

European Modernism and the Resident Theatre Movement:
The Transformation of American Theatre between 1950 and 1970

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Abstract

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This dissertation offers a cultural history of the arrival of the second wave of European modernist drama in America in the postwar period, 1950-1970. European modernist drama developed in two qualitatively distinct stages, and these two stages subsequently arrived in the United States in two distinct waves. The first stage of European modernist drama, characterized predominantly by the genres of naturalism and realism, emerged in Europe during the four decades from the 1890s to the 1920s. This first wave of European modernism reached the United States in the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, coming to prominence through productions in New York City. The second stage of European modernism dates from 1930 through the 1960s and is characterized predominantly by the absurdist and epic genres. Unlike the first wave, the

dramas of the second wave of European modernism were not first produced in New York. Instead, these plays were often given their premieres in smaller cities across the United States: San Francisco, Seattle, Cleveland, Hartford, Boston, and New Haven, in the regional theatres which were rapidly proliferating across the United States. In this study I address and answer a basic question: why were the majority of these European plays first staged outside of New York City at the resident theatre companies? The choice to stage the second-wave dramas was often influenced by various contributing factors: the work of prominent directors who devoted their careers to the second-wave dramas, the work of translators who rendered these plays into English, the influence of critics and scholars who helped to introduce and explain the new dramas, the emergence of academic theatre journals, the publishers that made these plays available across the United States, and the embrace of the new dramas by the American universities. The second wave of European modernism arrived impressively across the United States in the 1950s, as regional theatres outside of New York mounted many of the first American productions of these plays, and later settled in New York in the 1960s as the theatres of Off-Broadway began to produce these dramas.

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For Herb

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph.

- T. S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*

Introduction

In 1956 a small theatre company in San Francisco mounted the American premiere of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children*. Marc Blitzstein's 1954 adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera* in New York City, starring Lotte Lenya, had made Brecht a household name in America, and the play's popularity only increased when Louis Armstrong and Bobby Darin released their own recordings of the play's song, "Mack the Knife" (in 1956 and 1959, respectively). Yet this landmark production of *Mother Courage* closed after only seventeen performances, unable to find an audience for a play in which the protagonist was "not endearing."¹ Six years later, this theatre company, the Actor's Workshop, produced Brecht's *Galileo*. The production was so well-received it was put into the summer repertory, where it continued to attract audiences for months. Something had changed. True, the theatre troupe was better educated about Brecht's methods in 1962. But more significantly, the audience, too, had changed. During the 1950s, Brecht had "passed from the depths of unrecognition to the heights of chic celebrity."² America had changed, and would continue to change as the United States was influenced by an influx of European modernist drama. This dissertation offers a cultural history of the arrival of the second wave of European modernist drama in America in the postwar period, 1950-1970. I examine how a number of second-wave European plays were first staged by theatre companies outside of New York City. Why did this happen, given New York's established position as the center for modernist drama in the United States? In this study I address and answer a basic question: why were the majority of these European plays first staged outside of New York City at the resident theatre companies?

¹ Paine Knickerbocker, "Mother Courage – A Workshop 'First'," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 17, 1956, 21.

² Eric Bentley, "Introduction: Homage to B.B." in *Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht*, ed. Eric Bentley (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), xiii.

Two Waves of Modern Drama

It is important to recognize that modernism in the European drama developed in two qualitatively distinct stages, and that these two stages subsequently arrived in the United States in two distinct waves. The first stage of European modernist drama dates, generally, from the 1890s to the 1920s. It is characterized predominantly by the traditions of naturalism, realism, symbolism and expressionism, though this first stage also includes surrealism, futurism, DADA, and a number of other early twentieth century avant-garde movements. The major playwrights of this first stage were Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw, Maeterlinck, Zola, Pirandello, Synge, O'Casey, Yeats, Jarry, Čapek, Von Hoffmansthal, Hauptmann, Przybyszewski, Blok, Sternheim, and Gorky. The plays of Georg Büchner antedate this period, but Büchner may also be considered an early forerunner of the Scandinavian naturalist/realist tradition. This first wave of European modernism reached the United States in the 1920s.

The second stage of European modernist drama generally dates from 1930 through the 1960s. It is characterized predominantly by the existentialist dramas that critic Martin Esslin christened the "Theater of the Absurd," and by the epic drama. The major playwrights of this second stage are Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, Eugène Ionesco, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, John Osborne, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Peter Weiss, Sławomir Mrozek, Arthur Adamov, John Arden, John Whiting, and Vaclav Havel. This second wave of European modernism reached the United States in the 1950s and the 1960s.

While some of the dramas of first-wave European modernism reached the United States in the late nineteenth century, the number of productions of these plays and their positive reception with American audiences increased dramatically after World War I. Ibsen's plays, for example, had been produced in the United States since 1882, but these controversial works,

unpopular with audiences, were even banned on occasion. In 1923, the Theatre Guild's production of *Peer Gynt*, starring Joseph Schildkraut and Edward G. Robinson ran for 240 performances in New York. Also in 1923, Eleanora Duse came to America on tour; her repertoire included *The Lady from the Sea* and *Ghosts*. Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre, an early experiment with the repertory model of theatrical production in America, presented *The Master Builder* and *John Gabriel Borkman* in its first season in 1925, and staged *Hedda Gabler* (starring Le Gallienne) in 1928. Similarly, the plays of Chekhov were not popular in the United States before the early 1920s. While the Washington Square Players had produced *The Bear* in 1915 and *The Seagull* in 1916, both productions failed. American audiences did not understand Chekhov's dark humor and found his plays gloomy and overly "arty." The Moscow Art Theatre visited the United States during their 1922-1923 and 1923-1924 seasons; the Russian troupe's productions of Chekhov, combined with new translations of Chekhov's plays, improved the playwright's standing in America. Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre then mounted successful productions of *Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *The Seagull* between 1926 and 1929.

Less popular than Ibsen was August Strindberg. Strindberg's plays were produced so rarely in the United States that Eric Bentley would reflect in 1946 that the Swedish playwright was "still largely unknown."³ Yet American playwright Eugene O'Neill admired Strindberg, and in 1924, the Provincetown Players opened their new Provincetown Playhouse in New York with a production of *The Spook Sonata* (*The Ghost Sonata*), followed by a production of *A Dream Play* in 1926.

³ Eric Bentley, *The Playwright as Thinker* (Cornwall, N.Y.: Cornwall Press, Inc., 1946), 194.

Productions of plays by George Bernard Shaw were also controversial in the early years of the twentieth century. Although Arnold Daly's 1903 production of *Candida* at the Berkeley Lyceum Theatre in New York ran for 150 performances, his 1905 production of *Mrs Warren's Profession* at the Garrick Theatre in New York was closed down by police, and both Daly and the star Mary Shaw were arrested for indecency. Harley Granville-Barker's 1915 production of *Androcles and the Lion* was well-received, as was the American premiere of *Major Barbara* in the same year. In the 1920s, "the world premières of all of Shaw's major plays (except *The Apple Cart*) were presented by The Theatre Guild."⁴ Inspired by Le Gallienne's commitment to modernist classics, the Theatre Guild mounted the first productions of Shaw's *Heartbreak House* (at the Garrick Theatre in 1920), *Saint Joan* (also at the Garrick, in 1923), *Back to Methuselah* (in 1922), and *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* (in 1935).

Other first-wave modernist dramas were first produced in New York as well: the Theatre Guild produced the American premiere of Karel Čapek's *Rossum's Universal Robots* at the Garrick Theatre. The play opened on October 9, 1922, and ran for 184 performances. Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* was given its American premiere the same year. Directed by Brock Pemberton at the Princess Theatre in New York, it ran for 136 performances. The American premiere of Pirandello's play occurred only one year after the play's world premiere in Italy, and ahead of premieres in France and Germany. Thus, though the dramas of the first-wave of European modernism were sometimes produced in America in the late 19th century and early years of the 20th century, these dramas came to prominence through productions in New York in the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s.

⁴ Brian Tyson, *The Story of Shaw's Saint Joan* (Kinston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982), 82.

By contrast, the dramas of the second-wave European modernism were not first produced in New York. Instead, these plays were often given their premieres in smaller cities across the United States: San Francisco, Seattle, Cleveland, Hartford, Boston, and New Haven. For example, the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami, Florida, premiered Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1954). The Actor's Workshop in San Francisco produced the American premieres of Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children* (1956), Whiting's *Saint's Day* (1960), Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1960; the first American production of any Pinter play), and Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* (1961). The Theatre Company of Boston premiered Arden's *Live Like Pigs* (1964), *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* (1966) and *Left-Handed Liberty* (1967), Sartre's *The Devil and the Good Lord*, and Pinter's *The Dwarfs* (1967). In Seattle, Washington, A Contemporary Theatre premiered Mrozek's *Strip Tease* (1967).

While my dissertation focuses on the key role the regional theatres played in introducing the second-wave dramas to the United States, it is important to recognize that there were also directors based in New York who were committed to staging these plays. In particular, Alan Schneider is generally acknowledged as the preeminent American director of Beckett's plays in this period. Schneider was itinerant, directing second-wave plays both in New York and around the country at the regional theatres. In New York, Schneider directed plays of the second-wave dramatists at the Provincetown Playhouse, the Cherry Lane Theatre, the East End Theatre, the Lyceum Theatre, the Booth Theatre, the Billy Rose Theatre, the Chelsea Theater Center, and the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center. At the Provincetown Playhouse, he directed Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (January, 1960). At the Cherry Lane Theatre, he directed Beckett's *Endgame* (the American premiere, in January, 1958), Beckett's *Happy Days* (September, 1961), a second production of *Endgame* (February, 1962), Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* (November, 1962),

Beckett's *Play* (on a double bill with Pinter's *The Lover*, in January, 1964), and a second production of *Happy Days* (September, 1965). At the East End Theatre, Schneider directed *Krapp's Last Tape* on a double bill with Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* (September, 1962). At the Lyceum, he directed Jo Orton's *Entertaining Mr. Sloan* (October, 1965). At the Booth Theatre, he directed Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (October, 1967). At the Billy Rose Theatre, Schneider directed three of four absurdist plays mounted in repertory by Theatre 1969 (Richard Barr and Edward Albee) in October, 1968. The four plays were *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Zoo Story*, and two new pieces by Albee: *Box* and *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*. Barr directed *Zoo Story*; Schneider directed the Beckett play and Albee's two new pieces. Schneider also directed Edward Bond's *Saved* during the 1970-1971 season at the Chelsea Theater Center in Brooklyn, NY, and four Samuel Beckett plays (*Act Without Words*, *Happy Days*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, and *Not I*) at the Forum at the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center in 1972-1973.

1950-1970: The American Theatre Changes

In my study I examine how a number of second-wave European plays were first staged by theatre companies outside of New York City in the 1950s and 1960s. The period of these two decades is significant because it coincides with the emergence and spread of regional theatres across America. In 1950, only twelve professional regional theatres existed outside of Broadway in the United States: the Alley Theatre, the Arena Stage, the Barter Theatre, the Cleveland Play House, the Erie Playhouse, the Goodman Memorial Theatre, the Mummens Theatre, the Old Globe Theatre, Old Log Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Pasadena Playhouse, and the Pittsburgh Playhouse.⁵

⁵ Robert E. Gard, Marston Balch and Pauline B. Temkin, eds., *Theater in America: Appraisal and Challenge for the National Theatre Conference* (Madison, WI: Dembar Educational Services, Inc., 1968), 113.

By 1960, the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco, the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre in Stratford, the Charles Playhouse, the Dallas Theatre Centre, the Fred Miller Theatre (which became the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre), the Front Street Theatre, the La Jolla Playhouse, and the Theatre Group at UCLA (which became the Center Theatre Group) had joined the ranks of regional theatres. In 1968, a report from the National Theatre Conference (NTC) estimated that there were 57 such regional theatres in the United States (though the NTC report included some New-York operations, such as the Circle in the Square, the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center, the Negro Ensemble Company, the Actors Studio Theatre, and the New York Shakespeare Festival, in its count). Unlike the Little Theatres which emerged in the 1910s and 1920s, only to be cut down during the Depression and wartime years, the rise of the regional professional theatres continued throughout the second half of the twentieth century. By 1996, the Theatre Communications Group reported that there were over 300 such resident professional theatres in the United States.⁶

The various causes of the expansion of theaters outside of New York are not the subject of this dissertation. However, one of the missions of the regional theatres contributed to the staging of European drama outside of New York City: the regional theatres rejected the commercialism of Broadway theatre and its safe and mainstream entertainment. As Julius Novick wrote in *The Performing Arts and American Society*, a 1978 report from the Ford Foundation, the regional theatres were founded in part to provide theatre professionals the opportunity to produce classic dramas and to experiment with new plays:

Broadway was and is a commercial institution. It devotes itself as best it can to making money, and it is a well-known fact that the imperatives of commerce and of art are not

⁶ Martha LoMonaco, "Regional/Resident Theatre" in *Post World War II to the 1990s* ed. Don B. Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of the American Theatre* ed. Don B. Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 226.

always the same. ... Meanwhile, the live theatre was faced with competition from movies and radio, and increasingly from television as well ... as matters got worse economically, they did not improve artistically. ... It became clear that there were certain things that Broadway could not or would not do adequately: classical revivals, revivals of even those modern classics that had originated on Broadway; new American plays too delicate or esoteric for the Broadway audience; certain kinds of European drama; experimental theater generally.⁷

Formerly, professional theatres outside of New York were relegated to the status of “tributary theatres,” from which talent might flow to Broadway, the center of wealth and influence in American theatre. At midcentury, however, some of these regional theatres, such as the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, became homes to troupes that increasingly resembled subsidized European theatres. Some even experimented with European-style repertory production. Already in 1961, the rapid expansion of the resident theatre movement and the changing character of the resident theatres contributed to Henry Hewes’ impression that the “whole ... structure of the American theatre” was “rapidly changing.”⁸

By 1970, the second-wave drama was no longer new, experimental or esoteric. Indeed, the plays of Beckett, Brecht, Ionesco and others had already been incorporated into the canon of Western drama. At times, they even seemed a little staid, a little dated: in Seattle in 1970, local theatre reviewer John Voorhees noted the effects of the passage of time on the work of Jean Genet: “A decade ago, *The Balcony* was startling and provocative. Today, one tends to agree with Genet’s ideas and ask, ‘But is it a good play?’”⁹ Now accorded the status of “classics,” these plays were regularly produced in the regions and in New York, both on and off Broadway.

Many resident theatre companies may have had the opportunity in the 1950s and 1960s to base their seasons on second-wave European drama, but only a few companies did so. A number

⁷ Julius Novick, “The Theater” in *The Performing Arts and American Society*, ed. W. McNeil Lowry (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978), 97.

⁸ Henry Hewes, “Broadway Postscript: The Frisco Kids,” *Saturday Review*, August 26, 1961, 26.

⁹ John Voorhees, “View Interesting from ACT’s *Balcony*,” *Seattle Times*, July 8, 1970, D6.

of contributing factors influenced a select number of resident theatre companies to take up the second wave of modernist drama. These factors include the expansion of the resident theatres, the work of a few directors who committed their careers to directing these plays, the work of critics and literary scholars whose reviews and academic articles helped to introduce and explain the new drama, the rapid translation of these plays into the English language, the emergence of academic journals devoted to the subject of theatre and drama, the commitment of key publishers to producing English-language translations of these plays and books of scholarship on them, and the expansion of theatre programs (particularly at the graduate level) in the American universities.

The rapid growth of the resident theatre companies in the 1950s and 1960s provided venues which could afford to risk these experimental and unfamiliar dramas. Some, like the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco and the Theatre Company of Boston, committed to repertoires comprised almost entirely of these new European plays. Yet by the mid-1960s, such a repertoire was no longer significantly avant-garde. In Seattle, A Contemporary Theatre's repertoire of absurdist plays reflected audience demand rather than founder Greg Falls' preferences.

