Vain Reasonings
four short plays by

11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20
May 2007
(Beckett walking with a friend across a soccer field on a sunny afternoon, heading for a pub.)

Beckett: "It's a beautiful day, isn't it?"
The friend: "Yes, it makes one glad to be alive."
Beckett: "Aw now, I wouldn't go that far."

Director's Note

When Alan Schneider, who directed the first-ever production of 'Not I' asked its author for more clear guidelines as to how he should interpret the work, Beckett responded: "I no more know where she is or why thus than she does. All I know is in the text. 'She' is purely a stage entity, part of a stage image and purveyor of a stage text. The rest is Ibsen."

Tonight's programme consists of plays from the mid to late period of Beckett's theatrical output. Only Ohio Impromptu has been performed in Malta before.

These plays have been described as a 'terrifying ordeal' for the actors, of whom specific technical qualities are demanded. Billie Whitelaw, Beckett's favourite actress, said that when playing 'Mouth' she felt totally cut off from others, high above the stage, swathed in black, subject to panic attacks. After the dress rehearsal she was for a time totally disoriented. In 'Rockaby', we are presented with a delicately balanced tableau, an old woman rocking in her last moments recalling images of her mother. Of 'Rockaby', Whitelaw said: "I do find it very frightening to do. And I find it desperately lonely to do. I feel very, very lonely in that chair." Ohio Impromptu explores feelings of sadness, solitude and loss, and the process of coping, if not dealing, with these feelings. "What do words say, when there is nothing left to tell?"

With 'Not I', 'Ohio Impromptu' and 'Rockaby' objective meaning seems to be of secondary importance. The pieces work on an emotional level, enriching and enhancing the deep intellectual level.

Catastrophe presents a different side to Beckett. It is his most overtly political play, dedicated to Vaclav Havel, an author of several very political plays in a very hostile Czechoslovakia still under Soviet rule. It is, in a sense, simpler than the other plays being presented tonight - having been variously interpreted as a fable on dictatorship, be it political, theological and even theatrical - but as always with Beckett's theatre, it is unwise to limit oneself to a one-dimensional interpretation.

Directing these particular pieces, I have been struck by the powerful musicality of Beckett's language. I found myself 'conducting', savouring and enjoying the rich sounds and rhythms suggested by the text, listening to the subtleties of the dark poetry. I hope these 'dramaticules' manage to convey this poetry.

Michael Fenech
(Beckett walking with a friend across a soccer field on a sunny afternoon, heading for a pub.)

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Michael Fenech
**Cast List**

**Ohio Impromptu**
1981. *First performed at Ohio State University in 1981.*

- Reader: Victor Debono
- Listener: Kevin Attard

**Rockaby**
1982. *First performed at the Avignon Festival in 1982.*

- Woman: Leigh-Anne Abela

**Catastrophe**
*Dedicated to Vaclav Havel*
1982. *First performed at the Avignon Festival in 1982.*

- Director: Ray Calleja
- Assistant: Clare Agius
- Protagonist: Kevin Attard
- Luke (offstage): Chris Gatt

*There will be some smoking during this play.*

**Not I**

- Mouth: Leigh-Anne Abela

*There will be a 20 minute break after *Catastrophe*. The audience will be requested to vacate the theatre during the interval.*

**Stage Hands**
- Arman Ciudad, Elena Cancelo
- Paul Matzhold, John Sammut, Vince Vella, Michael Mercieca
- Michael Mercieca
- John Bruno
- Chris Gatt
- Chris Gatt
- Jeanette Theuma
- Jackie Farrugia

**Set Construction**
- Darren Zammit Lupi, Kris Micallef, Dominic Aquilina
- John Busuttil Leaver
- Leigh-Anne Abela, BPC International Ltd
- Elaine Fenech

**Light Design**
- Michael Fenech

**Sound and Lights**
- Michael Fenech

**Costumes and props**
- Michael Fenech

**Make up**
- Michael Fenech

**PR Photos**
- Michael Fenech

**Poster, Programme Design**
- Michael Fenech

**PR Production Assistant**
- Michael Fenech

**Thanks: Media.Link Communications**


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Stage Hands: Arman Ciudad, Elena Cancelo, Paul Matzhold, John Sammut, Vince Vella, Michael Mercieca
Chair constructed by: Michael Mercieca
Audio Recording: John Bruno
Light Design: Chris Gatt
Sound and Lights: Chris Gatt
Costumes and props: Jeanette Theuma
Make up: Jackie Farrugia

PR Photos: Darren Zammit Lupi, Kris Micallef, Dominic Aquilina
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Direction: Elaine Fenech

