

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania's
Department of Speech Communication & Theatre
Presents

the

BARD SOPRANO

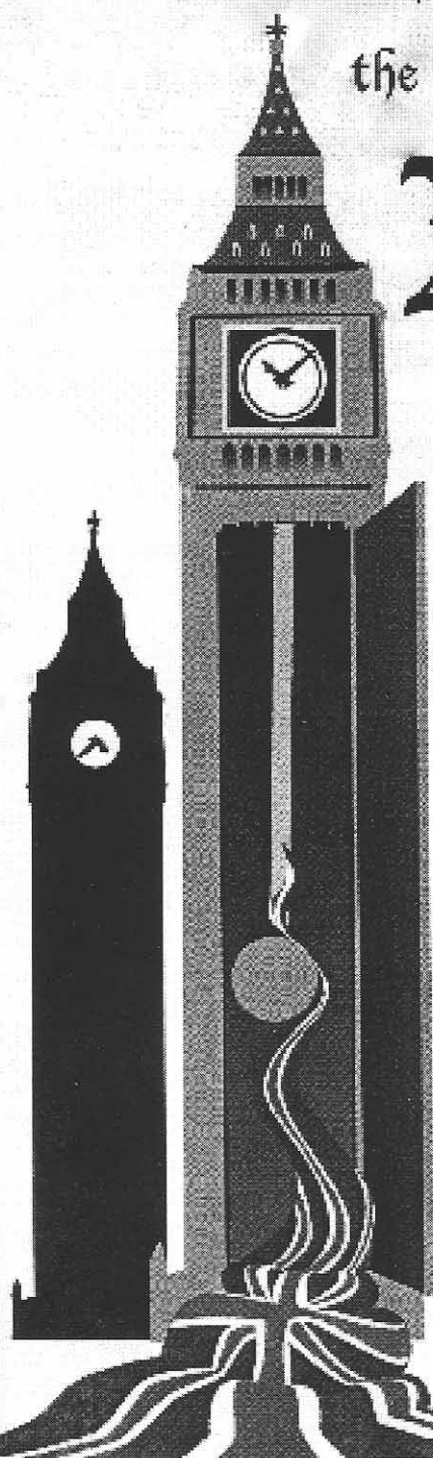
by
Eugene Ionesco

Kickenbach Theatre

Tuesday-Saturday
February 17-21 at 8pm

&

Sunday
February 22nd at 2pm



Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Department of Speech Communication and Theatre

Bly, Bill
Bock, Mary
Brandenberger, Emily
Brown, James N.
Campbell, Joyce
Catanach, Catherine
Chapman, Charles
Corby, Russell J.
Danielson, Dr. Kenneth
Davidheiser, Austin
Flynn, Mark
Forte, Johanna
Gilbert, Paul
Grapsy, Dr. Ronald
Ironside, Tiffany
Jafri, Dr. Amir
Jensen, Diane
Johnson, Dr. Deryl
Lambkin, David
McNiff, James
Mitnick, Dr. Andrea
Netting, Dr. Leslie
Noh, Suen
Pfeiffer, David
Rix, Roxane
Royse, Pamela
Sergel, Karin
Shaton, Theresa
Smith, Robert
Steber, Dr. John
VanEns, Dr. Claire

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Presents

The Bald Soprano

by Eugene Ionesco

Director

David Pfeiffer

Scenic and Lighting Design

Kerrie Lovercheck

Costume Design

Kate Garlick

Technical Director

Austin Davidheiser

Stage Manager

Eva Marie Wasko

Dramaturg

Bill Bly

Assistant Director

Angelo Franco

Poster and Cover design by David Quay

Photographs and recording devices are prohibited during the performance.
Please turn off cell phones and all other electronic devices
while inside the theatre.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

THE BALD SOPRANO

Cast

Mrs. Smith.....	Adrienne Wrona
Mr. Smith.....	Jon Erkert
The Maid.....	Angela Cutrone
Mrs. Martin.....	Emily Ray
Mr. Martin.....	Peter Philips
The Fire Chief.....	David Krater
<i>Understudy for Mr. Martin.....</i>	<i>Kirby Sybert</i>

Extras:

Gina D'Annibale

Kate Diem

Shanna Joseph

Abraham Kue

Sean O'Brien

Tyler Schnabel

Kirby Sybert

The action of the play takes place in London, England

There will be no intermission during this production.