Another key factor which contributed to the resident theatres' ability to produce these plays was the work of theatre critics who provided an introduction to the new playwrights and new genres. Some coined new terms which helped to classify the new dramas. For example, Irving Wardle coined the term "Comedy of Menace" in an article which appeared in the October, 1958 issue of the British journal *Encore* to describe the plays of Harold Pinter. In his 1961 book, Martin Esslin defined a new genre when he grouped number of existentialist playwrights together and described their work as "Absurdism." Likewise, literature professors in the

universities published articles and books on contemporary drama. Collectively, these theatre critics and literary professors educated American theatre professionals about the aims and goals of new European drama. Publications of these studies multiplied in the later 1950s and into the 1960s. For example, when the Actor's Workshop produced Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children* in 1956, Eric Bentley's chapter on Brecht in *The Playwright as Thinker* (1946) was still the primary source available in the United States on the German playwright's aims and methods. From 1946 forward Bentley published a series of articles and books on modern drama and theatre, including major essays on Brecht's plays, theories, and stagecraft. In the process he became the preeminent scholar and critic of Brecht in America.

Another factor which made the dramas of the second-wave modernism available to United States audiences was the rapid work of translators who rendered French and German texts available for America's English-speaking audiences. In 1946, Bentley's attempt to secure a contract for a *Collected Works of Brecht* had failed. As a result, Bentley published his translations of Brecht's plays, one at a time, in successive volumes of *From the Modern Repertoire* throughout the 1950s. By contrast, Genet's *The Blacks* was published in French by Marc Barbezat in 1958 and received its premiere in Paris in late 1959. The Grove Press published Bernard Frechtman's English translation in 1960 and the play received its American premiere in 1961. Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* was available for English language production almost simultaneously with its French premiere, in 1960.

Two key publishers – the Grove Press and Hill and Wang – were largely responsible for producing the English language translations and critical analyses of these plays in the United States. In addition to published books, several academic journals devoted to the study of the modern drama emerged during this period. Major journals include *Educational Theatre Journal*,

founded in 1949 by the American Educational Theatre Association, *TDR: The Tulane Drama Review* (established in 1957), *Modern Drama* (1958), and *Theatre Survey* (1960).

The emergence of academic journals devoted to the subject of theatre coincided with a record expansion of theatre programs in the American university. Programs in literature first provided a forum for encountering and understanding the new dramas, as is reflected in the academic careers of such scholars as Ruby Cohn, Leonard Pronko, David Grossvogel, and David Guichardnaud, before the expanding theatre programs took up the subject of the second-wave modernist dramas for study.

In addition to the increasing number of theatre programs in American universities, the character of these programs (many of which were still tied to departments of speech or English studies) was changing during the 1950s and the first part of the 1960s. As the NTC observed, “no longer does the avocational theater program or campus theater club dominate the scene. According to Hobgood, ‘the majority of our colleges now take theater to be a field of study in higher education, and three-fourths of the current programs find their home in the liberal arts college.’”¹⁰ The rise of graduate programs provide further evidence that theatre was becoming established as an area of academic study; twenty new programs came into existence during the first half of the 1960s.

Review of Scholarship

Various studies have chronicled key events and movements of twentieth-century American theatre history, such as *The Cambridge History of American Theatre* (2000), Mary C. Henderson’s *Theatre in America: 250 Years of Plays, Players and Productions* (1996), Christopher Bigsby’s *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama* (1982), and

¹⁰ *Theater in America*, 77.

Oscar Brockett and Robert Findlay's *Century of Innovation* (1991), which addresses European and American theatre since 1870. Collections of essays such as *American Theatre* (1967), John Lahr's *Acting Out America: Essays on the Modern Theatre* (1972), and Alvin B. Kernan's *The Modern American Theatre* (1967) address the topic of American theatre and modernism. In addition, the staging of first-wave European drama in the United States has received substantial scholarly attention. Studies such as Robert Schanke's *Ibsen in America: A Century of Change* (1988), and Lawrence Senelick's *The Chekhov Theatre: A Century of the Plays in Performance* (1997) address the European first-wave dramas in production in the United States. There are also studies of the Theatre Guild and Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory theatre, which introduced the first-wave European drama, such as *The Theatre Guild: The First Ten Years* (1929); Roy S. Waldau's *Vintage Years of the Theatre Guild, 1928-1939* (1972), Robert Schanke's *Shattered Applause: The Lives of Eva Le Gallienne* (1992), and Helen Sheehy's *Eva Le Gallienne: A Biography* (1996).

However, few studies exist which examine productions of the second-wave European modernist drama in the United States, and the connection between the regional theatres and the introduction of the second-wave dramas has not been explored. The third volume of *The Cambridge History of American Theatre* (2000), edited by Don B. Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby, covers the period from "World War II to the 1990s." The editors isolate the chapter on "Regional/Resident Theatre" from the chapters on "Broadway," "Off and Off-Off Broadway" and "Alternative Theatre." The four chapters are written, respectively, by Martha LoMonaco, Laurence Maslon, Mel Gussow, and Marvin Carlson. There is little or no connection made between theatre in New York City and theatre around the country, suggesting that the development of the resident theatres has nothing to do with modernist and avant-garde theatre.

Beckett, Brecht, and Pinter are mentioned once in the regional theatre chapter; other second-wave playwrights from Europe are invisible. Except for a reductive paragraph on the Actor's Workshop, the *Cambridge History of American Theatre* provides no account of the arrival and staging of the second-wave playwrights at the regional theatres.

Martin Gottfried's account of postwar American theatre, *A Theatre Divided* (1967), disregards the resident theatres out of hand because they lie outside of New York, "where American creative life is centered."¹¹ For Gottfried, the resident theatres are "outside the modern theater dialogue, relying on inbred self-analysis and inadequate journals," and have "little effect upon the mainstream (Broadway) theater, especially in regard to new plays."¹²

Historians like Joseph Ziegler in *Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage* (1973), Gerald Berkowitz in *New Broadways: Theatre Across America* (1982), and Julius Novick in *Beyond Broadway* (1968) have composed specific studies on little theatre movement of the 1920s and the resident theatre movement at midcentury, but they do not address the key role played by the regional theatres in introducing second-wave dramas to the American public.

Other scholars have limited themselves to focused studies of the dramatic work of a single playwright, such as Ruby Cohn's *A Beckett Canon* (2001), Rosette C. Lamont's *Ionesco* (1973), Arnold P Hinchliffe's *Harold Pinter* (1967), and Timo Tiusanen's *Dürrenmatt: A Study in Plays, Prose, Theory* (1977). While this literary study is valuable, few of these analyses consider production of the plays – those that do discuss theatre as well as drama do not address the productions of resident theatre companies. Some academics specialize solely in French or German literature, offering interpretations (in English) on the modern drama in those languages,

¹¹ Martin Gottfried, *A Theatre Divided: The Postwar American Stage* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), 111.

¹² Martin Gottfried, *A Theatre Divided: The Postwar American Stage* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), 115.

such as David Grossvogel's *20th Century French Drama* (1961). Others survey movements or groups of European playwrights, such as Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961), Styan's *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice* (1981), Brustein's *The Theatre of Revolt* (1964), Gilman's *The Making of Modern Drama* (1974), and Eric Bentley's *The Playwright as Thinker* (1946) and *Theatre of War: Modern Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (1973). Finally, some scholarship focuses specifically on avant-garde theatre groups and especially the Off-Off Broadway fringe theatres.

There has been no single attempt at a comprehensive study connecting the rise of the regional theatres to the introduction of the second-wave European modernist drama in the United States at midcentury. It is my goal to show how second-wave plays arrived in America. This requires a study which can draw from and unite all these branches of scholarship, and trace the shared history of all of these movements with the arrival of second-wave European modernism.

In order to understand how and why the directors of the regional theatres were motivated to produce these unfamiliar European plays, and how their productions contributed to the changing landscape of the American theatre, my dissertation draws upon the archival records of these theatres and their directors. My chapter on The Actor's Workshop of San Francisco mines the program notes written by Herbert Blau for the theatre's productions for evidence of the company's intentions. Blau, co-founder and co-director of the theatre, provided me with a copy of his program notes for my research, a select number of which have recently been published in Blau's posthumous volume, *Programming Theater History* (2013). Blau's early academic writings also provided insight into how and why these plays were staged. My chapter on A Contemporary Theatre ("ACT"), draws upon both the theatre's archival records and the University of Washington's School of Drama records from the period. Both collections are

housed at the University of Washington. I also accessed archival materials at the Seattle Public Library, which maintains a collection (albeit incomplete) of ACT playbills, and scrapbooks which were assembled by SPL arts librarians in the 1960s. My chapter on the Cleveland Play House draws upon the personal papers of Frederic McConnell, which are housed at the University of Oregon. The archives of the Cleveland Play House itself are not currently accessible. These archives were donated by the theatre to Case Western Reserve University. Archivists of the university are currently processing these collections, which will become a part of the University's permanent holdings. However, in response to my research query this winter, the team of archivists provided me with digital reproductions of some of these materials. They scanned and photographed newspaper clippings and transcripts of television and radio reviews preserved (or not) in the Play House's scrapbooks which pertained to productions of these second-wave dramas. In order to understand how these plays were received by their audiences, I rely upon theatre reviews from local daily newspapers in the period, such as the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Seattle Times* and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Whenever possible, I compared these reviews with those at the *San Mateo Times*, the *Oakland Tribune*, *The Argus* (Seattle), the *Cleveland News*, the *Cleveland Press*, and *The Catholic Universe Bulletin* (Cleveland).

Organization

My dissertation begins with a contextual chapter that provides a survey of the key factors which contributed to the arrival and staging of the second-wave plays at various resident theatre companies such as the Actor's Workshop, the Charles Playhouse, the Theatre Company of Boston, A Contemporary Theatre, the Alley theatre, and the Cleveland Play House. This chapter, and an appendix which provides a chronological production history of key plays and

developments in the American theatre during this era, provide the frame for my study. Between these two book-ends, I provide focused case studies of three of these resident theatre companies: The Actor's Workshop in San Francisco, the Cleveland Play House, and A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle. These three theatres present distinct histories of the staging of second-wave plays: the most revolutionary of the three, the Actor's Workshop, made production of the second-wave dramas its mission and the basis of its identity. By contrast, the Cleveland Play House, after some early productions of second-wave dramas in the late 1950s and early 1960s, relegated the second-wave plays to a minor (if consistent) place in the theatre's repertoire. A Contemporary Theatre was committed to the production of second-wave dramas from its inception. However, ACT was founded in 1965, by which time this commitment was no longer revolutionary. ACT followed in the wake of innovators like the Workshop; its success was evidence that the second-wave dramas had already been embraced by American theatre in general.

Each of these companies was also connected to several of the key contributing factors described in the contextual chapter. Directors whose careers reflected a commitment to the second-wave drama directed at the Workshop (Alan Schneider and William Ball) and ACT (Mel Shapiro). Blau and Falls contributed articles to the new academic theatre journals, and McConnell published articles on the Cleveland Play House's open stage in national newspapers and in *Ten Talents in the American Theatre* (1957). All three theatres were connected to American universities in some way, and their collaborations (with Stanford, Western Reserve University and the University of Washington, respectively) reflected the new experiments in training students by combining the practical work of professional theatre production with academic study of the theatre and drama. Each theatre was also committed to developing close

ties to its community and educating its audiences about the new drama: the Workshop, ACT and the Play House all held post-performance talkbacks to encourage questions and discussion, and all three theatres offered performances for students, in order to introduce local youth to live theatre. In addition, the Play House and ACT maintained apprenticeship programs, training young people for careers at resident theatres.

The contextual chapter identifies the key factors and trends that contributed to the arrival and staging of the second-wave plays. These factors, which I outlined above, include the contributions of specific directors, audiences, theatre critics, cultural critics, translators, publishers, academic journals, literary scholars at the universities, and university theatre programs. In various ways these factors created a cultural condition in the United States that brought about the changing landscape of modern theatre. This chapter identifies the national significance of productions by directors such as Alan Schneider, David Wheeler, Herbert Blau, Jules Irving and David Brooks, whose careers reflect a commitment to producing these plays for American audiences. Of course, these productions could not have occurred without the work of such translators as Bernard Frechtman, Derek Prouse, Donald Allen, and Eric Bentley. The translations of the texts made the new movement accessible to the United States' English-speaking population. New academic journals emerged, publishing translated plays and scholarly analysis, some of which were being produced in new academic programs (in theatre and in literature) devoted to the study of second-wave modernism.

Three subsequent chapters will be devoted to case studies of regional theatres which produced second-wave dramas: the Actor's Workshop of San Francisco, A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, and the Cleveland Play House in Ohio. Of these three theatres companies, the

Actor's Workshop is the most significant to my study, as the identity of this theatre was bound up with the arrival of the second wave.

In San Francisco, two university professors, Jules Irving and Herbert Blau, formed a theatre which emerged as a powerhouse repertory company. Initially organized as a private workshop for actors to hone their craft, the basis of the theatre's identity shifted from a focus on the actor to a focus on the repertoire in the mid-1950s as the theatre began to produce the plays of the second wave. Though the theatre's repertoire included a wide range of classic plays of the Western canon (including Sophocles, Aristophanes, Moliere, Shakespeare and Jonson), the Workshop produced a significant number of second-wave plays during its thirteen-year existence: Brecht's *Mother Courage* (1956), Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1957) and *Endgame* (1959), Osborne and Creighton's *Epitaph for George Dillon* (1959), Ionesco's *Jack* and *The Chairs* (1959), Dürrenmatt's *The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* (1960), Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1960), Whiting's *Saint's Day* (1960), Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1961), Genet's *The Maids* (1961), Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1961), Beckett's *Happy Days* (1962), Brechet's *Galileo* (1962), Pinter's *A Slight Ache* and *The Dumb Waiter* (1962), Genet's *The Balcony* (1963), Pinter's *The Caretaker* (1963), Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1963), Pinter's *The Collection* (1965), and Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* (1965). The company is also connected to several key contributing factors described in the contextual chapter: Blau began to publish in academic theatre journals in 1954, and the program notes he composed for the Workshop's productions are littered with references to recent publications by the Grove Press. The Workshop preferred Bentley's translations of Brecht's plays, and contacted Bentley to acquire additional, unpublished song lyrics for their production of *Mother Courage*.

In Seattle, the head of the University of Washington's School of Drama, Gregory Falls, founded A Contemporary Theatre in order to provide himself and his colleagues additional opportunities to apply the principles of their art. In the close collaboration between UW and ACT, Falls realized the ideal which many academic institutions strove to establish in the 1960s: he combined the academic study of theatre with the professional production of theatre. From the very beginning, ACT was committed to producing a repertoire of avant-garde dramas. However, in the second half of the 1960s, this was no longer a risky or adventurous commitment. Falls' choice to produce the new drama was motivated by local demand: as head of the UW School of Drama, Falls was frequently invited to lecture local groups on the Theatre of the Absurd in the early 1960s. Seattle audiences craved absurdist drama; the demands of ticket sales and audience polls directed Falls to commit his new theatre to the avant-garde dramas of Europe's second-wave modernism. By the time ACT was formed in 1965, absurdist drama had already been accepted into the Western canon. ACT's sustained commitment to Absurdist drama, particularly the plays of English playwright Harold Pinter, reflects the change which had already occurred in the American theatre.

