

THE HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH DRAMATIST'S PLAY SERVICE, INC. PRESENTS

SAMUEL BECKETT'S



WAITING

FOR



GODOT

MARCH 26-27 & APRIL 2-3, 2004 • 8 PM • WINSTON HALL • HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It is now 50 years since Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* took to the stage and shocked the theatre-going world. Since that time, what once was inconceivable has become common. The debt owed to Beckett and *Godot* can be seen in innumerable plays and has crossed media into film with direct links to movies like *Waiting for Guffman* and in television to a variety of shows, most notably *Seinfeld*, where particularly nothing happened. But, is what once was so revolutionarily funny and sad about this tragicomedy still capable of having such a strong impact on contemporary audiences? The challenge has been to re-discover the meaning of Beckett's text in terms that are significant to our times. The process for the performers has been one of exploration into a means of inhabiting the text as fully as possible, of giving life to the ideas of the play. Our rehearsal work has combined acting skills with a brief course of training in the Alexander Technique, a psycho-physical approach to learning which is a basic tool of contemporary actors, in order to give the performers a common language to navigate their ways through Beckett's play. What appears to be the case is that Beckett's world and ours have not changed so much in the past 50 years. Despite what might be termed as "Absurdist," the questions of life, of the meaning of existence itself, still remain, and asking them makes utter "sense." We are excited to share with you in our process of exploring these fundamental concerns.

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—Matt Dubroff

THE PLAY

Matthew R. Dubroff Director
Brad Stoller ... Set Design, Light Design, Technical Director
Todd Nolley Poster & Program Art

ACT 1

A country road. A tree.
Evening

INTERMISSION (10 minutes)

ACT 2

Next day. Same time.
Same place.

CAST

Estragon James Jordan
Vladimir Matthew Todd Elswick
Lucky Kevin Dunn
Pozzo Nicholas D. Beazley
A Boy Justin Shear

PRODUCTION STAFF

James R. Billings Stage Manager
Evan Nasteff Assistant Stage Manager
Thomas Robbins Assistant Stage Manager

CAST

JAMES JORDAN (ESTRAGON)

Enjoy the play? Good! There's no doubt that you have questions, though. Who is Godot? Does he ever show up? What's up with the guys with the rope? Is the play about religion? All of them are undoubtedly deep and insightful questions that I haven't been hearing for the last four months, so forgive me if I get a little snippy when you come up to me and ask them. That being said, I've prepared a model of the conversation that will eventually ensue when we meet. After all, time is money—and frankly I don't have much of either—so let's try to save it.



Audience Member X: So James, great job on the play. I really enjoyed your performance. But I have a few questions about the play.

James: Well, I'll do my best to answer them, but keep in mind I'm just an actor...a pretty face for the stage. I don't really know much of anything.

Audience Member X: (Chuckle, chuckle) Fair enough, James. So about the play...

James: Not to be rude, sir/ma'am, but I don't think you heard me. I don't know anything about the play. I barely know my lines, BARELY!! If you want some in-depth analysis of the play, ask the director. I think his name is Dubro or something...didn't you read the program?

MATTHEW TODD ELSWICK (VLADIMIR)

This is a report of the activities of prisoner number 974231. His real name is Todd Elswick, but he currently goes by the alias of Vladimir. His spree of accosting audiences started humbly but soon escalated into something unspeakable. Most notably, his crimes include *1776*, *Glengary Glen Ross*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, and *Rocky Horror*. His crime list grew exponentially when he worked on *Suppressed Desires*, *Volpone*, and *Greater Tuna*. For his crimes against humanity, the prisoner is finishing up a four-year stay at Hampden-Sydney College, where he studies Latin and Fine Arts and is active in the Pep Band, Eta Sigma Phi, and Alpha Psi Omega. After he finishes his stay, the prisoner shall get a chance for parole, but will likely spend many more years in a similar institution. The prisoner's one phone call was spent thanking people for helping him get where he is today. The call was directed to his family, friends, and all those other people. This concludes the activity report on prisoner number 974231.