Director's Notes

The Bald Soprano is a classic example of absurdist drama. The play came out of Ionesco's attempts to learn English from a book. He began to read the English primer as if it were a traditional narrative and, by decontextualising the narrative in this way, began to see the absurd possibilities in literature. He began to imagine the sentences not as exercises in learning English, but as revealing simple truths about life that people had so completely taken for granted they had almost disappeared. For the purpose of education, the textbook introduced named characters into the narrative, characters who reciting inane facts about themselves to one another. As a result of reading this narrative out of context, Ionesco began to imagine a world of people relating to one another only on this superficial and surreal level. For Ionesco, the simple truths revealed in the textbook "disintegrated into wild caricature and parody" and in the end caused language itself to "disintegrate into disjointed fragments of words." Ionesco translated this absurd experience into *The Bald Soprano*, a play that rejects traditional forms of narrative, plot, and structure and explores the modern human experience through the fragmentation of language.

Most of his famous plays were written over the next 15 years - pieces that mixed outrageous comedy with a dark and ultimately sinister world view. These combined elliptical dialogue with hidden dread, delighting in wordplay but dreading the results. It's a symbiosis that has informed British authors as varied as Harold Pinter and Caryl Churchill, Americans such as Edward Albee and even Canadians such as John Mughton. And, of course, the metaphysical chess games of Samuel Beckett, the Irishman who wrote in French, share much in common with Ionesco, the Romanian who wrote in French. Ionesco's later full-length works like *Rhinoceros* and *Exit The King* went on to indict the contemporary world as a graveyard of ideals, with his *Hunger And Thirst* causing a riot at its opening night performance at the Comedie Francaise in 1966. At the time, Ionesco was accused of writing subversive works that were coded attacks on the French government, but he defended himself, saying "It's not a certain society that seems ridiculous to me, its mankind."

Please sit back and stay calm! I do hope you enjoy all of our work on this production of *The Bald Soprano*.

Acknowledgements

The Director, cast, and production staff gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their guidance and assistance:

Jason Fazio
Aaron Phillips
James Robinson
Michael Smith
David Quay

Dramaturg's Notes

By Bill Bly

Two incidents mark the development of Eugène Ionesco as an author and thinker. The first took place during his childhood in France, an experience he claimed altered his perception of the world irrevocably. On a brilliantly sunny summer day, he was walking in a white-washed provincial village, when he suddenly felt enveloped by an intense luminosity which lifted him off the ground and suffused him with an overwhelming feeling of well-being. When he at last floated back to the ground, the light left him, and he found himself once again surrounded by the “real” world, full of decay, corruption, and meaningless repetitive action, at the same time realizing that death takes everyone and everything in the end. His subsequent distrust of reality — and especially of realism — is everywhere expressed in his later work.

The second incident led to the writing of his first play, *The Bald Soprano*. At the age of forty, Ionesco decided to teach himself English, and enrolled in the Assimil method, whose first book was *Anglais Sans Peine* (*English Without Pain*). This method focused on learning whole sentences, many presented in the form of simple dialogs, which Ionesco copied out verbatim in order to memorize them. Whilst immersed in this often tedious procedure, he had another epiphany: he felt that it was not so much English he was learning, but rather astounding truths such as the fact that there are seven days in a week, that the ceiling is up and the floor is down. And he began to wonder what an entire play made up of such dialogues would look like. *The Bald Soprano* is the answer.

Eugène Ionesco was born in Romania a century ago this year (on November 13 or 26, 1909), but moved to France the next year, where he stayed until 1925, when his parents divorced and he returned to Romania with his father. There he stayed until 1938, when he came back to France with his wife and daughter, settling in Marseilles, where they lived until France was liberated from the Nazis in 1944, and the family moved to Paris. It was there that *The Bald Soprano* had its not very auspicious premiere in 1950 under the direction of Nicolas Bataille; only after it was championed by established authors and critics such as Jean Anouilh and Raymond Queneau did the play receive the recognition it was due, and began its sold-out run of over fifty years (and counting) at the Théâtre de la Huchette.

Ionesco went on to write *The Lesson*, *The Chairs*, *Rhinoceros*, and *Exit the King*, plays that helped to establish the canon of what came to be called Theatre of the Absurd, along with the works of Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, and the early plays of Harold Pinter. The term was coined by Hungarian scholar and critic Martin Esslin and used as the title of his 1961 book on the subject, and based on the philosophy of Albert Camus, which asserts that life is without meaning. Esslin wrote: "The theatre of the absurd strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought."