The Cleveland Play House, a product of the Little Theatre movement in the early twentieth century, was founded in 1915. In many ways, the Play House provided a model for the regional theatres of the 1950s and 1960s: it was a not-for profit organization partly subsidized by donations from charitable foundations; it maintained a permanent ensemble of professional actors; it cultivated ties to its community through its Children's Theatre, Apprenticeship and Fellowship training programs; its cooperative relationship with a local University benefited both organizations through shared resources and talent; its open stage served as a model for the Vivian Beaumont theatre at Lincoln Center; and it was committed to producing non-commercial

plays. While the Play House's commitment to the avant-garde drama had peaked in the 1920s with its productions of the first wave of European modernist drama, the Play House offered early productions of plays by Brecht (*Mother Courage* in 1958) and Ionesco (*Rhinoceros* in 1962), and produced four second-wave plays in its 1962-1963 season. Though not as revolutionary as the Actor's Workshop, the Play House consistently found a place for the existentialist second-wave dramas in its regular repertoire from the 1950s onward.

In a short, concluding chapter I show that New York City was not completely lacking in second-wave productions. In particular, I identify a few key productions of second-wave European drama in the developing theatres of Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway. This chapter considers the work of groups like David Brooks' Rooftop Productions, which premiered Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and *Jack, or The Submission* at the Sullivan Street Playhouse and Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* in America at the Cherry Lane Theatre in 1958. In this way I want to overcome the false dichotomy between the regional theatres and New York which often structures historical narratives of theatre in the United States, as in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre*.

Finally, I include two appendices. The first, organized as a timeline ranging from 1950 to 1970, chronicles the arrival of major plays of the second-wave. I include the dates of European premieres of the plays, first publication, translation into English and publications in the United States, the English-language premiere and (where this differs) the American premiere. A second appendix tracks the appearance of articles in academic journals which take up the topic of the second-wave dramatists.

Chapter One: The Second-Wave of European Drama in America – Contributing Factors

Many factors contributed to the introduction of the second-wave modernist dramas to the United States, and to their gradual acceptance by American audiences during the 1950s and the 1960s. As the regional (or resident) theatre companies proliferated across the United States, some of these theatres began to produce the dramas of the second wave. In addition, a few key directors, like Alan Schneider (1917-1984), Michael Murray (1932-), and David Wheeler (1925-2012) dedicated their careers to producing the new European dramas.

Alan Schneider, perhaps the preeminent American director of Samuel Beckett's plays, premiered Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1956) at the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami. Schneider was an itinerant theatre worker who directed the plays of second-wave modernism at various theatres around the country: at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., he directed Osborne and Creighton's *Epitaph for George Dillon* (1959), Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (April, 1961), Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (October, 1961), and Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* (1963). At the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas, Schneider directed a production of *Waiting for Godot* (September, 1959). At the University of Wisconsin, he directed Ionesco's *The Chairs* and John Mortimer's *The Dock Brief* (July, 1961), and Pinter's *The Dumbwaiter* and Beckett's *Act Without Words II* (July, 1962). At the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey, Schneider directed Beckett's *Happy Days* (January, 1962). At Stanford University, he directed Brecht's *A Man's a Man* (August, 1962). In July, 1964, Schneider also directed Beckett's *Film*, a filmscript which Barney Rosset of the Grove Press had commissioned

from the playwright to inaugurate Evergreen Theatre, a new branch of the Grove Press devoted to producing recordings of plays and filmscripts by some of the Grove Press' featured authors.¹³

Michael Murray, co-founder and artistic director of the Charles Playhouse in Boston until 1968, directed a number of second-wave dramas at his theatre, including Osborne and Creighton's *Epitaph for George Dillon* (1959); Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1960) and Krapp's *Last Tape* (on a double bill with Sartre's *No Exit* in 1961); Ionesco's *The Chairs* (on a double bill with Genet's *The Maids* in 1961) and *Rhinoceros* (1963); Pinter's *The Collection* and *The Lover* (on a double bill in 1965) Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* (1962), *Galileo* (1966), and *Mother Courage and all her Children* (1967); and Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence* (1967).

At the Theatre Company of Boston, which he founded in 1963, David Wheeler staged no less than a dozen of the second-wave plays in less than a decade. He directed Albert Camus' *Caligula* (1964); Sławomir Mrożek's *Charlie* (on a double bill with Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, in 1965); Brecht's *In the Jungle of Cities* (1964), *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1965), *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (1966), and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1967); the American premieres of three John Arden plays: *Live Like Pigs* (1965), *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* (1966) and *Left-Handed Liberty* (1968); Harold Pinter's *A Slight Ache* (1964) and *The Birthday Party* (1966); Beckett's *Act Without Words* (on a triple bill with Samuel Beckett's *Play* and John Mortimer's *The Lunch Hour*, in 1965) and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1967); and Peter Weiss' *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* (1966).

Another key factor which helped to introduce and explain the new dramas of Europe was the work of critics and literary scholars. Their essays, which appeared in academic journals such

¹³ According to Rosset in *Obscene: A Portrait of Barney Rosset and the Grove Press*, production of Beckett's *Film* cost so much that the Evergreen Theatre was abandoned afterward.

as *The Kenyon Review* (founded 1939), *The Sewanee Review* (1892), and *The American Scholar* (1932), *Comparative Literature* (1949), and *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (1941) and national publications such as *The Partisan Review* (1934), *The New Republic* (1914), *The Nation* (1865), *Horizon* (1958), *Theatre Arts* (1916), and *The Saturday Review* (1924).

In the pages of these publications, figures such as Eric Bentley (drama critic at *The New Republic* from 1952 to 1956) and Robert Brustein (drama critic at *The New Republic* since 1959, though the frequency of his contributions dropped off after Brustein assumed the leadership of the Yale School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre in 1966) served as both theatre critics and literary scholars.

Bentley, playwright and professor at Columbia University (from 1953 to 1969), was a prolific author, editor and translator, and particularly key to introducing the dramas and theories of Brecht. Indeed, in 1964 Herbert Blau proclaimed that Bentley's anthologies "have done more than all of Broadway to enliven theatre in America."¹⁴ When the Actor's Workshop produced Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children* in 1956, Eric Bentley's chapter on Brecht in *The Playwright as Thinker* (1946) was still the primary source available in the United States on the German playwright's aims and methods available. From 1946 forward Bentley published a series of articles and books on modern drama and theatre, including major essays on Brecht's plays, theories, and stagecraft. The *Bulletin of the National Theatre Conference* published his report, "Brecht on the American Stage" in July, 1948; his article "German Stagecraft Today" appeared in the Autumn, 1949 issue of *The Kenyon Review*, *Theatre Arts* published Bentley's "Traveler's Report" in January and in June, 1949, and his report "World Theater 1900-1950" in December.

¹⁴ Herbert Blau, *The Impossible Theatre* (New York: Collier Books, 1964), 69.

Two other scholars, John Willett and Martin Esslin, also made key contributions to Brecht scholarship, with their own books on Brecht, both published in the United States 1960, and reviewed by Bentley for the *Tulane Drama Review*. In England, John Willett championed Brecht's still-unpopular dramas in a lengthy article in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1956. Methuen published Willett's *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht: A Study from Eight Aspects*, in London in 1959. The book was subsequently published in the United States by New Directions. Esslin's text was also first published in London in 1959, under the title *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, by Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd. The American edition of Esslin's text, renamed *Brecht: The Man and his Work*, was published by Doubleday (1960).

Of the two books, Esslin's was more influential. Frederic McConnell, director of the Cleveland Play House, wrote to director Benno Frank that, before reading Esslin's books, he had been "bothered by being unable to understand what really were [Brecht's] theories as expounded upon by English and American writers. That is to say, I was never able to get away from emotion and illusion which Brecht was supposed to deny – especially in *Mother Courage* in which there was plenty. Now, perhaps, we can go ahead and produce Brecht and get some theatrical sense out of it."¹⁵ Esslin's book even inspired Paine Knickerbocker, who reviewed the text for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1960. Knickerbocker used the review to publicly recant his negative review of The Actor's Workshop's 1956 production of *Mother Courage*. Uneducated on the subject of Epic theatre, Knickerbocker explained, "it was my unhappy experience as dramatic editor to criticize the Actor's Workshop's American premiere of *Mother Courage* not in terms of

¹⁵ Frank McConnell to Benno Frank, April 5, 1960 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

‘epic theater’ and ‘alienation’ but merely as a rather uninteresting production, and what an uproar that lamentable and admittedly inexcusable naivete provoked!”¹⁶

Perhaps Esslin’s greatest single contribution to the scholarship of the era, however, was his *Theatre of the Absurd*, published in 1961 by Doubleday. Esslin previewed his book with an article, “The Theatre of the Absurd,” in the May, 1960 issue of *TDR: Tulane Drama Review* (the same issue which carried Bentley’s review of Esslin and Willett’s books on Brecht). With this text, Esslin coined a term and defined a genre which seemed to describe many of the new dramas coming from Europe. The impact of Esslin’s text was felt immediately; Herbert Blau adopted the new term immediately, as the title of his article, “The Popular, the Absurd, and the ‘Entente Cordiale,’” in the March, 1961 issue of *TDR* demonstrates. William I. Oliver, critical of Esslin’s book, nevertheless invoked the term in the title of two articles in *Educational Theatre Journal*: “Between Absurdity and the Playwright” in 1963, and “After Absurdity” in 1965. Esslin’s book circled outside of academia, as well. By November 1962, Esslin’s term had become so established that a local theatre reviewer in Cleveland could invoke it offhand, in a complaint about the avant-garde theatre, and expect his audience to grasp the reference: “If others of his ilk had as delicious an imagination and mastery of the absurd as playwright Eugène Ionesco, the avant garde theater would have a much larger and appreciative audience.”¹⁷ In addition to Brustein, Bentley and Esslin, other scholars focused on the theory and practice of the second-wave dramas in their publications, among them Ruby Cohn, Leonard C. Pronko, Bernard Dukore, Herbert Blau, and David I. Grossvogel, and William I. Oliver.

¹⁶ Paine Knickerbocker, “The Art and Times of the Controversial Brecht,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 10, 1960, 25.

¹⁷ Peter Bellamy, “*Rhinoceros* Pricks Man’s Herd Instinct,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 8, 1962, 52.

By 1960, even magazines like *Esquire* and *Harpers* and newspapers like the *Christian Science Monitor* were running features on the new dramas, reviewing books about the new dramatists and the decentralization of the American theatre. As Frederic McConnell, director of the Cleveland Play House, wrote to John Beaufort, arts editor at the *Monitor*, “It seems to me that the Monitor has been unusually lively this summer in covering the art and theatre field outside of New York ... What is done West of the Hudson needs national publicity, to help give it force and credence. You and a few other editors are helping to open up the gates.”¹⁸

The writings of public intellectuals like Brustein and Bentley, whose work crossed the boundaries between academic journals and national publications with wide readership also began to provoke a new discussion of the role of the local theatre reviewer – and of theatre criticism in general. In the December, 1959 issue of *Educational Theatre Journal*, Francis Hodge opined that modernist drama necessitated a sophisticated critic, one who combined the practical experience of theatre production work (particularly directing work) with keen journalistic skills – and suggested that the ablest directors of the new drama also needed, like Brustein and Bentley, to demonstrate a capacity for critical analysis of the plays:

It is not surprising that some of the new dramatic critics of the last decade – Eric Bentley, Walter Kerr, Harold Clurman, for example – have brought to their work a background of experience in stage direction and have consequently provided some of the most stimulating theatre criticism of our time. As ‘directors in the aisle seats’ they are far-ranging in their treatment of the art form and have set high standards in play reviewing. As the twentieth-century theatre defined itself as a theatre of psycho-analytic and intellectual drama, as a theatre with a theatricalist stage and a diversity of expression far wider than any previous era has enjoyed, and as an art theatre that could be taken seriously on the level of painting and music, it was inevitable that the critics of such a theatre would need grounding in more than journalistic methods and literary studies. ... And as the need for sensitive direction increased, it was also inevitable that critically

¹⁸ Frederic McConnell, Frederic to John Beaufort, September 1, 1960 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

gifted people would assume the director's functions, for directing is criticism embodied in action.¹⁹

By 1960, the discussion of theatre critics and the quality of theatre criticism outside of New York was picking up steam on a national scale: “*Esquire Magazine, Harpers Magazine* and many other national publications have been focusing on this problem of theater criticism more this year than ever before and according to the latest announcement from the Ford Foundation they are taking some marginal interest in the subject also,” director Paul Baker wrote to Frederic McConnell at the Cleveland Play House in May.²⁰

New academic journals also emerged during this period, which were devoted to the subject of theatre and drama. The oldest of these was *Educational Theatre Journal*, founded in 1949 by the American Educational Theatre Association (AETA, also sometimes abbreviated ATA, established in 1949).²¹ *Educational Theatre Journal* regularly provided accounts of doctoral projects in process, completed masters' theses, and engaged its readers upon matters of proper curriculum and recommended plays for academic theatre. Gradually, *ETJ* embraced the new drama: the journal only published four articles on the second-wave during the 1950s; this number increased to 28 in the 1960s.

In 1955, professor Robert R. Corrigan founded *The Carleton Drama Review*, named for Carleton College, where he taught. The *Carleton Drama Review* was a small affair, appearing once a year and focused primarily on theatrical activities on the College's campus. Two years later, when Corrigan left Carleton for Tulane University, he took CDR with him and renamed the

¹⁹ Francis Hodge, “The Director as Critic,” *ETJ* 11.4 (Dec 1959), 280. I quote Hodge's article as it expresses a pervasive attitude (specifically, the rising interest in combining the study and practice of theatre) in the era. However, the grouping of Walter Kerr with Clurman and Bentley is curious; Kerr's criticism tended to be conservative, and he was dismissive of both the new drama and the regional theatres.

²⁰ Paul Baker to Frederic McConnell, May 25, 1960 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

²¹ The name of the journal was changed to *Theatre Journal* in 1979.

journal *The Tulane Drama Review*. *TDR* regularly featured translated articles and essays from the playwrights of the second wave, and articles from theatre scholars about the second wave. The journal even published short plays from second-wave dramatists; Eric Bentley served as the editor for *TDR*'s "Play Series." *The Tulane Drama Review* was renamed again in 1967, becoming *TDR: The Drama Review*, when editor Richard Schechner took the journal with him from Tulane to New York University. *Modern Drama*, founded in 1958, addressed the dramatic literature of both first-wave and second-wave modernism in both historical and formal terms. In 1960, the American Society of Theatre Research (founded in 1957 as an American version of the International Federation for Theatre Research) first published *Theatre Survey*, an academic journal of theatre history.

The British journal *Encore*, which was also available in North America, provided important insights about the second-wave dramas. Proclaiming itself "The Voice of the Vital Theatre," *Encore* published essays on "the art of drama by Eric Bentley, Michael Redgrave, Kenneth Tynan, and other critics or professional people. The focus of interest is on the present state of theatre and its future prospects, rather than on the past."²² Though distribution of English theatre books and periodicals was not widespread in the United States at midcentury, a New York publisher produced the journal for American readers. *Encore* also included features on American theatres, such as the journal's September, 1976 interview with Greg Falls, founder of A Contemporary Theatre.

