

City Garage presents the U.S. Premiere of

# **The Battle: ABC**

## **Heiner Müller**

### **On Times of War**

Directed by Frédérique Michel  
Production Design by Charles A. Duncombe  
Translation by Marc von Henning



November 11—January 29, 2005

# The Battle: ABC

Heiner Müller on Times of War

Translation by Marc von Henning

Directed by Frédérique Michel

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## Cast

Justin Davanzo . . . . . *Executioner, Soldier*  
David E. Frank . . . . . *The Son, Soldier*  
Sharon Gardner . . . . . *Wife, Mother, Lover, Soldier*  
Bo Roberts . . . . . *The Father, Soldier*  
Paul Rubenstein . . . . . *Heiner Müller*

## Production Staff

*Set and Lighting Design* . . . . . Charles A. Duncombe  
*Assistant Director; Light/Sound Operator* . . . . . Joel Nuñez  
*Costume Design* . . . . . Josephine Poinsoit  
*Audio/Visual Engineering* . . . . . Paul M. Rubenstein

## Place

***The Front Lines, the Homefront***

## Time

***Before and After the Battles***

**The play runs approximately 60 minutes and is performed without intermission.**

City Garage is supported, in part, by grants from

The Wells Fargo Foundation,  
Rocket Science Laboratories,

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission,  
and The Santa Monica Arts Commission.

Special thanks to Dan Butts and his crew  
for set construction.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Heiner Müller (1929-1995) was widely regarded, internationally and in both German states, as the most important German dramatist since Brecht. The extended public wake held upon his death on December 30, 1995 gave expression to a deep sense of loss in the vibrant East Berlin cultural scene that persisted during the communist German Democratic Republic's (GDR) existence, of which he was the most brilliant protagonist.

Müller's work traverses the entire possible and impossible spectrum, from an avant-garde implementation of the Brechtian *Lehrstück* (learning play), through the increasingly radical deconstruction of classic texts from the broader European and socialist traditions, to an apparent "split" between plays like *Hamletmaschine* [1977] and *Quartett* (1980), which offer themselves to the West with the deadly assurance of the wind that sweeps through Brecht's dead cities in "Of Poor B.B.," as well as one-offs like *Mauser* (1970/1976) and *Der Auftrag* [*The Mission*, 1979], which can justly claim to mark the end-point of a revolutionary avant-garde, spreadeagled across the yawning gap between present and future.

Müller encapsulates the paradox of a GDR avant-garde. A paradox, first, in the most obvious sense of all: the GDR did not want an avant-garde, it ruled it out, as Goebbels opposed the development of a "National Socialist art", as an annoying disturbance of the "normality" the regime wished so desperately to project, as a safeguard against the erosion of a position it always knew to be vulnerable. To occupy the avant-garde was to lay claim to a position the party itself had long since vacated, an ethically and politically troubling vacuum. But in another sense as well: for Müller, as for many other GDR writers of good faith, this paradox was only sustainable within the broader paradox of "socialism as it existed in reality"; it disintegrated on contact with the West. As long as the ultimate contradiction between socialist ideal and reality persisted, the compulsion, both ethical and aesthetic, to bridge the gap could triumph fitfully over the insights of "historical materialism." But when the black hole which promised to generate new worlds but did not contain them itself was finally closed, the paradox perished with it.

An early poem by Müller, *Bilder* [Images, 1955], provides a fitting epitaph for his life and work:

*Images mean everything, at first. They're stable and roomy.  
But dreams coagulate, form shapes and disappointments.  
No image can hold the sky any more. The clouds from a  
plane  
Only a vapour that hides the view. The heron just a bird.  
Even communism, the final image, always renewed  
Because it's washed over and over in blood—daily life  
Doles it out in small change, tarnished and blind with sweat.*

*The great poems: ruins, like bodies long loved, but no longer  
Needed, border the path of our finite,  
voracious species*

*Between their lines the laments, their ecstasies built*

*over labourers' bones*

*For the beautiful means the possible ending of horrors.*

—John Milfull, University of New South Wales

## CAST PROFILES

### Justin Davanzo

*Executioner, Soldier*

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.

### David E. Frank

*The Son, Soldier*

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, the Third Age Theatre Company, and The Muncie Civic Theater. 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*, and *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream*.

### Sharon Gardner

*Wife, Mother, Lover, Soldier*

Newly arrived in Los Angeles, Sharon is delighted to be working with City Garage for the first time. Recent appearances include the News Woman in the critically-praised *A New War* at 68 Cent Crew Theatre this summer and the taboo-breaking socialite in *Prove It On Me* at the Fountain Theatre. On screen, she plays a corporate elitist in the horror feature *My Demon Within*, making its premier at Slamdance '06, and a pop princess-turned-band manager in the improv-based indie pilot *Out 4 Revenge*. On stage in New York Sharon has portrayed expat writer Isabelle Eberhardt in *New Anatomies*, wounded idealist Thyona in *Big Love*, New Age spiritualist Meggie in *A Summer Share*, Helen in *Baby With the Bathwater* and Shakespeare's ladies Juliet, Regan, and Lady Macbeth, among many other roles.