KEVIN DUNN (LUCKY)

After waiting a lifetime for a role such as this, Kevin Dunn feels Lucky to have landed it. A simple professor of chemistry, Kevin has appeared in such Hampden-Sydney productions as *Dracula*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Comedy of Errors*, and, most recently, *Volpone*, in which he so ably portrayed the miserly Corbaccio that the audience was heard to cry, "Let him croak again, let him croak again," while, at the same time, developing an irrational hunger for popcorn, that ancient grain, gift of some Mayan prince who, with those of like persuasion, were in times of old known to doze languidly from time to time in the shade of trees which, in another time would come to be called "mimosa," voted "number one non-edible bean-producing plant,"



by the South and Central American Association of Tree and Shrubologists, in spite of the fact that Dunn has declined membership for reasons unknown after having been nominated from time to time by those who feel that his dubious talents have been wasted on those enterprises to which he has so far applied himself, namely, the pursuit of chemistry and chemical arts unrelated to acting or dramatic efforts in general which might, in another time or place, have brought fame and/or fortune to one whose talent and/or talent-related qualities might have been used to better effect.

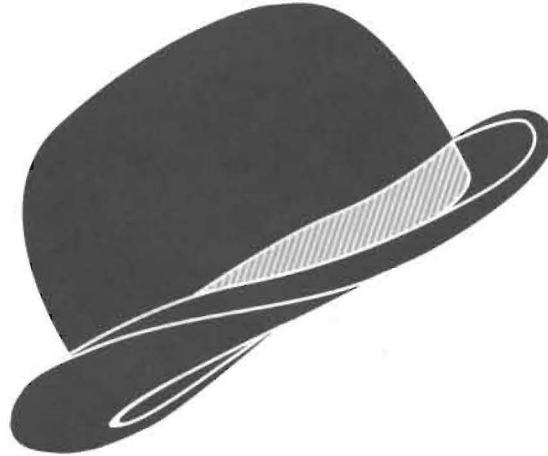
NICHOLAS D. BEAZLEY (POZZO)

Tonight's performance of Pozzo marks Nicholas' triumphant return to the American stage after he informally retired from acting following his critically acclaimed performance in the 2001 Edinburgh International Fringe Festival. Despite his retirement from acting, Nicholas has remained very involved in the American theatre movement that has electrified communities across the nation. During his time away from acting, Nicholas has had the privilege of working, and directing, with what he calls "Democrats," and Nicholas reports that the experience has been "surprisingly enlightening," and made for "wonderful conversation and theatre." Nicholas is thrilled that Winston Hall is once again housing live theatre and that his return to the stage has been under the same director that Nicholas retired under, Matthew Dubroff. Most recent of Nicholas' theatrical accomplishments was his co-directing of Richard O'Brien's *The Rocky Horror Show* with Alex Reczkowski in the spring of 2003.



JUSTIN SHEAR (BOY)

Justin Shear was spawned in an undisclosed laboratory somewhere in southeast Turkey. However, as an infant, he managed to escape, charter a private jet, and retreat to the rolling green fields of Virginia, where he was raised by a dysfunctional family of sheep. After the sheep were all killed in a terrible lawn mower accident, Justin traveled to Hampden-Sydney, where he became a carnival freak. His ambitions are to live forever and to acquire a device that is both lead pencil AND ink pen.



PRODUCTION STAFF

JAMES R. BILLINGS (STAGE MANAGER)

James (J.B.) has taken on the Herculean Laboresque (well, not really!) task of Stage Managing. Hailing from Newport News, VA, he attributes his penchant for learning about the Human Soul to having lived for 5 years in Seoul, South Korea (got to love those puns!) He would like to thank Matt, the cast, and the technical crew for making the play an amusing and enlightening experience. Here's to you, Boricua!