In addition to the wealth of new scholarship on the second-wave dramas, the dramas of the second-wave from France, Germany, and elsewhere on the continent were increasingly

²² Glenn M. Loney, "Some European Theatre Publications," *ETJ* 12.1 (March, 1960), 18. Loney's footnote provides an address for *Encore*'s NY publisher and information about annual subscriptions, which included six issues and cost \$2.50.

available for production, thanks to the rapid work of several key translators. Bentley was the primary translator for Brecht's plays, though Charles Laughton and George Tabori's adaptations and translations became increasingly popular in the late 1960s. Derek Prouse and Donald Allen were the primary translators of Ionesco's plays in America; Donald Watson translated Ionesco for British audiences. Samuel Beckett was his own translator, moving between English and French, and a New Yorker, Bernard Frechtman, was the primary translator of Genet's dramas. In 1946, Eric Bentley had attempted to secure a contract to produce a *Collected Works of Brecht* in English. When this failed, Bentley resorted to publishing his translations of Brecht's plays, one at a time, in successive volumes of *From the Modern Repertoire* and *The Modern Theatre*. His translations of *Good Woman of Setzuan* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* were published in 1948 (as *Parables for the Theatre*), *The Threepenny Opera* appeared in 1949, *Galileo* in 1952, *Mother Courage* in 1955 (in volume two of Bentley's *The Modern Theatre* series), *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* in 1956, *The Measures Taken* in 1960 (in volume six of *The Modern Theatre*).²³ Not until 1961 did Bentley publish *Seven Plays*, a collection of his Brecht translations, some of which had since been revised. Yet as the 1950s wore on, the delay between European publication or theatrical premiere of the second-wave dramas and the publication of English-language translations in the United States shrank. Genet's *The Blacks* was published in French by Marc Barbezat in 1958 and received its premiere in Paris in late 1959. The Grove Press published Bernard Frechtman's English translation in 1960 and the play received its American premiere in 1961 at St. Mark's Playhouse in New York. Barbezat published Genet's *The Screens* in 1961; and in 1962 the Grove Press published Frechtman's translation of the play. Derek Prouse's translation of Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* was available in the United States in 1960, almost

²³ Eric Bentley, *The Brecht Commentaries 1943-1980* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981), 298.

simultaneous with its French premiere. The Grove Press, which published the play (with *The Leader* and *The Future is in Eggs*), touted Ionesco as “the master of the absurd,” using the phrase which had appeared in Esslin’s May, 1960 article and also in David Grossvogel’s *The Self-Conscious Stage in Modern Drama* (1958).

In the United States the majority of the initial translations on second-wave drama were published by Grove Press and Hill and Wang. These two presses also published critical studies of the playwrights, as did New Directions and Twayne Publishers. Soon other publishers joined in the outpouring of plays and studies. Also, Methuen paperbacks of some of the British playwrights’ works entered the U.S. market in the 1960s. The Grove Press was failing when Barney Rosset bought it in 1951 and established it as the preeminent publisher of avant-garde literature (particularly French) in the 1950s and 1960s, publishing the plays of Beckett, Ionesco, Dürrenmatt, Pinter, Arden, and Mrozek. Hill and Wang was founded in 1956 by Lawrence Hill and Arthur Wang. Wang had been the editor at A.A. Wyn publishers, and Hill was the sales manager when the two decided to depart and create their own independent publishing house. They purchased backlist books from A.A. Wyn and established the Dramabooks imprint. Hiring Eric Bentley as an advisor, they published plays in the new trade paperback format.²⁴ By 1962, the new publishing houses and the increasing number of publications available on the second-wave dramas was starting improve the diversity of plays available for resident theatre directors to produce. As Herbert Blau reflected in *The Impossible Theatre*, the primary agents of this initial change included “the Dramabooks of Hill and Wang, the offbeat authors of Grove Press, and the sophistication of the *Tulane Drama Review*.”²⁵

²⁴ Dinitia Smith, “Arthur W. Wang, Founder of a Bold Publishing House, is Dead at 87,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2005, B8.

²⁵ Blau, *Impossible Theatre*, 72.

As the translations multiplied and became available in inexpensive paperbacks, college professors began to teach the second-wave playwrights along with the first-wave modernists. It was easy and convenient to put the plays in the hands of the students. Hundreds, then thousands of undergraduate courses were created to study modern drama, including the newest second-wave plays. Brecht, Beckett, Ionesco, and Pinter went from being obscure playwrights to the ‘must-read’ dramatists of the 1960s. Academic journals in literature – such as *Yale French Studies* and *Comparative Literature* – were already publishing articles on the new dramatists in the mid-1950s. For example, in a book review published in 1954 in *Comparative Literature*, Samuel Beckett’s work is briefly mentioned in an offhand reference; clearly *Comparative Literature* expected its audience was already familiar with the playwright’s work. Soon, the university presses (e.g., Yale UP, Cornell UP, University of California Press) were publishing books on the new playwrights, such as Leonard Pronko’s *Avant-Garde: The Experimental Theatre in France* (University of California Press, 1962) and Ruby Cohn’s *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut* (Rutgers University Press, 1962). Even the commercial publishers of New York City began putting out books that college professors were writing on Beckett, Pinter, and the other playwrights, such as Eric Bentley’s *In Search of Theatre* (Knopf, 1953) Ihab Habib Hassan’s *The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett* (Knopf, 1967). In a very short period, a new generation in the 1960s—teachers and students alike—had embraced the drama and the theory of Epic theatre and the theatre of the absurd.

Just as the paperback industry fueled the classroom teaching of Beckett and other playwrights in the many literature departments, so too did the availability of the second-wave plays find a place rapidly in theatre programs. A 1968 report on the state of the American theatre produced by the National Theatre Conference (NTC) found that “in the decade following World

War II ... instructional programs in theater subjects increased at a rate of 28 percent, and new graduate programs flourished at this time.”²⁶ In the 1960s, the rate of growth of theatre programs had dropped to 20 percent, but this was still higher than “the rate of growth of higher education itself” which was only 15 percent in the first part of the decade.²⁷

In addition to the increasing number of theatre programs in American universities, the character of these programs was changing during the 1950s and the first part of the 1960s. As the NTC observed, “no longer does the avocational theater program or campus theater club dominate the scene. According to Hobgood, ‘the majority of our colleges now take theater to be a field of study in higher education, and three-fourths of the current programs find their home in the liberal arts college.’”²⁸ The rise of graduate programs provides further evidence that theatre was becoming established as an area of academic study. In 1960 the AETA released its first Directory of American College Theatre (DACT). According to the DACT, in 1960, there were 27 doctoral programs of study in theatre at American universities. Less than half of these programs existed before 1950.²⁹ The AETA’s second DACT, published in 1967, reported the creation of another twelve doctoral programs had been created. Expansion of theatre programs at the highest level of academic study, then, exceeded even the rapid rate of expansion of theatre programs in general during the period from 1950 to 1967.

Indeed, the number of doctoral programs expanded so rapidly during this period that the NTC complained about their ubiquity in its 1968 report: “the doctoral degree fetish has feverishly invaded the American educational theatre – some believe to its detriment. Research

²⁶ *Theater in America: Appraisal and Challenge*, eds. Robert E. Gard, Marson Balch, and Pauline Temkin (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1968), 76.

²⁷ *Theater in America*, 76.

²⁸ *Theater in America*, 77.

²⁹ The second DACT, published by the AETA in 1967, provides dates for when these programs were founded. Dates are missing for three of the twenty-seven programs named in the 1960 DACT; of the remaining 24 programs identified in the 1960 DACT, only eleven had been created before 1950.

specialists may not necessarily be excellent theatricians, yet the universities feel bound to place a major emphasis upon research.”³⁰ Instead of research specialists, the NTC called for closer contact between the university theatre and professional theatre companies, a trend which the NTC insisted was “one of the most important developments in American theater up to the present.”³¹ The combination seemed ideal in many ways; as Theodore Hoffman, chairman of the Theater Communications Group, observed, the educational theatre and regional theatre already shared an audience, one which the “rapidly spreading professional resident theaters, by producing the most challenging drama,” had “captured” from the academic theatre.³²

To varying degrees, these contributing factors – the work of directors, translators, scholars/critics, journals, publishers, and universities – affected the decision of the resident theatres to take up these dramas and perform them. Directors who chose to stage plays of the second-wave inspired their colleagues to do the same. Translators rendered the French and German scripts (and those from other areas of the European continent) accessible to the United States’ English-speaking audiences. Publishers who worked quickly to bring these plays out in print, particularly in the new, affordable paperback format, helped to distribute these texts across the country. The universities provided a forum for encountering and understanding the new dramas, and produced the scholars whose articles helped to raise awareness of the new drama’s origins, character and aims. Scholars and critics producing insightful introductions to the new dramatists and the journals which were founded to study the theatre helped resident theatres to mount better productions. In three subsequent chapters, I present case studies of three resident theatres which produced the second-wave dramatists: the Actor’s Workshop, the Cleveland Play

³⁰ *Theatre in America*, 75.

³¹ *Theatre in America*, 75.

³² Theodore Hoffman, “Dangers of Educational Theater: Professional Resident Companies have Exposed Poverty of Amateur Work,” *The New York Times*, September 1, 1963, X3.

House and A Contemporary Theatre. Wherever possible I note the influence of these contributing factors in the decisions made by these theatres to stage the dramas of the second-wave, to publish academic articles about their experiences, to collaborate with university programs, to offer their audiences subscriptions to academic journals, and to provide education about the aims of the new drama.

Chapter Two: The Actor's Workshop in San Francisco, California

The Actor's Workshop of San Francisco was formed on January 16, 1952 in a loft over a judo studio on Divisadero Street in San Francisco by San Francisco State college professors Jules Irving and Herbert Blau. Irving and Blau were both natives of New York: Irving (born Jules Israel) grew up in Manhattan, Blau in Brooklyn. The two met during their undergraduate studies at the University Heights campus of New York University. Irving was an actor, with some professional experience already: he had made his Broadway debut at the age of 13 as part of the massive 250-person cast of George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's 1939 historical revue, *The American Way*. At the University Heights campus, Irving was the head of the university's Hall of Fame Players. Blau, by contrast, was an engineering student who aspired to graduate study at MIT, but who had nevertheless submitted applications to and been accepted at both Stanford and Yale to study theatre. Blau accepted Stanford's offer on the advice of Irving (who had already accepted an offer from Stanford). At Stanford, the two men studied together and even lived together when they first moved to California in 1947, renting a room for a time in the home of theatre director F. Cowles Strickland, the head of the acting and directing program at the University.

Both men married professional actresses. Irving married first, returning to New York later in 1947 to wed Priscilla Pointer. The two had been sweethearts since their days as undergraduates at NYU. Pointer joined Irving in California. Blau, meanwhile, struggled to find his place in the drama program – the emphasis on practicalities of production and Strickland's emphasis, in particular, upon doing things the “right way” grated against Blau, who left the program and returned to New York before completing his Master's degree. Back in New York, Blau reconnected with Beatrice Manley, an actress who had been working as an artist-in-

residence at Stanford when Blau arrived in 1947. When Hubert C. Heffner, the executive head of the Stanford Department of Speech and Drama, wrote Blau to encourage him to return to Stanford and complete his Master's degree, Blau allowed himself to be persuaded – and in his turn, eventually persuaded Manley to return to California, too. One week after Blau completed his thesis project, a play called *Out of the Rain*, for his Master's degree (Blau's emphasis was playwriting), the two left Manley's son Richard with a friend and drove to Las Vegas and married at an all-night chapel on April 18, 1949.

Irving and Blau both found work at San Francisco State College after graduation from Stanford. After completing his doctoral degree in theatre, Irving, with his considerable experience as an actor and director, joined the faculty in the theatre department. Blau, who had taken time off during his graduate study and changed fields, had not yet completed his dissertation when he joined the faculty at San Francisco State.

With Heffner's encouragement, Blau completed his Master's degree in theatre with an emphasis in playwriting, but had become increasingly dissatisfied with the Stanford theatre program throughout the course of his graduate study. Fascinated by the play texts themselves, what Blau craved was a critical inquiry into drama *as literature*, rather than practical discussion of how the drama should be staged. He began to take courses in the English department, and upon the suggestion of Richard Foster Jones (the head of Stanford's English department), applied to Stanford's doctoral program in English. Yet though he changed departments, Blau remained interested in the theatre and dramatic texts. Drawn to the modernists, Blau's dissertation (directed by Yvor Winters) on the poetry and dramas of W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot combined his interests. Blau found work as an Assistant Professor and then Associate Professor in the

Language Arts department at San Francisco in 1950, while he completed his graduate studies. Blau received his Ph.D. in 1954.

Given the paucity of professional theatre in San Francisco, Blau and Irving decided to found a theatre company in order to offer their wives and some friends the opportunity to practice their craft. They originally organized the company to exercise and develop the acting talents of an entire ensemble. Initially they discussed the possibility of rehearsing and developing individual scenes, but this idea was dropped in favor of rehearsing full plays instead. As the company was not planning to stage productions for a paying audience, they felt free to select plays which might not be popular at the box-office.

The Actor's Workshop was organized as a non-commercial amateur theatre group. In its humble beginnings, the group met for rehearsals and discussions in a loft behind a judo academy which the directors had rented for around \$36 a month.³³ As Blau recalled in 1964, "if, when we formed our Workshop in 1952, it was without 'stars, fanfare, real estate, and capital,' it wasn't because we had principles against them, but because they simply weren't available to us."³⁴ However, the Workshop's poverty became a virtue. As amateurs, the actors and directors were freed from the economic pressures of professionalism, including the restrictive repertory preferences of a city where the professional theatre continued to be dominated by light summer stock fare and out-of-town tours of Broadway hits.

The history of the Actor's Workshop can be roughly divided into three periods, based on the defining qualities of the theatre company's identity: in an initial stage from 1952 to 1956, the

³³ "Irving and I each plunked down about eighteen dollars a month and rented a loft behind a Judo Academy and went about our ingenious business." Herbert Blau, *The Impossible Theatre* (New York: Collier Books, 1964), 116.

³⁴ Blau, *The Impossible Theater*, 126.

company was primarily an acting ensemble. During a transitional period from 1956-1959 the company began to shift focus from the actor and base its identity on the plays it was producing. From 1959 to 1964, the mature Workshop made its major contributions to the American theatre in its commitment to the plays of second-wave European modernism.

In the first four years of its existence from 1952 to 1956, Irving and Blau established the basic foundations of the company's identity. Originally organized as a kind of private study group for actors, the group soon changed its function and began offering theatre productions for the San Francisco public. By 1955, it had become a professional Equity house. The emphasis of the early Workshop was the actor: the group was designed to give experienced actors the opportunity to explore more challenging and varied roles than were available in San Francisco's professional theatre. The company's core value was "ensemble playing." This meant the group would only consider plays that offered rewarding roles for every performer in the company, which numbered 22 members at the end of 1952. The repertoire the company produced during these years favored European classics and plays of first-wave modernism from Europe and America (e.g. Ibsen, Chekhov, Miller and Williams). These plays were considered standard fare for any theatre that had committed itself to "serious drama."

Throughout the early stages of the Workshop's development, a policy of "slow growth" served as a check on rapid expansion: Irving and Blau expanded their company slowly, wary of overextending their young theatre. Throughout most of its fourteen-year existence, the Actor's Workshop remained essentially a group of amateurs. Despite the company's attainment of professional status with the Equity union in 1955, the actors did not receive Equity wages (primarily because there were no funds to pay appropriate salaries).

During this initial period, the young company also established its permanent residence in San Francisco's professional theatre district. Originally the group offered private performances for an invited audience in a loft over a judo studio. Yet demand for seats quickly exceeded the seating capacity of the loft once the company began offering public performances. In August, 1953, the Workshop acquired the 250-seat Downtown Temple on Elgin Street in the Market district. As the theatre's audience continued to grow, the company acquired the 630-seat Marines Memorial Theatre in April of 1955 in the heart of San Francisco's professional theatre district. However, as the space at the Marines Memorial Association did not include offices or other necessary subsidiary spaces, the Workshop continued to lease the Downtown Temple, using the smaller theatre for studio productions until a San Francisco freeway expansion forced the demolition of the smaller theatre.