### Bo Roberts

*The Father, Soldier*

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*; *Journey's Among the Dead*; *Pre-Paradise*, *Sorry Now*; *Manage Blanc*; *The Fetishist*; *Katzelmacher*; *The Empire Builders*; and *Patriot Act: A Reality Show*.

### Paul M. Rubenstein, General Manager

*Heiner Müller*

Paul most recently appeared at City Garage in last year's *Patriot Act: A Reality Show*. He made his debut with the company in 1998 as part of the LA Weekly Theater Award-nominated ensemble from *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux*. He received a Backstage West Garlands Award Honorable Mention for his work here in the US premiere of Ionesco's haunting valedictory, *Journeys Among The Dead*.

## STAFF PROFILES

### Frederique Michel, Artistic Director

*Director*

Frederique was born in Paris and studied theatre at the Conservatoire. She has directed more than eighty productions in the United States, including works by Strindberg, Rozewicz, Vinaver, Horowitz, Fornes and Barker. She received a *Dramalogue* award for her direction of *Dissident*, and has led the company as Artistic Director since its founding in 1987. 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*.

### Charles A. Duncombe, Managing Director

*Production Designer*

Charles is a writer, director and designer. He began his partnership with Frederique Michel in 1985 with her production of *Miss Julie*, 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. In 2004 his play *Patriot Act: A Reality Show* was selected from nearly 300 entries from six nations as the winner of the the Mario Fratti-Fred Newman Anti-Corruption Playwriting Contest. *Patriot Act* is currently running in Buffalo, New York. It has been translated into Italian and will receive its European premiere at the Teatro Globi Distratti in Rome.

### Joel Nuñez

*Assistant Director; Light/Sound Operator*

Joel is a recent addition to City Garage. He was born and raised in Cuba. Between 1980 and 1993, he had leading and supporting roles in more than thirty projects there including plays with the island's leading theatre companies and feature films with ICAIC (Cuban Art Institute and Cinematography Industry). He emigrated to Mexico and he has lived in Los Angeles for the past three years. Films include *Me Alquilo para Soñar* by Ruy Guerra based on a script by Nobel laureated Gabriel Garcia Márquez and this year's *...al fin, el mar (Finally the Sea)*, an Argentinian-Cuban co-production. He has appeared in eight soap operas (most recently Univision Network's *Te Amare en Silencio*) that have aired around the world. L.A. stage credits include *Seagulls from Havana* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. Joel received UNEAC (National Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba) awards for Best Actor in a TV Series and Best Actor in Theatre, and The Golden Sun award for Best Actor in Theatre in Mexico City. This is Joel's first production with City Garage.

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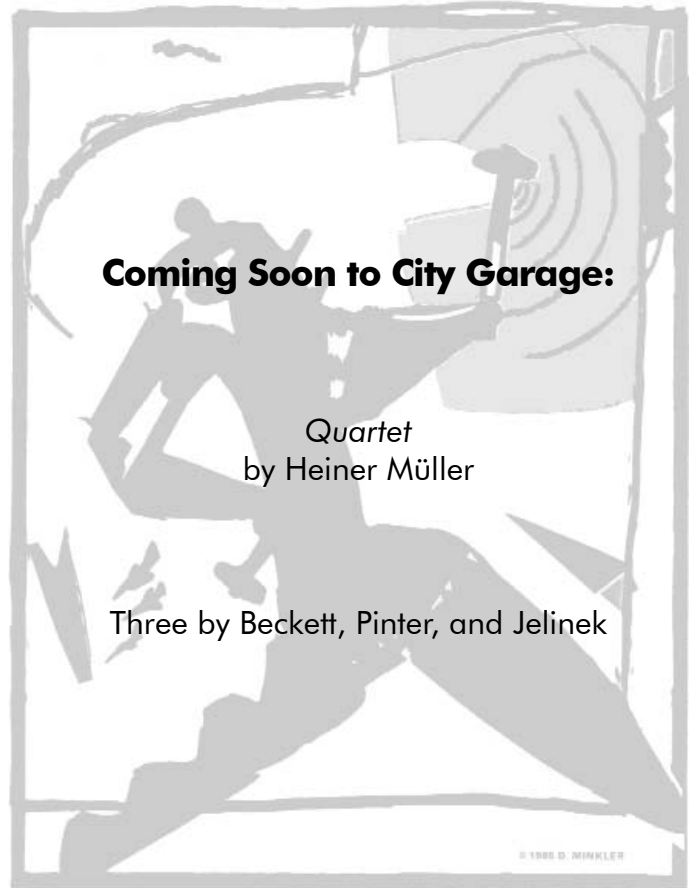
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**Coming Soon to City Garage:**

Quartet  
by Heiner Müller

Three by Beckett, Pinter, and Jelinek

City Garage recognizes the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, the Santa Monica Arts Commission, the Wells Fargo Foundation, and Rocket Science Laboratories for their generous support.



**Please visit our website:  
[www.citygarage.org](http://www.citygarage.org)**