Ionesco himself explained his "mission" differently: "Sometimes it seems to me that I started writing for the theatre because I hated it," he explains in *Notes and Counter-Notes*. "[E]verything about the theatre exasperated me. When I saw actors, for example, identifying themselves completely with their parts and weeping real tears on the stage, I found it unbearable, positively indecent."

But he'd loved the Punch and Judy puppet shows in the Luxembourg Gardens when he was a child — his mother couldn't drag him away. Punch is most often portrayed as "a deformed, child-murdering, wife-beating psychopath who commits appalling acts of violence and cruelty upon all those around him and escapes with impunity." (Wikipedia.) Now THERE was a theatre Ionesco could believe in. "It was the very image of the world that appeared to me, strange and improbable but true as true, in the profoundly simplified form of caricature, as though to stress the grotesque and brutal nature of truth."

Such a theatre didn't hide from the unendurable nature of life. "We need to be virtually bludgeoned into detachment from our daily lives, our habits and mental laziness, which conceal from us the strangeness of the world," Ionesco writes, perhaps thinking of the two revelations mentioned above. "The unendurable admits of no solution, and only the unendurable is profoundly tragic, profoundly comic, and essentially theatrical."

Who's Who in the Cast

Angela Cutrone (The Maid) - is a freshman theatre major at Kutztown University. She is very excited to be working on *Bald Soprano*. If you are an Angela career follower you may have seen her in the high school productions of *Fences* (Rose) *The Women* (Miriam Aarons) and *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (Lucy).

Jonathan Erkert (Mr. Smith) - is a junior making his Mainstage debut. He is a transfer student from Bucks County Community College and enjoying his second semester here at KU.

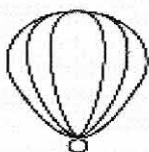
David Krater (Fire Chief) - is a sophomore theater major here at Kutztown, and is excited to be back on the main stage. He was also seen in last semester's production of *JB* as 1st Soldier and 1st Policeman, as well as the Sunshine Players' production of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* in which he played all of the adult male roles. He is a member of Spotlight Players, and is also a member of Alpha Psi Omega, the national honors theatre fraternity. David looks forward to many more experiences here with the Kutztown Theater Department and his friends, whatever those experiences may be.

Peter Phillips (Mr. Martin) - is a 5th year theatre major and enjoying his eighth role on the KU Mainstage. His last role was in *Little Shop of Horrors* last spring as the Plant Puppeteer for Audrey II. Peter was in the ensemble for the musical *Lucky Stiff* that went on to present at The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Region II Festival in 2006. He is also a scene shop assistant where he has built sets and worked on lights for each show for the past four years.

Emily Ray (Mrs. Martin) - is currently a sophomore at Kutztown University. She was recently seen in the fall production of *JB* and last year was in both productions of Sunshine Players. She spent her summer working with Montgomery County (Rockville Campus) Summer Dinner Theatre Program. She is thrilled to be returning to the KU stage this semester.

Kirby Sybert (Understudy) - is a freshman theater major at KU and is very excited about *The Bald Soprano*, this is Kirby's first main stage at Kutztown. Kirby was the Mad Hatter in the Sunshine Player's performance of *Alice in Wonderland* in the fall. Kirby also likes to play guitar and edit films.

Adrienne Wrona (Mrs. Smith) - is a senior theatre major. She has been on various crews for several KU Mainstage shows. Adrienne was Assistant Stage Manager of *Little Shop of Horrors* in spring '08 and was Stage Manager of last semester's production of *The Glass Menagerie*. She is on the stage management team for this semester's production of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, opening in April. She has also done stage management and make-up design for Kutztown University's Sunshine Players and is currently the group's Vice President. In fall '06 she co-directed a children's show at the Kutztown Middle School. Adrienne is President of the Rho Upsilon cast of Alpha Psi Omega, the National Honorary Fraternity in Theatre.