In a transitional middle period from 1956-1959, several changes occurred in the way the Actor's Workshop functioned as a theatre: the company began to plan entire seasons in advance, it instituted post-play discussions with its regular audiences (the Workshop previously only offered such discussions for students), and it began to experiment with the new, second-wave modernist dramas from Europe. These outward signs reflected a shift in the company's aesthetic values away from an emphasis on the actor's craft as the Workshop's repertoire became the basis of the theatre's identity. While an early experiment (the American premiere of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*) folded in 1956, the theatre's production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* was an unqualified success in 1957. During this transitional period the company also began to garner national and international attention through its partnership with the Ford Foundation and when it was selected to represent America's professional regional theatre at the World's Fair in Brussels in 1958. As part of the Ford Foundation's Playwrights

Program, the theatre received a subsidy from the Foundation to fund productions of two new works by American playwrights. As part of this program, the Workshop produced Sidney Michael's *The Plaster Bambino* in 1959 and Miriam Stovall's *The Rocks Cried Out* in 1960. Blau also applied for and received a Foundation grant to travel to Europe and study European repertory theatres.

From 1959 to 1964, the mature Actor's Workshop emerged. Its identity was rooted in the repertoire of new European dramas, which dominated the Workshop's theatrical seasons, particularly in the early 1960s. These productions also constituted the Workshop's major contribution to American theatre in general. The smaller and more experimental of these productions were often staged first at the Encore, a small studio theatre on Mason, one block from the Marine's Memorial, which the Workshop opened in May, 1959. The company became one of four regional theatres subsidized by the Ford Foundation for the three years from 1960-1963, an arrangement which pushed the company to finally abandon its policy of "slow growth" and to embrace a rapid expansion of its acting company, performance schedule and fundraising efforts. From about 100 members in July 1960, the company had grown to include over 140 members in 1962: with Ford subsidy, 20 staff members and 13 actors were paid salaries, and over 100 members continued to donate their time and efforts as volunteers.³⁵ Throughout the theatre's growth and development (which was particularly rapid during its years as a Ford Foundation theatre), some factors remained constant: from the early days of the Workshop, Irving and Blau (and the entire ensemble) committed themselves to the prestige of artistic excellence, often at the expense of economic success.

1952-1956: Beginnings

³⁵ Barbara Bladen, "Actors Given Great Chance," *San Mateo Times*, July 16, 1960, 31.

One of the first decisions made by the members of the Workshop was to rehearse and prepare entire plays rather than just performing individual scenes. These initial productions in 1952, however, were not presented to the general public. Instead, the Workshop offered very limited runs to invited audiences of friends and colleagues. One local theatre critic, Luther Nichols of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, was allowed to attend, but only under the condition that he agreed not to write about the Workshop or review its production work while these productions themselves remained private.

The first production, Philip Barry's *Hotel Universe* (1930), was offered only once, to fifty people, on February 20, 1952. The Workshop's second production, John Van Druten's *I am a Camera* (1951), was offered for two nights in May, 1952. Once again, only fifty guests were invited to attend the production on each of its two nights. *I am a Camera* proved to be the Workshop's final underground production, for, as Nichols recalled in 1953, "word soon spread of [the Workshop's] excellence," and before long an expanded Workshop troupe (the group now included 40 members) was cramming every inch of the loft's space to accommodate 100 seats at their productions.³⁶ The Workshop's small handful of private performances could no longer meet the increasing number of audience members seeking admission to its productions.

In response, Blau and Irving decided to transform their private theatre group into a public theatre and to open their productions to general audiences rather than limiting them to a small circle of invitees. Beginning with their next production, *Hedda Gabler*, which opened October 10, 1952, they also decided to advertise in local newspapers, rather than relying on word of mouth and their private mailing list to notify potential audiences of upcoming performances.

³⁶ Luther Nichols, "Another New Little Theater Group Steps Into the Spotlight," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 1953, 14.

Yet, in order to protect their budding theatre from overextending itself by expanding too rapidly, Irving and Blau established a formal policy of “slow growth” for the Workshop. This policy guided the group’s development from its first forays into the public arena through its emergence as the first regional Equity house to negotiate its own form of the Off-Broadway theatre contract with the union in 1955. In part, this policy forced the company to be very selective when adding new members. For example, though Irving announced in 1953 that he was “interested in acquiring new members for his group,” by 1955 the group’s 50 members represented only about 10% of the actors who had auditioned to join the Workshop in the first three years of the company’s existence.³⁷

The policy of “slow growth” also committed Workshop members to a regular practice of self reflection: it was important that the group constantly monitor not only its collective talent (which continued to develop and change throughout the theatre’s fourteen-year history) but also its limitations. Though the Workshop selected plays with roles that would challenge the ensemble to develop as actors, the company also collectively agreed not to undertake projects which lay beyond the abilities of the actors and directors to produce. To that end, Irving directed the first four productions at the Workshop, while Blau was still learning how to direct.

In early productions, Irving and Blau both relied heavily upon their wives and upon Irving to carry lead roles in Workshop productions. In *I am a Camera*, Priscilla Pointer played Sally Bowles, Irving played Fritz, and Beatrice Manley played Natalia Landauer. Manley played the title role in *Hedda Gabler*. In *Blood Wedding*, Manley played the Mother and Priscilla played the Bride. In *Playboy of the Western World*, Pointer played Pegeen Mike and Irving played Christy Mahon. In *Summer and Smoke*, Manley starred as Alma Winemiller. Meanwhile, other

³⁷ Theresa Loeb Cone, “Little Theater News: New San Francisco Quarters,” *Oakland Tribune*, August 30, 1953, B3; Theresa Loeb Cone, “Little Theater News,” *Oakland Tribune*, April 24, 1955, B3.

company members soon distinguished themselves as valuable, core members of the Workshop's acting ensemble, such as Stan Weese, Tom Rosqui, Joseph Miksak and Norma Jean Wanvig. Founding member Richard Glyer emerged as the company's makeup artist, Ralph McCormic as the company's technical director and set and light designer. Robert Searle frequently designed the sound and music for the Workshop's productions, and Jean Parshall became a lead costume mistress and designer. To combat the temptation to overstate the company's standards in advertising copy or interviews in local papers, Irving insisted to local newspapers that the Workshop was "still in the stage of incubus and [would] be so until the end of 1953," and politely requested that drama critics refrain from publishing too much about the company or its productions until it had been given two years to gestate and develop.³⁸

In addition, despite enthusiasm for the transformation of the Actor's Workshop into a commercial theatre, Blau suggested to Irving that perhaps the company should still retain something of its original commitment to actor development. After the production of *I am a Camera* in 1952, Blau proposed to Irving that the company, in addition to their new plan to stage full productions for the general San Franciscan public, should develop a private program of scene performance within the company. He suggested that Workshop members would prepare scenes and perform them for the rest of the Workshop company for review, discussion and critique. Blau thought it important that members of the Workshop should continue to hone and expand their skills outside the pressure of public performance. Blau wanted to avail himself of this opportunity in order to develop his directing skills. Up to this point, he had been serving the company as a dramaturg while Irving served as the director. Blau acquired experience as a director in these training sessions before taking on the responsibility of directing a Workshop

³⁸ Theresa Loeb Cone, "Little Theater News: Top Secret Stuff," *Oakland Tribune*, December 28, 1952, A53.

production. Other members of the company also used these training sessions to develop their talents: Robert Symonds, R. G. Davis and Lee Breuer all joined the company as actors and subsequently learned to direct in the Workshop's private training sessions. Blau later reflected that this "workshop program" was a "salvational expedient" at the theatre, keeping "the critical spirit alive within the company" whenever time could be spared between productions.³⁹

As the Workshop's audiences expanded, it became apparent that this "study group" for actors needed to become an official organization. The Workshop's productions in the Divisadero loft soon became a problematic liability: the space was small and could only accommodate 100 audience members – and that required the directors to violate the loft's fire code, overcrowding the space and blocking the fire escape during performances. This dangerous arrangement rendered the directors financially vulnerable, however: should anything happen to their patrons, they alone were responsible. The theatre was hardly generating a profit, but the directors realized they needed to establish the company as a legitimate business. They struggled at first to incorporate, for, as Blau recalls, "nobody would insure us, not even Lloyd's of London."⁴⁰ Finally, Irving and Blau succeeded in establishing the San Francisco Drama Guild on March 3, 1953, issuing \$10,000 of stocks (1,000 shares at \$10 each).

Increasing audience size also forced the company to seek larger accommodations for their productions. In August, 1953, the company acquired a new theatre at 136 Valencia Street, with an auditorium entrance at 37 Elgin Street. The concrete frame building, the "Downtown Temple," was originally a Ford motor car storage plant, which had been subsequently converted

³⁹ Blau, *Impossible Theatre*, 164.

⁴⁰ Herbert Blau, *As If: An Autobiography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 153.

to a church and then to an arena theater.⁴¹ Despite the space's design, photographs of performances show that the company used a flat backdrop or curtain for a number of their productions, suggesting that the Workshop often utilized thrust or proscenium-style staging in productions, rather than arena-style staging.

The new Downtown Temple space could seat 250 people, more than twice the maximum number the directors could cram into the Divisadero loft. The company opened their new space with *Lysistrata*, starring Norma Jean Wanvig, in October, 1953. The selection of Aristophanes' comedy was a matter of both principle (Blau's "vaguely academic responsibility" to the classics of dramatic literature) and expedience, as "there were a number of new women in the group who were expecting more to do, around scene projects, than painting flats, running props, or even cleaning toilets."⁴² Blau, ever interested in "the bearing of each play on the potential of the [audience]," adapted *Lysistrata*, shaping the play to comment on local San Francisco politics.⁴³

With this production, the company began to experiment with Sunday evening performances. Previously, the Workshop had been offering performances on Fridays and Saturdays only, as it was difficult to draw Bay area audiences out to the theatre on weeknights. The Sunday evening performances, with an early curtain at 7 p.m. (on Friday and Saturday nights, performances began at 8:30 p.m.), were designed to cater to local students, who might not be able to attend the theatre's later performances on Friday and Saturday nights.

In February, 1954, the Workshop produced their first Arthur Miller play, *Death of a Salesman* at the Elgin theatre. Irving directed and played the role of Happy. Maurice Argent played Willy, Muriel Landers was Linda, Tom Rosqui was Biff, and Richard Glyer performed

⁴¹ Barbara Bladen, "Actors' Workshop Given Aid to Decentralize N.Y. Theater," *San Mateo Times*, December 5, 1959, A8.

⁴² Blau, *Impossible Theatre*, 152; Blau, *As If*, 178.

⁴³ Blau, *As If*, 152.

the role of Uncle Ben. With this production, San Francisco critics took note of the rising standards of professionalism in the company. Though a “first rate professional company” had already brought the play to San Francisco on tour, Theresa Loeb Cone, head drama critic for the *Oakland Tribune*, opined that “this group of ‘amateurs’ somehow manage to invest the tragedy with even deeper significance.”⁴⁴ Though the fledgling Workshop was only two years old, the production of *Death of a Salesman* demonstrated that this amateur company was already exceeding the professional touring theatre’s standards of production. “Only extravagant superlatives could convey this show’s excellence,” raved Cone, who praised the entire cast as well as the staging and light design of Ralph McCormic. Indeed, Cone suggested that the intimacy of the small Elgin space, which lacked an orchestra pit that might otherwise distance an audience from the action on stage, contributed to the play’s effect. “The audience almost has the illusion of participating in the Miller drama, to which [Irving] managed to give such universality that hardly a viewer can escape identification with some aspect of the tale.” With *Salesman*, the Workshop once again offered Sunday evening performances for students at 7:00 p.m.

After productions of Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* (directed by Blau), Noel Coward’s *Tonight at 8:30* (in which Stan Weese made his directorial debut with the company), and the humorous incongruity of pairing Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* with the anonymous medieval French farce, *Master Pierre Patelin* (both directed by Blau), the company mounted a second Miller play, *The Crucible*, on December 3, 1954. The play was an unqualified hit for the Workshop and helped to launch the theatre to professional status.

Though another Bay-area theatre, the Peninsula Little Theatre, had already announced their upcoming production of the play, the Workshop production opened first, making the

⁴⁴ Theresa Loeb Cone, “*Death of a Salesman* Given Best Staging So Far,” *Oakland Tribune*, March 8, 1954, E18.

Workshop's production the West Coast premiere of the play. Workshop actor Robert L. Ross (who had first appeared on stage with the company in 1952 as Lovborg in *Hedda Gabler*), directed the Workshop's production of *The Crucible*, which starred Irving as John Proctor and Pointer as the antagonist Abigail Williams. The program for the production credited no stage designer for *The Crucible's* "almost bare" staging, which consisted of a curtain backdrop and a few minimal props such as a bench, a lectern, and a stool. Yet local critics averred that the excellent production presented the play with such "sensitivity and intelligence" that it didn't "require elaborate backdrops."⁴⁵

Response to *The Crucible* was overwhelming. On January 2, 1955 (almost a month after the production had opened), Theresa Loeb Cone reported in the *Oakland Tribune* that performances were still "consistently sold out with turnaways every night."⁴⁶ By the end of January, the run of the production had been extended again as the play was still "so heavily attended that people are turned away at every performance."⁴⁷ Cone predicted the production would have to be extended into March; she was incorrect. *The Crucible* ran for four months in the Elgin space before being transferred to a new, larger theatre where the Workshop continued performing its hit production. Though the Workshop still limited performances to weekends only, by April 1, 1955, the production had been seen by over 10,000 Bay-area theatergoers and had sold out 45 times at Elgin Street.⁴⁸

The sold-out run of *The Crucible* may also have helped Irving to negotiate official recognition of his company's professionalism. In February 1955, Irving traveled to New York

⁴⁵ Theresa Loeb Cone, "Actor's Workshop Turns in Top Staging of *The Crucible*," *Oakland Tribune*, December 6, 1954, E30.

⁴⁶ Theresa Loeb Cone, "Experts Tell 'Why' of L.T. Expansion," *Oakland Tribune*, January 2, 1955, C13.

⁴⁷ Theresa Loeb Cone, "Little Theater News: Anniversary Party," *Oakland Tribune*, January 23, 1955, B3.

⁴⁸ "Actor Workshop Loves Location," *Lodi News-Sentinel*, April 1, 1955, 12.

City to meet with representatives from Equity, the professional theater union, while Workshop member Rudy Solari temporarily stepped into the role of John Proctor. By April, Irving had managed to acquire professional status for his theatre. The Actor's Workshop was the first off-Broadway Equity house outside of New York to negotiate its own contract with the union rather than to accept the standard union agreement for off-Broadway houses. Only five of the company's members were signed to Equity contracts in 1955: Irving, Pointer, Stan Weese, Ray Fry and Maurice Argent.⁴⁹

The Workshop's unique contract liberated it from the financial constraints of Equity's standard rates of pay, allowing the theatre to continue to maintain a high-quality repertoire and company with the gloss of professional status, despite the fact that throughout its fourteen-year existence, the Workshop could pay its members very little. As late as 1959, only two members of the company were receiving a full-time salary, and the weekly sum of all the Workshop actors' salaries (including the five Equity members) was only \$230.⁵⁰ Even Robert Symonds, one of the most valued members of the company as both actor and director, could not be paid a living wage until 1960, when the Workshop received a grant from the Ford Foundation that included an allowance for salaries for three of the ensemble's members. The Workshop's general manager, Alan Mandell, was unpaid; he lived in the back of his office at the Workshop. Gale Herrick, a retired businessman, served as a business advisor to Irving and Blau for the nominal sum of \$1 a year. Herrick's salary doubled to \$2 a year when he moved to New York with the company in late 1965. Yet the Workshop's relative poverty was also a condition which preserved the theatre's artistic integrity. As Blau explained in *The Impossible Theater*, while he would "have

⁴⁹ "Equity Contracts Signed by S.F. Actors' Group," *Oakland Tribune*, April 18, 1955, E25.

