

About the authors

Pinter (1930 -)

Harold Pinter is an English playwright who achieved international success as one of the most complex post-World War II dramatists. Pinter's plays are noted for their use of silence to increase tension, understatement, and cryptic small talk. Equally recognizable are the 'Pinteresque' themes - nameless menace, erotic fantasy, obsession and jealousy, family hatred and mental disturbance. In 2005, Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Ionesco (1909 - 1994)

Eugène Ionesco was one of the major figures in the Theatre of the Absurd, the French dramatic movement of the 1940s and 50s that emphasized the absurdity of the modern condition as defined by existential thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre. His first play, *The Bald Soprano* (1950), a one-act piece that borrowed its phrasing from English language-instruction books, garnered little public attention but earned Ionesco respect among the Parisian avant-garde. Ionesco rejected the logical plot, character development, and thought of traditional drama, instead creating his own anarchic form of comedy to convey the meaninglessness of modern man's existence in a universe ruled by chance.

Sartre (1905- 1980)

Born in 1905, Jean-Paul Sartre was one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century. He believed that philosophical arguments were most persuasive when presented as fiction. However, unlike works such as Voltaire's *Candide*, Sartre's fiction rejected the allegory and parable genres, and instead plainly outlined many of his most complicated ideas in a thinly veiled narrative format. Sartre was interested in the nature of existence, freedom, responsibility, consciousness, and time, helping to develop a philosophical movement called existentialism.

Mill City Productions

presents



Friday, March 10th & 17th at 7:30pm

Saturday, March 11th & 18th at 7:30pm

Sunday, March 12th & 19th at 2:00pm

St. John's Episcopal Church - Parish Hall
North Adams, MA

Mill City Productions

Presents

Hell, Hitmen & Hospitality

“The Dumb Waiter” *

by Harold Pinter
directed by Liz Urban
Gus- Joshua Sprague
Ben- Edward Cating

“The Bald Soprano” * *

by Eugene Ionesco
directed by Marissa Carlson
Mr. Smith- Tim Vecchiarelli
Mrs. Smith- Brooke Mead
Mr. Martin- Josh Bishoff
Mrs. Martin- Phee Mayer
Mary, the maid- Phoebe Hazzard
The Fire Chief- Joshua Sprague

“No Exit” * *

by Jean Paul Sartre
directed by Tim Mangun
Valet- Lauren Forbes
Garcin- Edward Cating
Inez- Jackie DeGiorgis
Estelle- Liz Urban

Director’s Notes

In choosing a short play to be part of this trio, I remembered how much I had loved Eugene Ionesco’s “The Bald Soprano” the first time I saw it. At the time, I just thought it was one of the funniest plays I had ever seen. Revisiting the script as an adult, I was amazed by the variety of ways in which the play can be enjoyed. Whether you are looking for a complex commentary on the absurdity of polite society’s interactions, or simply a quick, hysterical, and unique romp of words and thoughts, there is something for you in Ionesco’s first play. Ionesco’s themes are almost universal in western culture; the words and actions of these characters are not as far-fetched as they may seem at first. As Ionesco once commented upon interview:

To feel the absurdity of the commonplace, and of language – its falseness – is already to have gone beyond it. To go beyond it we must first of all bury ourselves in it. What is comical is the unusual in its pure state; nothing seems more surprising to me than that which is banal; the surreal is here, within grasp of our hands, in our everyday conversation.

-Marissa Carlson

When I finally decided on directing “The Dumb Waiter”, I thought back to past productions of it I had seen and realized they had all been directed by men. How was I, a woman, going to direct two men in a very masculine, almost violent play? I must admit, I was very nervous at the first few rehearsals. Then I realized what had drawn me to this play in the first place. It didn’t have anything to do with whether or not it was about two hitmen, but what Harold Pinter’s plays are known for, their use of silence to increase tension, body language, and cryptic small talk. Is our version of “The Dumb Waiter” any different because it was directed by a woman? I don’t know, but I do know I have had a wonderful time discovering this play with my actors, and am very excited to share it with you.

-Liz Urban

Since first reading “The Stranger” by Camus when I was in high school, I have always been interested in existentialist literature and philosophy. When given the opportunity to direct my first one act I immediately thought of “No Exit” by Sartre. I think of “No Exit” as an episode of *Survivor* that lasts much much longer than 39 days. Each character is jockeying for position to satisfy his own self-interests. Not the simplest piece to tackle for a first time director, but working with such an experienced cast has helped me immensely along the way.

-Tim Mangun

* Produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

** Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.



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Technical Crew

Stage Manager- Sam Therrien
Lights- Jon King
Sound- Tim Mangun
Set Design- Edward Cating & Tim Vecchiarelli
Set Construction and Painting- Edward Cating, Tim Mangun, Kate
Merrigan, Ed Sedarbaum, Josh Sprague, Liz Urban, Tim Vecchiarelli
Makeup- Staci Downey
Poster Design- Howard Cruse
Programs- Tim Mangun & Liz Urban -printed by Edward Cating
Photographer- Kim Rose
House Crew- Kate Merrigan, Dave, Mollie, Sarah and Sheri Simon

*Special thanks to the Williamstown Community Theatre
and the Drury Drama Team for the use of their lights, and
to St. John's Episcopal Church for their extreme generosity
in giving us a home. *

(Edward's Ad Here)

Cast Biographies

Joshua Bishoff (Mr. Martin) is returning to MCP after playing “Drake” in the November production of *Honk!* Other credits include *Inherit the Wind* (Oldcastle Theatre), “Barnum” in *The King & I* (Mac-Hayden Theatre Co.), *Slug-Bearers of Kayrol Island* (NYC). Josh is a member of the Oldcastle Bennington Actor’s Express. He would like to thank Becca and the fam.