Photos Of This Production

available at

www.KUPictures.com

Artistic and Production Staff

Professor David Pfeiffer (Director) - is in his second year as a faculty member here at Kutztown University. In January he presented a session on musical theatre performance for the regional KCACTF festival. He also was a preliminary respondent for the Irene Ryan Scholarship auditions. Last semester he directed *JB*. Last year, he directed and choreographed *Little Shop of Horrors*. He comes here with an extensive professional and academic background. David was on the directing staff of New York City Opera at Lincoln Center for ten years, where he directed productions of *Medea*, *Carmen*, *Mikado*, and *The Pearl Fishers* among others. He has directed at over 50 companies throughout North America, Europe and Japan. The companies include The Ashlawn-Highland Festival, Indianapolis, Michigan, Montreal, Philadelphia, Sacramento and Memphis Opera. He has taught or done residencies at The University of Southern California, Carnegie-Mellon, Indiana University, and LSU among others. David worked as an actor and singer on Off-Off Broadway, Daytime TV, independent films and various festivals, including the Spoleto Festival, as well as with many symphonies, opera companies and regional theatres.

Kerrie Lovercheck (Set and Lighting Design) - graduated from Ohio University with an MFA in set, lighting, and costume design. She designs in the New York City area, and has been nominated for New York Innovative Theatre Award for best lighting design for *Mill Fire* in 2008.

Katherine Garlick (Costume Designer) - is pleased to join in the design process at Kutztown University again for *The Bald Soprano*. Katherine joined KU Theatre last fall as the costume studio manager, and designed for the department's production of *The Glass Menagerie*. A Pennsylvania native, she matriculated at IUP, where her design for *Zastrozzi: The Master of Discipline* was awarded as a Barbizon Award finalist. She continued her education at Indiana University, earning her MFA in Costume Design. Some of her favorite shows there include productions of *Arcadia*, *The Crucible*, and *Twelfth Night*. Katherine has also designed for The Brown County Playhouse, the Bloomington Early Music Festival, and numerous independent projects. Her combined portfolio earned her recognition as an honoree of USITT's 2007 Young Designer's Forum. Most recently, Katherine worked in Columbus, Ohio, at the Contemporary American Theatre Company. She served as assistant designer for their production of *Crowns*, and as the costume fellow for their 07-08 season. While in Ohio, she also co-designed the Ohio State University's production of *The Magic Flute*.

Bill Bly (Dramaturg) - returns to KU theatre faculty after a stint as US editor for the online journal Arts Hub, which originated in Australia. He received an MFA in Playwriting from Carnegie-Mellon University, and taught dramatic literature and theatre history for nearly twenty years at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. During this time he served as Artistic Director for Harbor Repertory Theatre, the Director of Writing Programs at Wagner College, a Y2K warrior, and founding member of the Hypertext Writers Workshop. His play *Jonas* won the Stanley Drama Award as well as fellowships to the Shenandoah Valley Playwrights Retreat and the Empire State Institute of the Performing Arts. He also earned writing residencies at the Ploughshares International Fiction Seminar and the Vermont Studio Center. He is the author of the hypertext novel *We Descend* (Eastgate) and his writings have appeared in such diverse publications as *TDR*, *Daskalia*, *TEKKA*, and *Yahoo! Internet Life*. Bill shared the 2002 John Cullin Award for Outstanding Praxis in the Field of Media Ecology with fellow hypertext author John McDaid for their CD *Media Ecology Unplugged*.

Austin Davidheiser (Technical Director) - has been a production manager, technical director, and master electrician, as well as a freelance designer and technician, for various theaters, events companies, and colleges in the Philadelphia area. In the summers, he is the Technical Director/Production Manager for the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts, an intensive interdisciplinary arts program for gifted high school students. His recent design credits include *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Italian American Reconciliation*, *Lucky Stiff*, *R. U. R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, and *The Children's Hour* at KU, as well as *Laundry and Bourbon/Lone Star* at Camden County College, *Disengaged* at Ohio University, and *Pipeline* [sets] for the PGSA Dance Concert.

Cheryl Schreib (Sound Designer) - Cheryl is a senior theatre major. This is Cheryl's fifth show at Kutztown, she previously did sound designs for *Anatomy of Gray* and *Little Shop of Horrors*; worked costumes for *Hay Fever*; and did makeup for *JB*. She also designed sound for *Polish Joke* and *Collected Stories* at Northampton Community College. Her next sound design can be heard in April for *As You Like It*.

