

City Garage presents

Le Rhinocéros
by Eugene Ionesco
translated by Derek Prouse

Directed by Frédérique Michel
Production Design by Charles A. Duncombe



June 1—July 15, 2007

Rhinocéros

By Eugène Ionesco
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Cast

Ruthie Crossley ... Café Owner, Madame Boeuf, Rhinoceros
Justin Davanzo Logician, Dudard, Rhinoceros
Troy Dunn Berenger
David E. Frank..... Gentleman, Botard, Rhinoceros
Nita Mickley Daisy, Rhinoceros
Maximiliano Molina Grocer, Papillon, Rhinoceros
Alisha Nichols..... Young Girl, Rhinoceros
Mariko Oka..... Waitress, Rhinoceros
Rachel Oliva..... Grocer's Wife, Rhinoceros
Bo Roberts..... Jean, Rhinoceros

Production Staff

Set and Lighting Design Charles A Duncombe
Sound Design Paul M Rubenstein
Assistant Director Nicole DiGaetano
Costume Design Josephine Poinot
Light/Sound Operator..... Irene Casarez

Time & Place

Next week at a village in France.

**The play runs approximately 120 minutes.
There will be a 10 minute intermission.**

City Garage is supported, in part, by grants from:
the Wells Fargo Foundation,
Rocket Science Laboratories,
and the Santa Monica Arts Commission.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Romanian-born French dramatist Eugène Ionesco (1909–1994) began his career with a one-act “antiplay” *La Cantatrice chauve* (1949; *The Bald Soprano*) that inspired a revolution in dramatic techniques and helped inaugurate the Theatre of the Absurd.

Ionesco was taken to France as an infant but returned to Romania in 1925. After obtaining a degree in French at the University of Bucharest, he worked for a doctorate in Paris (1939), where, after 1945, he made his home. While working as a proofreader, he decided to learn English; the formal, stilted commonplaces of his textbook inspired the masterly catalog of senseless platitudes that constitutes *The Bald Soprano*. In its most famous scene, two strangers—who are exchanging banalities about how the weather is faring, where they live, and how many children they have—stumble upon the astonishing discovery that they are indeed man and wife; it is a brilliant example of Ionesco’s recurrent themes of self-estrangement and the difficulty of communication.

In rapid succession Ionesco wrote a number of plays, all developing the “antilogical” ideas of *The Bald Soprano*; these included brief and violently irrational sketches and also a series of more elaborate one-act plays in which many of his later themes—especially the fear and horror of death—begin to make their appearance. Among them, *La Leçon* (1951; *The Lesson*), *Les Chaises* (1952; *The Chairs*), and *Le Nouveau Locataire* (1955; *The New Tenant*) stand out.

After these successes, Ionesco mastered the full-length play with *Amédée* (1954), *Tueur sans gages* (1959; *The Killer*), and *Le Rhinocéros* (1959; *Rhinoceros*) before creating his masterpiece *Le Roi se meurt* (1962; *Exit the King*). The character of Bérenger recurs throughout Ionesco’s work as a semi-autobiographical figure expressing the author’s wonderment and anguish at the strangeness of reality. *Rhinoceros* represents Ionesco’s most forceful expression of the horrors of orthodoxy, as Bérenger watches his friends turn into rhinoceroses one by one, until he alone stands unchanged against the relentless tide of conformity. Ionesco’s final completed full-length play, *Voyage chez les morts* (1980, *Journeys among the Dead*), had its U.S. premier at City Garage in 1999.

Ionesco’s primary achievement lies in having popularized a wide variety of nonrepresentational and surrealist techniques and in having made them acceptable to audiences conditioned to naturalistic conventions in the theatre. As Ionesco aged, he grew less concerned with witty intellectual paradox and more interested in dreams, visions, and exploration of the subconscious, but virtually all his plays build on bizarrely illogical or fantastic situations using such devices as the humorous multiplication of objects on stage until they overwhelm the actors. The clichés and tedious maxims of polite conversation surface in improbable or inappropriate contexts to expose the deadening futility of most human communication. His plays continue to effectively dramatize the absurdity and meaninglessness of social conventions as they expose the futile and mechanical nature of modern civilization.

CAST PROFILES

Ruthie Crossley

Café Owner, Madame Boeuf, Rhinoceros

After taking time to be a new mom to her daughter, Cordelia, Ruthie is glad to be back on the City Garage stage. She joined the company in 1995, and has appeared *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW’s Dream of Sleep*, *The Queens*, *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now*, *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux*, *Jungle of Cities*, *Garbage The City And Death*, *Hamletmachine*, and *Girl Gone*. She has earned her credential in Special Education from Sonoma State University and works full time in the classroom as a teacher of students with special needs.

Justin Davanzo

Logician, Dudard, Rhinoceros

Justin is pleased to be a member of City Garage, where he was previously seen in *The Dumbwaiter* by Harold Pinter, *The Jungle*

of *Cities* by Bertolt Brecht, *The Dispute* by Marivaux, *La Leçon* by Eugene Ionesco, and *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream* by Kathy Acker. He also appeared in Heiner Müller's *The Battle: ABC* (which won the Best Ensemble award at the 2006 LA Weekly Theatre Awards) and last year's *Agamemnon* and *The Bacchae*. Justin has had a busy year, completing a feature film due out in June 2007.

Troy Dunn

Berenger

Troy was seen here last year as *Agamemnon* in *Iphigenia* and *Agamemnon* and as *Pentheus* in *The Bacchae*. He hails from the Midwest and spent most of his professional career in Milwaukee working with the MRT, Theatre X, and Chamber Theatre to name a few. Notable roles include *Ariel* in *The Tempest*, *John Oleanna*, *Lord Goring* in *An Ideal Husband*, *Benedict* in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Barnum* in *Barnum*, and *Don Quixote* in *Man of La Mancha*.

