are spoken in an exquisite reflective sorrow by Mr O'Toole and Mr McCann.