Eva Marie Wasko (Stage Manager) - is thrilled to be a part of this production, and to be filling a role she never has before. Eva was last seen on the KU main stage as Jackie Coryton in *Hay Fever*, and understudied the role of Laura in last semester's *The Glass Menagerie*. She has also performed the title role in the Sunshine Players' production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Off stage, Eva serves as the Public Relations officer for the Spotlight Players, and is a proud member of Alpha Psi Omega. She is currently a sophomore theatre major, and is dual-minoring in Public Relations and Speech Communication. Thanks to everyone involved for such a rewarding experience!

Angelo Franco (Assistant Director) - is pleased to be part of the team that made this show a reality! He has previously worked on several positions in the technical field of theatre, but his particular interest in directing, writing, and other artistic aspects has made this experience a truly enjoyable one for him. He wishes to thank his co-workers for coping with his eccentricities, the stage management team for making everything easier, and the three Englishmen that so kindly agreed to spend some time in our theatre. Angelo also wishes to extend his gratitude to Prof. David Pfeiffer for giving him this opportunity.

Ginny Lawler (Assistant Stage Manager) - is a freshman here at KU. She is more than thrilled to be working on "*The Bald Soprano*" in her first time as an Assistant Stage Manager. This past semester Ginny also worked backstage as a dresser for the fall show "*JB*". Ginny hopes to learn everything she can about the acting and the stage (on and off!) here at KU in the four (or more) years to come. She also hopes you truly enjoy the wackiness and britishness that is this production!

Patrick Pomian (Assistant Stage Manager) -Patrick is a freshman theatre major and is thrilled to be working as Assistant Stage Manager for both *The Bald Soprano* and *As You Like It* this semester. He was seen last semester as the Caterpillar in The Sunshine Players production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Kate Diem (Make-Up Designer) - is a Junior Theatre Major here at Kutztown University and this is her first time designing make-up for a main stage production. She is absolutely honored and excited to be such an important part in this hysterical production of *The Bald Soprano*. Normally, Kate is seen acting on the stage, but was privileged enough this semester to show to you what she learned in her make-up class. She hopes you enjoy!

Production Crews

Production Coordinator

Paul Gilbert

Stage Manager

Eva Wasko

Asst. Stage Manager

Ginny Lawler
Patrick Pomian

Assistant Director

Angelo Franco

Scene Shop Manager

Austin Davidheiser

Scene Shop Assistants

Rachel Liesau
Pete Phillips
Merrill Rodgers
Stephen Sury
Matt Walsh
Mike Smith

Scene Painters

Mike Smith
Jason Fazio
Katelyn Moyer
Mishara Moyer
Matthew Fulkerson
Kirby Sybert
Pat Pomian
David Quay
Ginny Lawler
Angela Cutrone

Deck Chief

Merrill Rodgers

Master Electrician

CJ Mellon

Electrics

Carolyn Kelly
Thomas Gutherman

Light Board Operator

Soren Ersbak

Set Construction

Tim Gutherman
Kirby Sybert
Ryan Kern
Matthew Loewen

Sound Designer

Cheryl Schreib

Sound Board Operator

Brianna Starmer

Prop Head

Kelli Conkey

Prop Head Assistant

Samantha Paine

Prop Procurement

Rachel Liesau

Deck Crew

Allison Zeiman

Public Relations

Charles Weigold, III
Sean O'Brien
Sarah Pellegrini

Wardrobe Mistress

Shanna Joseph

Box Office

Abraham Kue
Alexandra Liguori

Dressers

Jen Santos
Allison Zeiman

House Manager

Jen Santos

Costume Shop

Carly Handa
Mishara Moyer
Gina D'annibale
Samantha Paine
Jessica Moy
Sam Freier
Lauren Timek
Matthew Fulkerson

Costume Shop Manager

Katherine Garlick

Costume Shop Assistants

Tim Schumacher
Becky Malkemes
Nicholas McCartney
Shanna Joseph

Makeup Design

Kate Diem

Assistant to Makeup Designer

Brandon Ellis

Makeup

Tyler Schnabel
Shoshanna Roberts

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Performing Artists Series**

**Ragamala Music and Dance Theatre
with Wadaiko Ensemble Tokara**

Sunday, February 22, 7:30 pm

Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago

Wednesday, April 1, 7:30 pm

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The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival

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The Laura Pels International Foundation

The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund

The National Committee for the Performing Arts.

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 selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants, and awards for actors, playwrights, designers, stage managers, 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 2009.

Last year more than 1,400 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.



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