MATTHEW R. DUBROFF (DIRECTOR)

Matthew R. Dubroff is a Professor of Theatre at Hampden-Sydney College where he has been involved with productions since 1997. Dubroff's training has taken him from Massachusetts to Japan to Hawaii, where he earned his Master of Fine Arts Degree in Asian Theatre. Dubroff is a founding member of Theatre Nohgaku, a company dedicated to performing Noh-inspired works in English. This past fall Dubroff performed at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival in a self-conceived piece titled *Noh Blood for Oil*. He is also a teacher of Wu Style Tai Ji and the Alexander Technique. This summer he looks forward to performing in the Noh Training Project/Theatre Nohgaku ten-year anniversary production of *Kurozuka* in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. He would like to thank all the helpful colleagues, students, and community members who make this exciting process come to life.



EVAN NASTEFF (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER)

Evan hails from Richmond, Virginia and acted throughout high school with major roles in *The Crucible*, *Oedipus the King*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and others. When asked about his plans for after H-SC he gets a terrified look on face, runs to a corner and cries. He would like to thank Professor Dubroff, my dad, Emily, and *Combos Snacks*



THOMAS D. ROBBINS (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER)

Thom is a double major in political science and Spanish from Rockingham, North Carolina. He is actively involved with 'Good Men, Good Citizens' Community Service Organization and is serving as Chairman of the Student Museum Board. *Waiting for Godot* is the first theatrical production Thom has helped to produce. He would like to thank Professor Matt Dubroff and the cast for such an exciting experience. After he graduates in May, Thom plans to pursue a Ph.D. in political science.



BRAD STOLLER (SET DESIGN, LIGHT DESIGN, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR)

Brad Stoller has an MFA in drama from UVA. He is a published playwright and won the ACTF one act play competition for his play *A Tempting Fate* in 2000. His hometown is Los Angeles (perhaps he knows a friend or relative of yours that lives there!) He is currently co-director of Presence, a theatrical consulting firm that is using theatre for social and individual change in institutions and communities. He is a certified Alexander Technique teacher and helps train other teachers in Charlottesville, VA.



SIGNIFICANT DATES IN HAMPDEN-SYDNEY THEATER

Excerpts from the book, *Hampden-Sydney Stage*, by Hassell A. Simpson

1798 First particular play known to have been performed here: Charles Macklin's farce *Love à la Mode*, along with another, unidentified show. These and earlier plays are put on by literary-debating societies.

1821 Performance of the first play known to have been written by a Hampden-Sydney student: *The Broken Merchant*, a tragedy by Daniel A. Penick, class of 1821. It begins with a prologue in verse, written and spoken by Isaac Cochran 1822. Penick and Cochran are two of the four actors.

1891 Construction completed on Memorial Hall, later called McIlwaine Hall. Its first-floor chapel will house occasional theatrical performances for some forty years.

1894 April 19, the first known Hampden-Sydney play to be performed off campus: a farce called *A Sporting Career*, in Farmville, combined with a Glee Club musical program.

1902 December, a "Young Ladies' Dramatic Club" presents the only known all-woman show to be performed publicly at H-SC, *The Man in the Case*. Delia Brock, daughter of Professor H. C. Brock, is in the cast; later, Miss Brock is the longtime College nurse.

1903 February 21, *Charley's Aunt* is the first play known to have been performed in "the Seminary chapel," now called Parents and Friends Lounge of Venable Hall. (Union Theological Seminary has moved to Richmond and its former buildings now belong to the College.) Edgar G. Gammon 1905 is in the cast; afterward he is pastor of College Church, later president of Hampden-Sydney College.

1923-24 Professor of French Herman Bell becomes the first sponsor-coach of "The Jongleurs" (new name of the Dramatic Club), producing a comedy, *Never Touched Me*, on the Farmville stage of the State Female Normal School (forerunner of Longwood) because H-SC still has no proper stage or theater. Men continue playing female roles.

1926 Robert Porterfield '28 leaves College in 1926 to become first H-SC man to find a professional theater career, in New York.

