12-6-1962

Three by Ionesco

Follow this and additional works at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/playbills

Part of the Acting Commons, Dance Commons, Higher Education Commons, Playwriting Commons, and the Theatre History Commons

Recommended Citation

https://pillars.taylor.edu/playbills/276

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus Events at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Taylor Theatre Playbills by an authorized administrator of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact pillars@taylor.edu.
Trojan Players
Taylor University
THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH
and
THE TROJAN PLAYERS
of
Taylor University
Present
THREE BY IONESCO
The Lesson
and
The Chairs
by Eugene Ionesco
translated by Donald M. Allen

Shreiner Auditorium
December 6, 7, and 8, 1962, 8:15 p.m.
Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French Incorporated
ABOUT THE PLAYS

"A work of art is above all an adventure of the mind, an imaginary construct, the creation of a whole world introduced into our world. One does not wonder about the meaning or the use of a painting, a column, a symphony. And why? Well, if an answer is absolutely required, one could say that it is because the painting of a picture, the erection of a column, the composition of a symphony are exigencies of the mind. In the same way, a play must also be the expression of an unpremeditated creative act.

"One does not ask why a flower is a flower, nor why existence exists: it exists to exist. I once met a man who wanted to kill all pigeons because those creatures seemed to him utterly useless. Thus one can reach the point of wanting to exterminate the entire universe because the universe is useless as well. Or rather it is beyond usefulness and uselessness.

"What can the function of the theatre be in our time? The answer is simple. The function of the theatre is to be theatre; its aim is inherent in itself. If the theatre were anything other than theatre (a demonstration, the illustration of an ideology, an attempt at demagoguery, education or re-education, or something else) it would be a small thing indeed."

So wrote Eugene Ionesco in the September, 1961 issue of Theatre Arts. M.Ionesco's two plays The Lesson and The Chairs are just what he says—exigencies of the mind. They need no explanation, for they are. Of, and by themselves, they speak or they do not speak. However, like the Mios, the Ernst, and the Dalis exhibited on the first floor, these plays demand a new approach. If one has been surrounded by Rembrandts all his life—he is fortunate, but he is not ready for Picasso or Dali. One who has had a steady dramatic fare of Shakespeare, Moliere, and especially the "well-made" plays of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may be shocked by the "Theatre of the Absurd" and its exponents, Beckett, Albee, Genet, and Ionesco. Rembrandt deals somewhat more completely with the outer world, a world of reality perhaps, but one of facial features, gowns, hands, natural light and shadow; Shakespeare uses objective time, concrete spatial relationships, inter-personal
conflicts. These great artists have dealt with universal concepts, but from an Aristotelian or rational viewpoint. Yet the world of Hitler, Hiroshima, H-bombs, supersonic speeds, featuring proliferation of matter and atrophication of the soul seems a highly non-rational world to many sensitive, intelligent persons of the mid-twentieth century. To these people the universe is either almost totally existentialistic or else controlled by a fickle, impetuous god who decides by the flip of a coin to let the innocent and wicked people of Iceland live and the innocent and wicked people of Hiroshima die. Theirs is a world devoid of hope and reason, a world of nothingness in which man's highest attainment may be a kind of wry amusement at the absurdity of the human condition.

How far removed, you say, is all this from the Christian point of view! But how can the Christian approach the person with this viewpoint unless he understands its rationale, its validity? The writers of the Absurd are concerned less with social conditions than with the inner state of man, the hollowness, the materialism of modern life; less with external reality than with man's subconscious, his drives, his fantasies and illusions. Why, they say, must the theatre be only concerned with what man says when what he dreams may be as valid an indication of what he really is? No plot is offered, and character is not consistent but ever-changing; time, space, even truth are relative. Life itself is most characterized by evanescence—say, Solomon and Ionesco. The individual soul is an isolated entity, hopelessly separated from everyone else, in The Chairs by water.

The language has little meaning because language has little meaning. Ionesco seems to say, "if communication were possible, which I doubt, I'd like to show you how completely inane, trite, and maudlin our language is." Since we speak nonsense, he writes nonsense, but in the midst of endless nonsense there is momentary sanity, almost a clarity of meaning. Where that clarity is depends upon the individual viewer. Tom Driver, theatre critic for Christian Century, has called Ionesco's recipe for creating the "theatrical act," "two parts vaudeville, one part nihilistic bitterness, and one part humorous love of people.

So do not be too concerned with meanings, enter into an experience. The plays must always be concerned, not with a meaning, an idea, but with meanings, ideas. One may laugh, another may weep at the same line...we hope no one is bored. Perhaps The Lesson may speak to you of ruthless authority, the vacuity of modern education, the weakness or the power of words, the whimsey of God, the abstraction of tools, the significance of tables, or the makeup of clowns. You may view The Chairs and be made aware of the oversignificance of things, man's inability to communicate his own experience, the absence of people in most of our lives, the failure of life, the impact of the moon, the reality of the invisible, metaphysical emptiness, or the need of wastebaskets—we only provide a framework within which you experience...man's loneliness, frustration...his sense of humor. By next Tuwensday we hope you've added a fifth experience (or play) to the three which these to twonight have created.

A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER
by
Walt Whitman

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.
Cast for The Lesson

The Maid ............................. Gloria Griffin*
The Young Pupil ....................... Leanne Levchuk*
The Professor .......................... David Slater

SCENE
The apartment of a professor.

8 minute intermission

Cast for The Chairs

Old Woman ............................ Marcia Van Doren*
Old Man ............................... Jim Young*
The Orator ............................. Thomas Ringenberg*

SCENE
The top of a lighthouse.

A discussion based on the experiences of the plays will begin approximately five minutes after the final curtain. Coffee will be brought to those who remain.

We hope you will listen to the electronic music and view the surrealist art on the first floor before the plays and during the intermission.

If you attend the plays on Thursday or Friday evenings and wish to experience them again, you may return on Saturday night for twenty-five cents. Save your ticket stub and exchange it for another ticket at the door Saturday evening. Your ticket stub, however, is not transferable.

*Denotes Trojan Players Membership

Production Staff

Director ............................... Jim Young
Assistant Directors for The Lesson ............................. Virginia Doctor
Robert Finch*
Associate Director for The Chairs .............................. Gladys Greathouse
Assistant Directors for The Chairs .............................. Myra Bullock
Priscilla Burns

Stage ................................. David Winzenz
Lois Grimes, Carl Haaland, Barbara Inglis*, Dale Lantz,
Robert Larsen, Janette Lister*, Martha Niver*, Sandra
Phinney, Jill Schoemaker*, Wanda Whalen, Darlene
Yarian.

Stage Properties ..................... Loretta Young*
Toby Andrews, Konita Forbes, Grace Humphrey, Stanley
Spear, Joan Templin.

Hand Properties ...................... Bonnie McIntire
Beth Needles, Marge Olsson.

Costumes ............................. Barbara Davis
Arlene Terman.

Make-Up .............................. Beverly Pettersen
Janice Lowrey, Laura Pearson.

Publicity ............................. Dianne Skoglund*
Norma Hill, Molly Moffett, Lynne Osberg, Jeannine
Terhune.

Box Office ............................. Dianne Skoglund*
David Dickey*, Judith Liechty, Bonnie McIntire,
Lawrence Uhrich.

Lights ................................. Sterling Davis*
David Copham, Harry Haakonsen, Coreen McCoy,
David Ring.

House ................................. Katherine McAndrews*
Elaine Springer*, Karen Whiteman*.

* Denotes Trojan Players Membership