Marissa Carlson (Dir. Bald Soprano) is thrilled to be directing her second MCP show, following last spring’s production of “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown.” She is a native of North Adams and holds a B.A. from Pomona College. She also spent 5 years performing with the L.A.-based “Young Americans”. Some of her favorite acting roles in recent years include “Irma Kronkite” in *Picnic* (Oldcastle Theatre), “Sister Mary Leo” in *Nonsense* (Ghent Playhouse), and “Wanda” in *Wanda’s Visit* (MCP). Marissa would like to thank her delightful cast, her amazing friends & loved ones, and the Mississippi school that first introduced this high school freshman to the brilliant absurdity of the Bald Soprano.

Edward Cating (Ben, Garcin) is a multi-media artist whose studio is in the Historic Beaver Mill in North Adams; his photographs and paintings reference nature while acknowledging the ever-present impact of technical mediation on how we view “realism”. He and wife, Margaret, live in Williamstown with their four children. No Exit and The Dumb Waiter represent his first dalliance with theatre in over twenty years. Some of his past credits include, “The Dauphin” in *Joan of Arc* (96th Street Workshop, NYC), “Josiah Bartlett” in *1776* (Westport Playhouse), and “Father Brian Rivard” in *The Runner Stumbles* (Clark College). Edward would like to thank Margaret, Emma, Caroline, Paul and Cornelia for their patience during this process! And thanks to his other castmembers for their dedication.

Jackie DeGiorgis (Inez) is a science teacher at Drury High School. Some of her favorite past credits include “Eleanor Roosevelt” in *Annie*, “Auntie Em” in *The Wizard of Oz* (Drury Drama Team), “Ms. Mavis” in *Living with Lady MacBeth*, “Swift” in *Words, Words, Words* (MCP), and “Ms. Haviland” in *Wildwood Park* (Main Street Stage). Jackie would like to thank Tim for the opportunity to play Inez. She would also like to thank her husband Butch for his patience and support.

Lauren Forbes (Valet) is making her acting debut with MCP’s production of *No Exit*. Lauren has helped behind the scenes for previous MCP productions and maintains her role as MCP’s stylist extraordinaire. When not on stage, Lauren can be found working to beautify the Berkshires at The Clip Shop in Williamstown. Lauren would like to thank her mom, and also Marissa for her encouragement to take the stage.

Phoebe Hazzard (Mary) daily plays the role of “Teacher” in front of an audience of 4th graders, and has recently discovered the fun of directing plays with kids. Her past credits include “Hannah” in *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (Oberlin College), “Nellie” in *South Pacific*, “Deputy” in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and “Chorus” in *A Chorus Line* (Concord Carlisle High School). Phoebe would like to thank her family and friends for their support and encouragement, her husband Stephen for being a rockstar, and MCP for existing!

Tim Mangun (Dir. No Exit) is thrilled to make his directing debut with such a supportive and patient cast. Tim has most recently played “Charlie Brown” in *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (MCP) and would like to thank his wife Liz for her unwavering confidence and support.

Phee Mayer (Mrs. Martin) recently moved to North Adams after graduating from Arizona State University. Phee grew up in Neenah, WI. Some clever and very lazy friends shortened Stephanie’s name to “Phee” a few years ago. Some of her favorite roles are “Essie” in *You Can’t Take It With You*, “Elizabeth Proctor” in *The Crucible*, “Jan” in *Go Ask Alice*, “Marty” in *Grease*, “Ruth” in *Pirates of Penzance*, and any part of her involvement in The Vagina Monologues. “My life has a superb cast, but I can’t figure out the plot.” Thanks to all the great characters who add depth and direction to her story.

Brooke Mead (Mrs. Smith) made her stage debut at age 4 in a children’s production at the Clark Art Institute. Since then she has been privileged to be a part of many wonderful and sometimes embarrassing theatrical productions, including: “Mrs. White” in *Clue*, “Ella” in *Curse of the Starving Class*, “Annie” in *Annie*, and “Ado Annie” in *Oklahoma*. Brooke received her B.A. in Theater from the University of Southern California and currently works to help immigrants navigate our complex immigration laws and resettle in the Berkshires. Brooke wishes to thank her amazing support system of friends and family and her dog, Lila.

Joshua Sprague (Gus, The Fire Chief) is returning for his third production with MCP. His past credits include “Ugly” in *Honk!*, and “Snoopy” in *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Joshua graduated from UMASS Amherst in 2004 with a Bachelor’s degree in Music. He has been involved with many musical productions, but this is the first time he has ever been in a serious drama. Joshua would like to thank his parents for all of their love and support and the directors for this opportunity.

Liz Urban (Dir. Dumb Waiter, Estelle) is very excited to be making her directing debut for MCP. Liz graduated from Skidmore College in 2001 with a Bachelor’s degree in Theatre, and currently teaches acting and dance classes at NBKA. For the past two summers, Liz has been the Assistant to the Director of WTF’s Greylock Theatre Project. Favorite past credits include “Betty” in *Sure Thing*, “Female Actor” in *This is a Play*, “Marsha” in *Wanda’s Visit*, (MCP), and “Mrs. Soames” in *Our Town* (Home Made Theatre). Liz would like to thank Tim and Casco for their support as well as her cast and fellow cast members for their hard work and dedication.

Tim Vecchiarelli (Mr. Smith) is thrilled to be participating in this, his second endeavor with Mill City Productions, despite the contrary desires of his house! His past credits include “Schroeder” in *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, (MCP), “Clitandre” in *The Misanthrope* (Fitchburg State College), “Lenny” in *Rumors*, and “Sheriff Vernon Cookley” in *Exit the Body* (Exit Seven Players). Tim wishes to thank Monique and Michaella for always supporting my theatrics, both on and off the stage.