1932 Alpha Psi Omega, dramatics honorary chapter (Delta Delta cast), is installed at Hampden-Sydney.

1950-51 Collaborative play production resumes in the small auditorium at Longwood (following a fire and three semesters with no plays), with Alec Finlayson (a former H-SC actor who worked under Professor Leola Wheeler and now succeeds her for a year) directing fall and spring plays, *The Madwoman of Chaillet* and *As You Desire Me*.

1951 Frank S. Johns Auditorium is completed at H-SC; Jarman Hall is completed at Longwood. H-SC actors will perform on these stages for half a century or more.

1964-1965 SUMMERS: The only summer-stock plays ever performed by H-SC and Longwood students and alumni together are produced in Drakes Branch, Virginia, by their "Southern Actors Guild," organized for that purpose.

1971-1975 The only plays produced, directed, and acted by faculty and staff are staged in Johns, one play per year, under the name of Hampden-Sydney Faculty Players. Some College students also perform.

1975+ The Jongleurs engage a professional director, Dudley Sauv e of Farmville, to design and direct a campus production in each of several years, beginning with *A Hatful of Rain*, 1975.

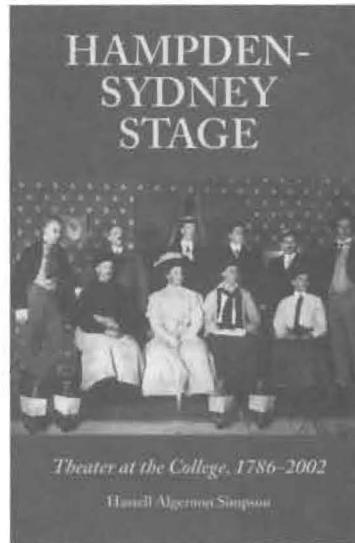
1978 First person appointed in theater at H-SC, David Addington, directs a play, as "visiting distinguished professor," fall semester; and first person regularly appointed in the arts, Cardon Burnham, in theater and music, who holds the post three years, 1978-1981.

1990 March 29-31. The only musical written by a H-SC student (Jared Mauney '90) is performed in Johns: *Three Guys Naked from the Waist Down*, directed by Professor Mel Michel, sabbatical replacement for Dr. Stephen Coy.

1991-92 December and April, Brian Lampert '92 produces, directs, and acts in *The Comedy of Errors* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the first full-length, student-run shows at H-SC since *Parting Shots*, 1979-83.

1996 February and March, Professor David Kaye presents "An American Dream Theatre Festival" in Johns, with two plays presented by H-SC, one by Longwood, one nonacademic play, and two by Randolph-Macon College. Pulitzer-winning playwright Edward Albee speaks in Johns. November 19-23, first full-length local production to be performed in Crawley Forum, Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*, is directed by Professor Frederic Berg. In the role of Falstaff is the first professional actor ever to appear in a Hampden-Sydney production, Jim Hilgartner of Richmond.

1999, 2001 Two Hampden-Sydney shows, performed here in the springs, are taken in the summers to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland: Professor James Schiffer's "Sonnet Variations" in 1999, and Professor Matthew Dubroff's "Communication Breakdown" in 2001, with mixed casts of men and women, faculty and students.



Hampden-Sydney Stage: Theater at the College, 1786-2002
by Hassell Algernon Simpson

For over two hundred years the theatrical tradition at Hampden-Sydney, one of the oldest in the country, has played an important part in the story of the College and in the development of hundreds of her students. Simpson's volume, which traces the evolution of this tradition from its humble beginnings to its current stature, offers the first comprehensive history of the stage at Hampden-Sydney.

A thorough chronology is coupled with absorbing narrative details about individual plays and players—several of them now professional actors—to offer revelations not only about Hampden-Sydney theater but also about the broader history of the College, the community that surrounds it, and the significance of the arts in a liberal education. The book features in-depth notes and a range of photos as well as an appendix of original local play-production posters. Simpson is Professor Emeritus of English at Hampden-Sydney College.

Available from the Hampden-Sydney College Bookstore
(434) 223-6117, www.hsc.edu/bookstore