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Leigh-Anne Abela

Leigh-Anne is 26 years of age. She was awarded 2 Mediterranean Awards for achieving the highest results in her theatrical studies. Leigh-Anne’s theatrical credits include the opera/musicals Elisir D’Amore, Il-Hotbi ta’ Notre Dame, and theatrical productions ir-Rewwixta tal-Qassisin, Ritmatti and The Second Coming of Joan of Arc. Earlier this March she was invited to perform in Berlin in the EU Festivities commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Rome Treaty. She played several comic parts in the last three editions of the Festival of Satire Bla Kondixin. She is actively involved in a number of performance-based initiatives. She attended drama workshops in Scotland, Greece, Spain and Slovenia. She is a founder-member of local theatre company Stage Breeze, with whom she performs regularly. Currently she is studying for LTCL Diploma in Performing (Speech and Drama).

Clare Agius

Clare has been acting in leading roles and productions locally and internationally for the past 15 years. After having completed her 5 year acting course at M.T.A.D.A. in 1996, she has been entrusted with leading roles the likes of Yerma, Juliet and Salome at the Manoel Theatre. She has worked with international artists and travelled on theatre projects and performances at the Edinburgh Festival, Biennale in Rome, Sardegna, Switzerland, England, Poland, Belarusia and India. Besides theatre she has played major acting roles on TV in Award winning teleseries including Il-Madonna t-Coqqa where she played the leading role of Rita. To date Clare has been producing and presenting a variety of programmes on local television stations.

Victor Debono

Victor trained at MTADA, at the University of Perugia, Webber Douglas, as well as with the Spanish Troupe Atalaya. Recent roles he has performed include Tim in Some Explicit Polaroids and James in Paul. He was also one of the acting coaches on Net TV’s L-Iżfida. Victor is an actor/teacher at the drama unit. This year he is performing such classics as Macbeth, as well as Checkhov’s The Sneeze to hundreds of schoolchildren. He also devises workshops in various schools, and has also worked with residents of a substance abuse rehabilitation centre.

Ray Calleja

Ray Calleja has been involved in Theatre, Radio, TV and Film for the past 25 years. Currently producing and presenting a lunch time TV Magazine show - but mostly known for his various interpretations of different comic characters presented in a few of his TV productions. Ray has been away from the Theatre for a number of years, so tonight’s performance may be considered as a comeback to the boards after a long absence.

Michael Fenech

Michael has been involved in theatre and TV since 1979. In 1981 he was co-founder of Ateatru, an experimental/political theatre group. He directed numerous theatre and TV works, and was a drama tutor at the Manoel Theatre Academy of Dramatic Art. He wrote, adapted and translated several works for the theatre, including children’s plays L-Cirkku Monda, and Il-Torok fi Zmien D’Omedes. Plays directed include: La Logique and Lqugh ghad-Dawl by Alfred Buttigieg, Marat/Sade by Peter Wiess, Exit The King by Eugene Ionesco, Metamorfozi, a personal adaptation of the novel by Kafka, P’Ubu by Alfred Jarry, L-Opra tat-Tlitt Habbiet by Bertholt Brecht, Auschwitz by Peter Barnes, Ir-Rewwixta tal-Qassisin, and The Second Coming of Joan of Arc by Carolyn Gage. He has been producing and directing Bla Kondixin, an annual Festival of Satire, since 2001.

When Suzanne, Beckett’s wife received the news that Samuel Beckett was the Nobel Prize winner for Literature, her reaction was “What a catastrophe!”
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When Suzanne, Beckett’s wife received the news that Samuel Beckett was the Nobel Prize winner for Literature, her reaction was “What a catastrophe!”
what would I do without this world

what would I do without this world faceless incurious
where to be lasts but an instant where every instant
spills in the void the ignorance of having been
without this wave where in the end
body and shadow together are engulfed
what would I do without this silence where the murmurs die
the pantings the frenzies towards succour towards love
without this sky that soars
above its ballast dust

what would I do what I did yesterday and the day before
peering out of my deadlight looking for another
wandering like me eddying far from all the living
in a convulsive space
among the voices voiceless
that throng my hiddenness

Samuel Beckett
Vain Reasonings by S Beckett
Sunday 13th May 2007 8.00 PM

Theatre SJ
1 * complimentary
Lm0.00 €0.00
inc VAT 18%

Seat E05

St. James Cavalier Centre For Creativity, Valletta
Book your tickets online: www.sjcav.org
Email: boxoffice@sjcav.org tel: 21223200

Latecomers will be seated at the first suitable break. Copyright laws forbid the use of recording devices during this event.

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