⁵⁰ Barbara Bladen, "Actors' Workshop Given Aid to Decentralize N.Y. Theater," *San Mateo Times*, December 5, 1959, A8; Joseph Zeigler, *Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 54.

liked to see most of our people paid well from the very first,” working without salary preserved the artistry of the actors – and the theatre as a whole.⁵¹ While Blau felt that “few people in any profession are prone by nature to incur risks,” theatre artists were particularly affected by public opinion and therefore “liable to be wary of, if not outright hostile to, what has not yet been approved by publicity.”⁵² The fact that the Workshop, from the first, had no expectation of being able to provide even a basic subsistence wage to its members, freed it from the temptation to appeal to public opinion and resort – as so many regional theatres did – to producing the kind of mainstream, reliable plays which had already proven their marketability on Broadway.

In addition to elevating the company’s status by association with Equity, Irving also managed another coup: he found a new home for the Workshop in the heart of San Francisco’s professional theatre district. In early 1955, Irving acquired the use of the 630-seat theatre at the Marines Memorial Association for the company. Located at the intersection of Sutter and Mason, the new space at the Marines Association was two blocks from the Geary theatre, which was home to professional touring shows in San Francisco. The Marines would serve as the Workshop’s mainstage theater for the duration of the company’s existence, but it lacked storage and subsidiary spaces like offices. Thus, the Workshop retained the Elgin Street space facilities and used the smaller space to mount productions and private performances of those scenes that company members continued to use as training sessions to hone their craft. The acquisition of the Marines, however, proved timely, as the Workshop was forced to abandon the Elgin space in 1956: the building was demolished to make room for the expanding San Francisco highway system.

⁵¹ Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 160.

⁵² Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 160.

Irving and Blau proclaimed the move to the Marines a triumph for the little theatre movement in San Francisco, and commensurate with their new status as professionals.⁵³ Still, the directors remained practical and cautious in company matters: the move to Marines was, initially, provisional. In fact, Irving announced that the Workshop would delay announcing the dates for its next production, Shaw's *Major Barbara*, while the company tested the waters at their new location. "If *The Crucible* can fill the 600 plus seats at the Marines Memorial nightly, then the Workshop will be encouraged to produce more shows there. If not, the Shaw play and subsequent productions will be staged at the 37 Elgin Street Theatre," reported Loeb Cone.⁵⁴

The Crucible needed to be restaged for the larger Marines theatre space. As Robert Ross had left the Workshop company, Blau was assigned the task of directing the new production, which ran for another two months in the new space to continued praise in the press. Though the Marines theatre could accommodate an audience almost three times the size of that at Elgin Street, the box office receipts continued to be "very comforting as audiences continue to flock to this unusually well-staged production."⁵⁵ The Workshop also took *The Crucible* on the road to nearby Santa Rosa, San Rafael, and Stockton. At the Santa Rosa Junior College, the Workshop performed the play as part of the performances offered at the Northwest Drama Conference in February, 1955; of the three performances offered at the Conference, the Workshop alone played to a full house of 700 at Santa Rosa.⁵⁶ *The Crucible* remained in the company's repertoire as one of its most successful and dependable productions, and the Actor's Workshop continued to revive the play whenever company coffers ran low.

⁵³ "Actor Workshop Loves Location," *Lodi News-Sentinel*, April 1, 1955, 12.

⁵⁴ Theresa Loeb Cone, "Little Theatre News," *Oakland Tribune*, April 10, 1955, B3.

⁵⁵ Theresa Loeb Cone, "*Camino Real* is Coming to Actors Workshop," *Oakland Tribune*, May 8, 1955, B3.

⁵⁶ Lafayette Osler, "Ukiah on the Campus," *Ukiah Daily Journal*, February 6, 1955, 7.

Though Miller's plays were perhaps the most popular and acclaimed productions at the Workshop, the popular American playwrights from the 1930s-1950s constituted just one small part of the Workshop's repertoire of "serious drama." From the outset, the Workshop's repertoire in this initial stage demonstrated Irving and Blau's commitment to canonical classic dramas, primarily drawn from what would have been termed the "modern" tradition. Specifically, the Workshop's repertoire indicated Irving and Blau's preferences for Europe's first wave of modernism and the corresponding naturalist/realist tradition which had developed in America. A strong preference for English and Irish works in the Workshop's repertoire reflects Blau's influence upon play selection: Blau was still writing his dissertation on the plays of W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot during the first two years of the Workshop's existence. In both his academic work and his involvement with the Workshop, Blau demonstrated a preference for the literature of the early-20th-century avant-garde. Irving, the experienced performer, director and professor of theatre, seems to have been shaped by the prevailing climate of the American theatre in his selection of plays for the Workshop to produce. Though the plays of Eugene O'Neill had fallen considerably out of fashion by 1952 in the United States (José Quintero's productions of O'Neill at Circle in the Square in New York would begin to resuscitate O'Neill's reputation in 1956), the American theatre at midcentury continued to be dominated by the first-wave modernist tradition, as demonstrated by the immense popularity of such playwrights as Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Lillian Hellman, and William Inge in the 1940s and 1950s.

The dramas of the first wave of European modernism, which had inspired Miller, Williams, Hellman and others, dominated the Workshop's choice of repertoire during the first four years of its existence, 1952-1956. The theatre's first production for the San Francisco public was Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, which opened October 10, 1952. This was followed by

productions of Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding* (December, 1952), J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* (February, 1953) and *Dierdre of the Sorrows* (the first American production of the play, in November, 1955), Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (June, 1954), Sean O'Casey's *Pound on Demand* (also in November, 1955, as part of a double-bill with Synge's *Dierdre*) and *The Plough and the Stars* (October, 1956), and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (starring Viveca Lindfors) and *The Stronger* (the two Strindberg plays were presented on a double bill, in September, 1956). The company also produced traditional classics of the Western canon, including Molière's *The Miser* (June, 1953), Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, and the French medieval comedy, *The Farce of Pierre Patelin* (in October, 1954).

The Workshop's early preference for European plays over American plays reflected Blau's disdain for the contemporary American drama, a disdain which he voiced in his academic work. In an early article, "The Education of the Playwright," published in *Educational Theatre Journal* in 1952, Blau critiqued the American drama for lacking imagination and dignity.⁵⁷ The problem with the American drama, wrote Blau, was its ambiguity, which stemmed from a lack of rigor and responsibility: American playwrights were simply not required to make decisive choices or to resolve the dramatic situations which they had invented. Yet despite the predominance of European plays and Blau's distaste for American drama, the Workshop's repertory did include the works of major American playwrights in these first four years. The company produced Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible* in February and December, 1954, respectively. The Workshop also produced Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke* in 1953, and *Camino Real* in 1955, and Clifford Odets' *The Flowering Peach* in 1956.

1956-1959: Transition

⁵⁷ Herbert Blau, "The Education of the Playwright," *Educational Theatre Journal* 4.1 (March, 1952), 6.

1956 and 1957 were years of significant change for the Workshop. In 1956, the Workshop produced Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children*; a year later, they produced Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. These productions constituted the Workshop's first experimental foray into plays of second wave of European modernist drama, which would subsequently become the defining mission of the Workshop's repertoire. This commitment to the second-wave modernist dramas of Europe ultimately constituted the Workshop's major contribution to the American theatre. The second of these two productions, *Waiting for Godot*, is perhaps the most significant production in the Workshop's history. It was this production which first launched the Workshop to national and international attention when the company was selected to represent the professional American theatre at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels.

The Workshop's production of *Mother Courage* was less successful at the box office but still a significant milestone in the American theatre. For the Workshop was the first professional theatre to produce Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children* in America. However, the production was poorly received by an audience largely unprepared for the Epic theatre genre. Blau was already familiar with Brecht through the critical work of Eric Bentley, the primary scholar and translator of Brecht in the English language. In one of Blau's early articles, "A Character Study of the Drama," published in 1954 in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, he reveals that he had already read Bentley's essay on Brecht *In Search of Theatre* (1953).⁵⁸ Bentley's text included a chapter on Brecht and many photographs from various European productions of *Mother Courage*.

Nevertheless, it seems that the Workshop did not know much about the particular play. In *As If*, Blau insists that he "had barely heard of Brecht" before one of his colleagues at San

⁵⁸ Herbert Blau, "A Character Study of the Drama," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 13.1 (1954), 52-68. Blau quotes Bentley's book in a footnote on page 53.

Francisco State (and a fellow playwright) James Schevill suggested the play to him. Schevill had witnessed Manley's performance as Madame Ranevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*, and became convinced that she would be excellent as the eponymous Courage. In a letter of 1954, Schevill asked Blau if he had read *Mother Courage*, observing, "This, it seems to me, would be a wonderful role for your wife and a play to think about doing."⁵⁹

Two years later, the Workshop produced *Mother Courage*. In order to be as "reverent" to Brecht's epic theatre in their production of *Mother Courage* as they could, they "studied the theories and struggled to the limit of our naïve resources to deploy ourselves in 'Epic style.'"⁶⁰ Yet the Workshop's good intentions were hampered by their limited resources: the company lacked the *modelbücher*, or model book, which provided the Berliner Ensemble's strictures on how Brecht's plays were performed in their initial productions. Blau admitted in *As If* that he would have liked to have had the model book, "because we knew so little of Brecht. Aside from tips from Eric Bentley, there wasn't much around."⁶¹ Though a collection of six model books had been published by the Berliner Ensemble in Dresden in 1952, Blau's academic publications indicate that he did not have access to the collection until 1957.⁶²

Just as Schevill had suggested, Manley was cast as Courage. Eugene Roche played Pete the Pipe, the Dutch cook who joins Courage. Robert Symonds was cast as the Chaplain. Sean Young played Courage's eldest son, Eilif, and Malcolm Smith was praised for his portrayal of Swiss Cheese. Jinx Hone was well-received as Catherine. In an attempt to reproduce Epic Theatre staging conventions as the company understood them in 1956, the Workshop's

⁵⁹ Blau quotes Schevill's letter in *As If*, 203.

⁶⁰ Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 103

⁶¹ Blau, *As If*, 187.

⁶² Herbert Blau, "Brecht's *Mother Courage*: The Rite of War and the Rhythm of Epic," *Educational Theatre Journal* 9.1 (1957), 1-10. In a footnote on page two, Blau reports that "An unusual record, with many pictures, of some European productions has been published by Brecht and his colleagues in *Theaterarbeit: 6 Aufführungen des Berliner Ensembles* (Dresden, 1952)."

production was as sparse as possible. The stage and lighting design, by Ernest Baron, was simple: the stage opened onto the theatre's back wall, with no backdrop to distract from the action. Props were simple and spare. One reviewer complained repeatedly about the simplicity of Courage's wagon, which he wished the Workshop had used as a "dramatic symbol of her fortunes," altering its appearance throughout the production to reflect Courage's changing fortune.⁶³ Instead, the wagon was the same throughout the show. Jean Parshall's costumes were also quite plain: simple garments in muted tones (the same reviewer complained about a lack of color in the production). No makeup effects were used to age the characters throughout the show, and their faces appear bare in production photographs. While Blau recalled in *As If* that Manley was able to convey Mother Courage's aging, her "hideously wasted" energy in the final scenes of the play, reviewers in 1956 complained that Manley's performance – like the props, staging, and costuming – never changed.⁶⁴ "I found no reason why Mother Courage should not have aged more perceptibly during her 12 years," asserted Knickerbocker.⁶⁵ In their critiques of the staging conventions, the local critics reveal their confusion over the nature of the play. The critics expected the Workshop to mount *Mother Courage* as if it were part of the naturalist/realist tradition of plays, which had comprised such a large part of the Workshop's repertoire in the theatre's early years.

The actors' performances may have been restrained by the use of repeated gestures, though it is unclear if this choice was the result of Blau's direction or other factors. Manley's performance was critiqued by two reviewers for her repetitive use of a particular gesture or movement of her hands: Paine Knickerbocker complained of "monotonous use of her hands and

⁶³ Paine Knickerbocker, "Mother Courage – A Workshop 'First,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 17, 1956, 21.

⁶⁴ Blau, *As If*, 204.

⁶⁵ Paine Knickerbocker, "Mother's Admirers Force a Last-Ditch Defense," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 1956, 9.

voice,” and Theresa Loeb Cone observed that Manley “relies too much on repeated gestures that detract from her portrayal.”⁶⁶ Both contrasted Manley’s work with Robert Symonds’ livelier performance as the Chaplain. As the heroine of the piece, Courage is far more central to the play, and those repetitive gestures may have been an attempt to establish an epic *gestus* for Courage. On the other hand, what the reviewers observed may also have been the early effects of Manley’s multiple sclerosis. For, as Blau has recalled in *As If*, Manley was already beginning to experience “debilities in her body” during rehearsals for *Courage*.⁶⁷

In part, the foreign nature of the Epic Theatre was to blame for the cool reception of *Mother Courage*. Reviewers were ill-prepared for the experience of Brecht’s alienation effect. In his review, its headline touting the production as “A Workshop First,” Knickerbocker complained that the titular heroine was “not endearing . . . a target neither for our scorn, nor our admiration.”⁶⁸ This suggests that Manley’s performance actually exemplified Brecht’s *verfremdungseffekt*, offering audiences neither the satisfaction of a sympathetic heroine whom they could cheer, nor an unsympathetic villain they could condemn. In fact, Knickerbocker’s assumption that “here [in Manley’s performance], perhaps, lies the weakness of the drama,” indicates that at least one audience member had missed the point of the Epic genre; rather than emotional identification, the audience of the Epic Theatre must be able to critically evaluate events and “form an opinion.”⁶⁹

The pacing of the play, which Blau and his actors had carefully scored so as to enhance the alienation effect of the play, also upset reviewers. Brecht’s initial scenes are lengthy,

⁶⁶ Paine Knickerbocker, “Mother’s Admirers Force a Last-Ditch Defense,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 1956, 9; Theresa Loeb Cone, “Vitriolic *Mother Courage* Pillories War,” *Oakland Tribune*, January 14, 1956, D4.

⁶⁷ Blau, *As If*, 204.

⁶⁸ Paine Knickerbocker, “*Mother Courage* – A Workshop ‘First,’” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 17, 1956, 21.

⁶⁹ Bertolt Brecht, “Street Scene,” in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), 121.

devoting much stage time to context and exposition. As each scene passes, however, “the diffuse, omnibus, verbal novelistic character of the play became more and more active, visual, empathic, concentrated and dramatic toward the end.”⁷⁰ Blau believed the early scenes were designed to alienate audiences from the action, to prevent sympathetic identification – so that critical distance could be maintained throughout the productions, even as the emotional crises of the deaths of each of *Mother Courage*’s children threatened to undermine the epic quality of the play. Unfortunately, the San Francisco critics did not share the director’s appreciation for the structural necessity of this slow initial pace. Knickerbocker complained of the boredom and confusion induced by this “somewhat tedious” play.⁷¹ Theresa Loeb Cone agreed that “the play is far too drawn out and seemed irritatingly so.”⁷² Defending his January 17 review, Knickerbocker observed that the Workshop had misrepresented the subdued pace of the play when they touted it as a “dramatic earthquake” in their advertising copy (which Blau had also written).⁷³

The overstatement of the play’s tension and excitement was not the only problem caused by the Workshop’s marketing. Announcing the play as an anti-war piece, the Workshop’s advertising oversimplified the irony and complexity of *Mother Courage*. In Brecht’s play, war is both a product of an acquisitive culture and a condition which perpetuates acquisitive capitalist values. Thus, Workshop audiences arrived expecting an attack upon war and encountered something else entirely. Knickerbocker’s complaint that “there have been many plays that are sharper weapons against war” was not misplaced; the framing misrepresented the play.

⁷⁰ Blau, “Brecht’s *Mother Courage*,” 5.

⁷¹ Paine Knickerbocker, “*Mother Courage* – A Workshop ‘First,’” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 17, 1956, 21.

⁷² Theresa Loeb Cone, “Vitriolic *Mother Courage* Pillories War,” *Oakland Tribune*, January 14, 1956, D4.

⁷³ Paine Knickerbocker, “Mother’s Admirers Force a Last-Ditch Defense,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 1956, 9.