David E. Frank

Gentleman, Botard, Rhinoceros

David is originally from Muncie, Indiana, where he received his degree in Theatre Performance from Ball State University. In addition to his work at BSU, he also appeared with the Vagabond Players and the Third Age Theatre Company. His credits at City Garage include *MedeaText: Los Angeles Despoiled Shore*, *Atrocities: Meetings With Monstrous Men*, *The Skriker*, *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep*, *The Gertrude Stein Project*, *Katzelmacher*, *OedipusText: Los Angeles, La Leçon*, *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream*, *The Battle: ABC* (which won the Best Ensemble award at the 2006 LA Weekly Theatre Awards), *Agamemnon*, and *The Bacchae*.

Nita Mickley

Daisy, Rhinoceros

Nita Mickley grew up performing in Boulder, CO, then moved on to study theater at Barnard College in NYC, in London at BADA, and in San Francisco around the Bay. Prior to singing with the Rhinos, she was seen here last year in *The Bacchae* and *Iphigenia*. She is a violinist as well.

Maximiliano Molina

Grocer, Papillon, Rhinoceros

Maximiliano is happy to have found City Garage. He is looking forward to another good season after being part of *Three by Mee* last year. A graduate of Cal Poly Pomona and the Actors Studio Drama School in New York, he is glad to be back in California. He has been affiliated with such companies as the Zoo District here in L.A., Campos Santos in San Francisco, and was a founding member of MMM... Comedy in New York.

Alisha Nichols

Young Girl, Rhinoceros

Alisha is thrilled to again be working at City Garage. She attended California State University Northridge and received her B.A. in theatre arts. She also studied with the Steppenwolf Theatre Company at summer arts. This winter at City Garage she played a Bridesmaid in *Iphigenia*. Some of her other credits included *The Lesson*, *Balm in Gilead*, and *Polaroid Stories*.

Mariko Oka

Waitress, Rhinoceros

Born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, Mariko Oka graduated with high honors from Gakushuin University with a B.A. degree in American and English Literature. Upon graduation, she immediately pursued her career in acting in the U.S. by attending the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute in New York and Theatre of Arts in Los Angeles. She also has trained under the guidance of the legendary voice coach, Patsy Rodenburg. Her credits include *Himiko* in the play "TEA" by Velina Hasu Houston at Theatre of Arts. She also has been featured internationally in various commercials throughout the US and Asia. She appeared at City Garage last year in *The Bacchae*.

Rachel Oliva

Grocer's Wife, Botard Understudy, Rhinoceros

Originally from Wisconsin, Rachel has studied at The Actors Studio MFA Program in New York, The Royal National Theatre in London, and Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Favorite roles include *Gwendolen* in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Maggie* in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Rachel* in *Inherit the Wind* (off-Broadway), *Nora* in *Nora* (Ingmar Bergman's adaptation of *A Doll's House*), and *Georgeanne* in *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*.

Bo Roberts

Jean, Rhinoceros

Bo has previously performed at City Garage in *Blood On A Cat's Neck*; *The Universal Wolf*; *Wantons, Rogues and Libertines*; *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux*; *Journeys Among the Dead*; *Pre-Paradise, Sorry Now*; *Manage Blanc*; *The Fetishist*; *Katzelmacher*; *The Empire Builders*; *Patriot Act: A Reality Show*; *The Battle: ABC* (which won the Best Ensemble award at the 2006 LA Weekly Theatre Awards), *Agamemnon*, and *The Bacchae*.

STAFF PROFILES

Frederique Michel, Artistic Director

Director

Frederique was born in Paris and studied theatre at the Conservatoire. She has led the company as Artistic Director since its founding in 1987. She received a Dramalogue Award for her direction of *Dissident*. Her 1998 production of *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* was nominated for four L.A. Weekly Theater Awards, including Best Director. She was nominated again for Best Director for *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* (2000). In 2005 she won the LA Weekly Award for Best Direction (one-act) for *La Leçon*. Her production of *The Battle: ABC* was nominated for Best Direction and received the 2006 LA Weekly Award for Best Ensemble.

Charles A. Duncombe, Managing Director

Production Designer

Charles is a writer, director and designer. He began his partnership with Frederique Michel in 1985, and he has designed all of her work since then. He has won two Dramalogue awards for production design and in 1999 won the L.A. Weekly Theater Award for Best Lighting Design for *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* (1998). He was nominated for two L.A. Weekly awards for *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* (2000): Best Adaptation, and Best Set. He was nominated again for two L.A. Weekly awards for *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep* (2001): Best Adaptation, and Production Design. His play *Patriot Act* won the Frattii/Newman Award for Political Playwriting in 2005 and will open in New York at the Castillo Theater this June as part of their 2007 season. At the 2007 LA Weekly Theatre Awards, Charles won Best Production Design for the entire *Three by Mee* season.

Nicole DiGaetano

Assistant Director;

Understudy: Old Gentleman, Botard, Rhinoceros

This is Nikki's first show with City Garage and she is excited to be a new member. She earned her BA in Theatre Arts from the University of the Arts and is a recent transplant to L.A. from New York. Previous credits include *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *Ladyhouse Blues*, *Crazy For You*, *The Misanthrope*, *Summer And Smoke*, *Into The Woods*, and *Tony N Tina's Wedding*.

Irene Casarez

Light/Sound Operator

Irene has appeared here in *The Bacchae* and *The Gertrude Stein Project*. She is delighted to be once again working in the booth at City Garage.

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