Blau's didactic program note for the production, "The Epic Theater of Brecht," also failed to ameliorate the situation. It offered little more than a brief introduction to the foreign Epic style painted in broad strokes and constrained by the distancing effect of Blau's use of past tense and foreign locales:

[The Epic theatre] was to be a sociological theater, scientific and tactical, opposed to the spirit of illusion and magic which had been the prime stock-in-trade of drama since it was born out of the Greek mysteries and again out of the ritual of the Church. It was to be, furthermore, a didactic and critical theater, where all the conventions of the stage would function on behalf of man's alert intelligence.⁷⁴

Blau offered a brief introduction to *Mother Courage* as a play "chronicling the German Thirty Years War," observed that the characters "are modern in word and deed," but failed to suggest to Workshop audiences the significance or relevance of the play for San Franciscans in 1956. Despite the fanfare anticipating the American premiere of Brecht's play, *Mother Courage* closed after only seventeen performances.

One year later, Blau published a reflective article on the production in the March, 1957 issue of *Educational Theatre Journal* (now *Theatre Journal*) entitled, "'Mother Courage': The Rite of War and the Rhythm of Epic." In the article, excerpts of which later appeared in both *The Impossible Theatre* and *As If*, Blau blamed the critics, the Workshop's audiences, and American culture in general for the play's early closure. Blau proclaimed *Mother Courage* a "virtual anti-trust suit of our commonest emotions," stating, "The truth is that *Mother Courage* attacks not only war, but all forms of subservience to the ethics of 'business as usual.'"⁷⁵ Blau insisted that the play had to be closed early because San Francisco was unwilling or unable to face the fact that America's economy was "structured on the premise that war is, after all, the necessity and

⁷⁴ Herbert Blau, "The Epic Theatre of Brecht." (program note)

⁷⁵ Blau, "Brecht's *Mother Courage*," 8.

destiny of our time ... it doesn't tell us what we already know; it tells us what some of us don't want to hear."⁷⁶

Whether the Workshop's audiences wanted to hear it or not, the theatre mounted another new European drama the following year: Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Though the 1957 production of *Waiting for Godot* was a seminal moment in the history of the Workshop, this production was not the American premiere of the play. The play had premiered one year earlier, opening on January 3, 1956, at another regional theatre: the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami Florida. The premiere was directed by Alan Schneider, the preeminent director of Beckett's work in America. Schneider's production failed miserably. Schneider later wrote that 'The failure in Miami depressed me more than any experience I had had in the theatre, though I had from time to time anticipated its probability and done all in my power to avoid it.'⁷⁷ Undaunted, producer Michael Meyerburg transferred Schneider's production to New York later in 1956 – albeit with both a new cast (starring Bert Lehr and E.G. Marshall) and a new director (Herbert Berghof). Brooks Atkinson, reviewing the production for *The New York Times*, found much to praise in the cast, but was more guarded in his appraisal of the playwright's work: "Although *Waiting for Godot* is an uneventful, maundering, loquacious drama, Mr. Lahr is an actor in the pantomime tradition who has a thousand ways to move and a hundred ways to grimace in order to make the story interesting and theatrical, and touching, too."⁷⁸ Though the production only ran

⁷⁶ Blau, "Brecht's *Mother Courage*," 8.

⁷⁷ Alan Schneider, "Waiting for Beckett: A Personal Chronicle," in *Casebook on Waiting for Godot*, ed. Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967), 57.

⁷⁸ Brooks Atkinson, "Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*: Mystery Wrapped in Enigma at Golden," *New York Times*, April 20, 1956, 21.

for 60 performances in New York, Blau recalls that the play “had become a *cause célèbre* in New York,” and that it was “some time before we could get [the rights] to do it.”⁷⁹

The single most important and best-known production at the Actor’s Workshop, *Godot* also became the foundation upon which the San Franciscan company began to establish the basis of its mature artistic identity. In the summer of 1956 (after *Mother Courage*, but before *Godot*), the entire company engaged in a discussion of the theatre’s mission, purpose, and direction. At this time, the company was becoming restive: there was “growing internal demand for reassessment of purpose” as Workshop members sought answers to such difficult questions as, “Why does The Workshop exist? What does it really want? What does it *mean*? How do *I* fit in?”⁸⁰ The directors were aware of the growing need for a clear statement of identity and purpose, but could offer no definite answers: “the history of The Workshop was like a dramatic action, not conscious of its own working out. . . . we had no real idea of where we were heading . . . Random in origin, the theater had begun to stand for something that everybody vaguely felt, but that still needed definition. Our work contained no explicit “message”; our plays were still heterogeneous.”⁸¹

After this seminar, the Workshop decided to institute its first planned season, in which the plays to be mounted were selected in advance rather than *ad hoc*, throughout the course of the year. The programmed season constituted a shift in the Workshop’s central focus away from the actors and towards repertoire as the source of the theatre’s identity and mission. Blau, with his literary focus, was a proponent of the planned season. He suggested that the Workshop should use the programmed season as a kind of platform, engaging individual plays in dialogue

⁷⁹ Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 235.

⁸⁰ Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 170-171.

⁸¹ Blau, *Impossible Theatre*, 169-170.

with each other and turning “performance itself an activity of critique, with one production reflecting on another.”⁸² The planned season therefore changed the Workshop: the company began to craft seasons in which individual plays were be selected for their contents and themes, and placed in juxtaposition with other plays in the season. The program notes which Blau was writing for Workshop productions also evince this shift, beginning to direct the attention of Workshop’s audiences consistently toward the issue of the theatre’s identity and mission. *Waiting for Godot* was part of the first season in which the Workshop’s productions were explicitly chosen to reflect the company’s values. Additionally, with *Waiting for Godot*, the Workshop also instituted its first post-play discussions with its audiences, thereby inviting the San Francisco community to interact further with the theatre just as the theatre began to solidify its own identity.

Blau directed the production of *Godot*, which opened February 28, 1957. Eugene Roche and Robert Symonds, praised for their work together in *Mother Courage*, starred as Vladimir and Estragon. Joseph Miksak performed the role of Pozzo and Jules Irving was Lucky. The boy who serves as Godot’s messenger was played by Miksak’s son, Anthony Miksak. Robin Wagner designed the setting, which was minimalist and bleak. The single skeletal tree, its branches drooping, suggested a grasping claw or a withered hand. A wine cask, half sunk into the ground, is almost indistinguishable from the mounds of stones that separate the acting space from a dark backdrop painted with the occasional horizontal streak of light. A wire strung between two poles at the back of the stage suggested a tightrope, or perhaps the remains of a fence. Once again, Jean Parshall designed the costumes. The tramps appeared in dusty oversized Chaplinesque suits. Irving’s Lucky was crowned with a bald cap and a weird halo of long crinkled white hair. The

⁸² Blau, *As If*, 209.

costumes and the set (particularly, the Workshop's tree) mimicked the designs used in Roger Blin's premiere French production, photos of which (while Blin's company took the production on tour in Germany) were included in the Grove Press' first edition (1954) of the play.

The Workshop balanced this bleak atmosphere with the actors' performances, which emphasized the inherent humour in the play. Knickerbocker found the production "spirited" when it played in San Francisco; the tramps' "amusing bickering and antic attempts to thwart boredom" offered an antidote to "a dreary existence" reinforced by Wagner's stage design. He praised the "superb" cast for their energy and enthusiasm (Irving, in particular, was "a skyrocket of sputtering brilliance in his brief moment). The designers' work suggested "just enough of a circus," and Blau's direction had imbued the play with "a wonderful elan." The play thus reflected both "a fearful loneliness and the stubbornness of the human spirit," a stubbornness which expressed itself in ebullience.⁸³ Though not the American premiere of the play, the Workshop's approach to the play seems to have constituted an important and new idiom for Beckett production in America, as critical reception of subsequent performances indicate.

In subsequent years, the Workshop's mature identity came to be defined by the company's productions of the new European drama which formed the core of its repertoire. Blau's program note for the production of *Waiting for Godot*, entitled, "Who is Godot?" indicates that the company was convinced that the new drama would be key to its emerging artistic identity. The program note challenged San Francisco audiences to ask themselves the same questions which were circulating in the Workshop: "Who am I? What am I doing here?" *Waiting for Godot*, the program suggested, offered a kind of answer, for the play contained a valuable lesson about the virtue of self-examination: "Always there is something to give us the

⁸³ *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 28, 1957, 20.

impression we exist; but habit is the great deadener. It takes a play like “Godot” to ... help keep us human, and conscious of our humanity.”⁸⁴ The Workshop also offered its first post-play discussions after performances of *Waiting for Godot*, suggesting that the theatre was earnestly seeking to delve into these questions of identity *with* its audiences.

Blau, who had written the program note, renewed the attacks on American culture that he had made in his article on *Mother Courage* (which emerged in print simultaneously with the Workshop’s production of *Godot*). He suggested that European literature offered an antidote to right American wrongs. Habit, “the great deadener,” had deadened American life. It had created the “malady of the [contemporary] age: cosmic thoughtlessness ... immense confusion ... [and] the enormous buffoonery of the modern soul.”⁸⁵ Thus inured, Americans acquiesced to injustices which betrayed their humanity. As an example, Blau pointed to local current events: the abuses of McCarthyism in Hollywood, where publications like *Red Channels* (published in 1950) perpetuated a blacklist which lasted until the early 1960s. Blau insisted that Didi and Gogo’s time-wasting activities (their “neurotic games”), “like charades in Hollywood, are exhibitions of cultural hysteria.”⁸⁶ Current events seemed to demonstrate to Blau that the cultural hysteria of McCarthyism had reached a fever pitch in 1957. John Henry Faulk, the humorist who had been fighting to end censorship and the blacklist, had been labeled a communist by right-wing New York organization AWARE, Inc., in February of the previous year – an act which had resulted in his firing from CBS in September, 1956. In 1957, Faulk sued AWARE for libel. Though AWARE’s lawyers (including McCarthy-committee counsel Roy Cohn) managed to delay the

⁸⁴ Herbert Blau, “Who is Godot?” (program note)

⁸⁵ Blau, “Who is Godot?”

⁸⁶ Blau, “Who is Godot?”

trial for five years, Faulk's plight remained in the public eye, especially as CBS Vice President Edward R. Murrow openly supported Faulk and helped finance the long trial.

In the face of this cultural hysteria, *Waiting for Godot* offered a model of "good classical discretion," which could "teach us to care and not to care, teach us to sit still."⁸⁷ The thick frame of literary reference in the program evinced Blau's conviction that Beckett's writing, however experimental or avant-garde, also belonged in the classical canon of the western tradition. The director framed quotes from Beckett's *Godot* and his novel *Malone Dies* (the Grove Press had just published Beckett's English translation in 1956), alongside literary allusions to some of the greatest English-language poets: T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and even John Milton. Blau's program reflects the influence of the director's academic research upon the Workshop: already in 1957, Blau was breaking new ground in the American theatre as he fused pedagogy and theatrical production, applying literary theory to his direction of plays.

Waiting for Godot was a hit in San Francisco; however, the single most famous performance of the Workshop's production (indeed, of any Workshop production) occurred later in the year, under very different conditions. On November 19, 1957, the Actor's Workshop toured their production to an unlikely setting: San Quentin State Prison. The performance by a professional theater company at a maximum security prison was almost without precedent; the last time a professional performer had visited San Quentin State Prison had been in 1913, when French actress Sarah Bernhardt had appeared there.⁸⁸ However, this was not the first time *Waiting for Godot* had been performed for prison inmates: in 1954 an inmate at the

⁸⁷ Blau reveals his background in English literature in his program notes, and his proclivity for dense references: "Teach us to care and not to care, teach us to sit still" is a line from T.S. Eliot's *Ash-Wednesday*, the first poem written by the poet upon his conversion to Anglicanism. In it, Eliot presents a figure who has lacked faith in the past struggling toward God, much as Blau suggests in the program note that *Godot* can reform American cultural hysteria.

⁸⁸ Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961), xv.

Lüttringhausen prison in Germany had received a copy of the French play, translated it into German, and cast and mounted production for his fellows.⁸⁹

Still, the small cast and crew were nervous about their audience of fourteen hundred inmates. “Frankly, we were scared to death,” Jules Irving confided to an inmate who was covering the story for the prison newspaper, the *San Quentin News*. “You had never seen us, or this type of play, and we had never seen you or this type of audience.”⁹⁰ San Quentin lacked a stage, so the Workshop performed the drama on the prison’s gallows, for an audience of “muscle-men, biceps over-flowing, who parked . . . on the aisle and waited for the girls and funny stuff.”⁹¹ The restless crowd soon discovered their expectations were going to be disappointed – but were fascinated by the production. Within two minutes the inmates were hooked, and at the play’s end, “All shook.”⁹²

The Workshop production of *Godot* was an unqualified success at the prison. Two separate reviews were published the next day in the *San Quentin News*, the prison newspaper. The front-page review, “Workshop Players Score Hit Here,” praised all of the actors for their strength and solidarity as an ensemble, suggesting that these were the values which the inmates most admired. Yet it was Irving, as Lucky, who was again singled out for special praise. “It was Lucky who held them here. Lucky. No one – and everyone in the world. In juxtaposition with the other characters, Jules Irving made this neuter sounding-board more real than life, or as nebulous as *Godot*. The frenzied monologue at the end of the first act brought a spontaneous

⁸⁹ William Hutchings, *Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot: A Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 82.

⁹⁰ “Workshop Players Score Hit Here,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 1.

⁹¹ Etaoin Shrdlu, “Memos of a First-Nighter,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 3.

⁹² Etaoin Shrdlu, “Memos of a First-Nighter,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 3.

demonstration from a hypnotized audience.”⁹³ In return, Irving graciously praised the audience of inmates: “Responses were rapid, spontaneous, and we enjoyed playing to one of the finest groups it has been our pleasure to entertain.” Within two weeks, *Godot* had become a cultural force at San Quentin, Pozzo’s “Pig!,” “Think!” and “Bass-kett!” became by-words in the prison yard.⁹⁴

Inmates at San Quentin, like those at Lüttringhausen, identified with the tramps’ interminable wait as well as Irving’s Everyman: “I didn’t really dig the action, man – but I dug the symbols,” reported one inmate after the show.⁹⁵ In this play of “lapsed memory,” director Blau realized that the absence of memory was also a gift.⁹⁶ Released from the burden of their private histories, Vladimir and Estragon at least were offered the hope of creating anew at each moment. The virtue of uncertainty, the value of waiting, and the possibility of continual renewal even amid the wreckage of bodies in the “charnel house” of the modern age touched a chord at San Quentin. *Godot* himself was no mystery: “*Godot* is society,” one inmate told Michal Harris of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Another said, “He’s the Outside.”⁹⁷ “I’d go back to see it tomorrow night,” said another, adding, “Anyway, maybe they’ll bring something else over here. Maybe next month, or next year – or whenever. Like the man said. Nothing happens!”⁹⁸ The Workshop performance and the subsequent popularity of *Godot* at San Quentin became the stuff of theatre legend; in 1961, Martin Esslin recounted the event in the introduction to *The Theatre of the Absurd*. The performance also sparked the formation of an official theatre troupe at the prison. Rick Cluchey, an inmate at San Quentin who missed the performance, was so intrigued

⁹³ “Workshop Players Score Hit Here,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 1.

⁹⁴ Etaoin Shrdlu, “Memos of a First-Nighter,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 3.

⁹⁵ Etaoin Shrdlu, “Memos of a First-Nighter,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 3.

⁹⁶ Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 231.

⁹⁷ “Offstage . . .” *Theatre Arts*, July 1958, 74.

⁹⁸ “Workshop Players Score Hit Here,” *San Quentin News*, November 28, 1957, 3.

by the aftermath that he coordinated with prison authorities and with Workshop member Alan Mandell, who helped the inmates develop the troupe which became the San Quentin Drama Workshop.

The San Quentin production contributed to the increasing prestige of the Workshop, and helped to launch the Workshop to national and international attention. In 1958, the Workshop accepted an invitation from the U.S. State Department to represent the professional American theatre at the World's Fair in Brussels with their production of *Godot*. The Workshop also accepted an invitation to perform *Godot* in New York for several weeks before they traveled to Brussels, where the theatre company hoped to raise additional funds to help cover the expenses of travel – for the State Department offered no funding support to invitees bound for the Fair.

Reception of the play was cool in New York. Upon their arrival, Workshop touted their production in their advertising as “one of the most controversial, brilliant and humorous plays of the century,” continuing to emphasize the comic aspect of the play.⁹⁹ Blau's “positive” direction was denigrated by Brooks Atkinson at *The New York Times*, who considered Meyerburg's 1956 production superior. Citing his preference for “the torpor, the mournfulness, the boredom, the anxiety, the heavy feeling of frustration” in the 1956 production directed by Herbert Berghof, Atkinson attacked Blau's “decisive tone” and “lively direction.”¹⁰⁰ Though Atkinson acknowledged that the Workshop production was “tonic,” he was also curiously adamant that Beckett's play should be unclear, insisting that *Waiting for Godot* was comprised of “obfuscations” and lauding Mr. Lahr's performance in 1956 for the actor's portrayal of a “moonstruck state of confusion.”¹⁰¹ Though Atkinson found the Workshop's *Godot* “an

⁹⁹ *New York Times*, September 7, 1958, X8.

¹⁰⁰ Brooks Atkinson, “Coast Troupe Here on Way to Brussels,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 1958, 22.

¹⁰¹ Brooks Atkinson, “Coast Troupe Here on Way to Brussels,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 1958, 22.

intelligent production of an unintelligible play,” he felt that the plunging vitality (and perhaps the clarity) of the Workshop let the tragedy of Beckett’s “baleful story” escape.

The Workshop’s selection of *Godot* for the Brussels Fair was also criticized while the theatre was in New York. “I recently went to see the off-Broadway production of “Waiting for Godot,” currently running here prior to presentation at the Brussels World Fair,” Dennis W. Vernon of Arlington, Virginia, wrote in to the “Drama Mailbag” at the *New York Times*. “I came away not only disappointed that I had not been entertained,” he complained, “but also ashamed that this production would represent the United States at the Fair.” Vernon’s complaint was primarily with the origin of the play: “In the first place, the play is not American – either in origin, setting or dialogue.” If a play could not be found to send to Brussels which was “more representative of the United States,” Vernon concluded, “then better we should send nothing.”¹⁰² With audiences dwindling and negative press in the *New York Times*, it became apparent that the Workshop might not be able to acquire sufficient funds for their trip to Brussels while in New York. Ultimately, the Equity association stepped in and provided the company with a grant to assist them.

However, the company’s difficulties in New York were not over. In early September, just weeks before the Workshop’s small touring company was to leave for Brussels on September 13, the State Department contacted Irving and Blau and informed them that their stage manager, James Kershaw, who had once been a member of the Communist Party, was an “unsatisfactory person.” The directors were advised that Kershaw should not attempt to leave the country. The State Department refused to offer the Workshop any subsidy to offset the additional cost of flying a replacement for Kershaw from San Francisco to New York, nor for the cost of training

¹⁰² “Drama Mailbag: About *Godot* and some Other Drama Topics,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1958, X5.

Kershaw's replacement. The company felt an obligation to the people of San Francisco who, through a lengthy fundraising effort, had generated the lion's share of funding for the Workshop's trip. The directors decided to acquiesce to the State Department's demands, but also published a letter of protest. They presented the letter to the entire company first for review and approval, as they felt any public protest must represent the unity of the entire theatre company. The resulting letter includes a revised statement of the Actor's Workshop's artistic intentions and identity in 1958:

Participation in the Actor's Workshop depends solely on artistic competence. We are partisan only in preserving the liberty of partisanship, in the choice of our plays and among the members of our company. This, we feel, is the necessity of a democratic theater. If our work has any distinction . . . this attitude is in large part responsible. We have no political character except that we cannot abide political censorship of our work.

The final sentence, in particular, became a guiding principle of the mature theatre. It was still a core value of the organization in 1964, when Blau quoted it in *The Impossible Theatre*.

The comic emphasis of the Workshop production was also novel when the Workshop performed *Godot* at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels. Robert Symonds recalled that Europeans were surprised by the company's interpretation: "When we played the show in Brussels the European actors frequently commented on the amount of physical activity we used."¹⁰³ A *New York Times* reviewer who reported on the Workshop's performance at the Fair, perhaps under the influence of Atkinson's opinions, insisted that "Samuel Beckett had the audience puzzled as to what he had in mind when he wrote this tragicomedy," but acknowledged that the Workshop's "artistic interpretation of the characters" was applauded in Brussels and that the actors received three curtain calls.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Keith Fowler, "A History of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop" (dissertation, Yale University, 1969), 233.

¹⁰⁴ "Godot in Brussels," *New York Times*, September 18, 1958, 36.

Thus, *Godot* constituted a significant turning point in the history of the Workshop: building upon their experimentation with the new drama, which had begun the previous year with *Mother Courage*, the Workshop scored a timely artistic success. The play coincided with a shift in the Workshop's focus away from the actor and toward the play as the primary concern guiding the selection of their seasons, which were now programmed in advance in order to place plays in conversation with each other (whereas before, plays had been selected at random throughout the year, according to the needs and abilities of the acting ensemble, with less concern for the ideas the plays might contain). *Godot* was more than a part of the first planned season; it was also the play which occasioned the first post-play discussions with the audience, a practice which the Workshop continued in subsequent seasons. Thus, as the Workshop began to feel its way toward its own mature identity, it began to engage in conversation with its community. The program note for the production tied the production to the Workshop's search for identity, and the Kershaw affair in New York occasioned a new statement (rather more strident than in 1953) of the Workshop's mission. Finally, the Workshop's performances of *Godot* at San Quentin, in New York, and at Brussels provided new visibility for the company at both the national and international level.

In 1958, the Workshop also began a partnership with the Ford Foundation which would keep the theatre in the national spotlight long after its tour at Brussels. That year, the Ford Foundation unveiled its new Program for Playwrights, and invited regional American theatres to apply to be selected to participate. The ten theatres selected from among the applicants would produce a new play by an American author from a list of works selected by the Ford Foundation for production. The Ford Foundation was not primarily interested in the decentralization in the American theatre, however; the Program for Playwrights was designed with the hope that one of

these regional productions would spark enough attention that the play might subsequently transfer to Broadway. Thus, the design of the Program for Playwrights reinforced the tributary status of regional theatres. Regardless of the inherent conflict between this attitude and The Workshop's express mission to prove that good theatre could be produced outside New York, The Workshop applied and became one of ten theatres around the United States to receive a Ford Foundation subsidy. In fact, the Workshop participated in the program twice: in 1958 and again in 1959, producing Sidney Michaels' *The Plaster Bambino* in September, 1959 and Miriam Stovall's *The Rocks Cried Out* in November, 1960.

Despite the Workshop's changing repertoire, participation in the Program for Playwrights was not antithetical to the theatre's mission, for the company still maintained that it was invested in nurturing and producing emergent writing talent in America. Just as Nichols had reported in 1953 that The Actor's Workshop planned "to provide new playwrights with a company capable of understanding and sympathizing with their work and performing it as it was intended to be performed," Blau exhorted the company in a letter dated October 28, 1959 that, "It's not only that we need to give new plays major productions ... we need to provide workshops for them, and we need to solicit the best writers we can find ... to work for our theatre – one of the reasons many of them have not done this before is that there was no theatre they could respect to write for"¹⁰⁵ Blau's letter was subsequently reprinted in *The Tulane Drama Review* in September, 1960, as a singularly "articulate statement of purpose in the American theatre." Yet collaboration with the Ford Foundation's Program for Playwrights did not result in new plays that satisfied the company – or their audiences. Both Michaels' and Stovall's plays were poorly received by San Francisco critics and poorly attended by local audiences and closed early. This is not to say that

¹⁰⁵ Luther Nichols, "Another New Little Theater Group Steps Into the Spotlight," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 1953, 14. Herbert Blau, "Meanwhile, Follow the Bright Angels," *Tulane Drama Review* 5.1 (1960), 89.

the Workshop utterly failed to find new works by American authors which appealed to San Francisco: James Schevill, a colleague of Blau and Irving at San Francisco State College, penned *The Bloody Tenet*, which was well-received when the Workshop produced it in 1957. Local San Francisco poet, playwright and painter George Hitchcock (who later founded and ran the literary journal *Kayak* from 1964 to 1984) wrote plays for both The Actor's Workshop and another local theatre group, the Interplayers. The Workshop produced Hitchcock's *Prometheus Bound* and *The Housewarming* in 1958 and *The Busy Martyr*, which was particularly well-received, in 1959.

Despite the unimpressive results of their collaboration in the Program for Playwrights, the Workshop continued to partner with the Ford Foundation. In 1959, Blau received a \$10,000 travel grant from the Foundation to tour Europe for a year, visiting major art theatres and observing their rehearsal and production techniques. Blau's trip proved influential for the theatre's future, cementing the director's conviction about the value of the new European drama. Blau attended productions of the works of emerging playwrights like John Arden and Harold Pinter and acted quickly to secure the rights to these plays. As a regional theatre, the Workshop still did not have the economic wherewithal or the professional clout to compete with Broadway producers for the rights to new plays. For example, Sean O'Casey had actually denied the Workshop the rights to his *Cock-A-Doodle Dandy* when the company applied for them in 1955; O'Casey had insisted that the play's American premiere be in New York. Thus, it was Blau's quick action in Europe which allowed the Workshop to secure the rights to premiere both Pinter's *Birthday Party* and Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, something of an artistic coup for a small regional theatre from a city on the far-flung Western coast of the United States.

In addition to these valuable additions to the Workshop repertoire, Blau's trip offered him the opportunity to observe other theatres at work in Europe. He was impressed by two directors

(and their companies) in particular: Joan Littlewood and her Theatre Workshop in the West End of London, and Roger Planchon, based in Villeurbanne, outside of Lyon in France. Both directors had founded their theatre companies with groups of amateurs who had, over time, solidified into permanent acting ensembles. Both directors were outspoken proponents of the political left: Littlewood embraced Marx as Planchon did Brecht for Planchon. While Blau's was sympathetic to Littlewood and Planchon's politics, he took issue with the liberties both directors were willing to take with dramatic texts in order to make their political points. Blau critiqued Planchon for flattening the politics in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and Littlewood for oversimplifying the character of the English middle class in her Marxist opposition to the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, Blau admired the rough vitality (the virile "gusto") of both acting companies as exhibited in Planchon's production of *Henry IV* and Littlewood's premieres of Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* and Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*. He also admired the unified productions which resulted from the shared political commitment of the permanent ensembles. In this way, Planchon and Littlewood became valuable exemplars for Blau of style and "living theatre": "Planchon ... proves, as Joan Littlewood does in England, that style and all we mean by that dead term living theatre come from having something personal and urgent to say."¹⁰⁶ The Workshop's repertoire was settling into an established pattern of European classics and second-wave modernist works, but the company was still grasping to establish its own voice. Blau's tour in Europe convinced the director that "we must be less concessive ... we must go

¹⁰⁶ Blau, "Bright Angels," 94.

way, way out, further than we have gone with our most unorthodox plays” in order to find their own theatrical style or message.”¹⁰⁷

Blau’s travel also convinced him that the Workshop needed to hire a permanent scenic designer; like the permanent ensemble of actors, Blau observed that the permanent designer in the European theatre lent continuity and unity to the entire repertoire of a theatre’s productions, helping to unify a theatre company’s unique message or style. In California, Irving agreed with Blau and immediately offered the position to Robert LaVigne, who accepted. LaVigne was the first of several designers who collaborated with the wider community of artists in San Francisco, in order to bring the latest developments in visual and plastic arts to the staging of Workshop productions.

In 1960, the Ford Foundation again invited regional theatres to apply for subsidy: this time the charitable organization was interested in supporting professional acting companies outside of New York which could produce works of Broadway caliber. The Foundation was primarily interested in investigating whether talented actors who might otherwise be working on Broadway could be convinced to work in other parts of the country – and for a slightly more modest pay rate. Regional theaters were invited to compete for a handsome subsidy (provided, of course, that a matching contribution was provided by each theatre’s community, and that each theatre reshape their respective acting companies to contain a certain number of actors which the Foundation deemed of suitable caliber). The Workshop applied and, along with the Alley Theater in Houston, the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., and the Seattle Repertory Theatre, received subsidy.

¹⁰⁷ Blau, “Bright Angels,” 99.

The subsidy was problematic, however, for several of the Foundation's stipulations violated core Workshop values. The ensemble which had played together for years was suddenly host to a new group of actors who were paid far more than most of the Workshop's members, inducing disparity into the community of actors. Only three of the Workshop's veteran actors would be afforded a comparable salary by the grant. Furthermore, the Foundation wanted the Workshop to attract a weeknight audience, though the troupe had long since realized that San Franciscans rarely went out during the week. The economic demands placed on the theatre by the subsidy forced a sudden intense growth of the theatre which violated the Workshop's long-term policy of "slow growth," and which they could hardly support economically. Throughout its tenure as a subsidized Ford theatre, the Workshop suffered accusations of economic mismanagement, as it struggled to meet the terms of its agreement. In 1966, looking back upon the then-defunct Workshop, Paine Knickerbocker (long-time theatre reviewer and sometime antagonist of the Workshop at the *San Francisco Chronicle*) reflected that, "During the 12 years of the leadership of Irvine [*sic*] and Blau, the Workshop achieved distinction but not support. ... That the Workshop has been forced to fold is neither surprising, nor a target for scolding. The actors subsidized it long enough by working for peanuts; the theatre crews by their unflinching efforts."¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Ford subsidy was a crucial influence upon the mature Workshop: to be singled out as one of four exceptional regional theatres cemented the national prestige of the Workshop, attracting the attention of major critics and reviewers who published enthusiastic accounts of the theatre in national journals. Henry Hewes toured the two western Ford-subsidized theatres (the Workshop and the Seattle Repertory Theatre) in 1961 and wrote about them in the *Saturday Review*. Harold Clurman came to observe the Workshop and wrote about it

¹⁰⁸ Paine Knickerbocker, "What is Heartbreaking is that it came so Close to Success," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 31, 1966, Datebook section 3, 9.

in *The Nation* in 1963. Robert Brustein visited the Workshop in early 1965 and contrasted the excellence of the regional theatre with disappointing productions in New York at the APA and at Lincoln Center in *The New Republic*. The grant also put the Workshop into the company of other respected regional institutions, encouraging flattering comparisons, such as Howard Taubman made between the Workshop and the Alley in his *New York Times* review of Irving's production of *Misalliance* in 1961. More significantly, the challenges posed to the Workshop by the Ford Foundation's requirement of acquiring matching community funds prompted new experiments in both production style and audience relations. Far from betraying the Workshop's core values, the pressures of Ford subsidy actually led the Workshop to further refine their commitment to the new European dramas.

1959-1964: The Mature Workshop

By 1959, the Workshop's repertoire had settled into a pattern of predominantly European plays, drawing on the canonical classics and the new second-wave modernist works. In 1959, the only American plays produced by the Workshop were Hitchcock's *Busy Martyr* and Michaels' *Plaster Bambino* (subsidized by the Ford Foundation, and starring Viveca Lindfors and Burgess Meredith). The year was otherwise characterized entirely by European plays, with the exception of three Japanese Noh plays, recently translated by Donald Keene from Yukio Mishima's new versions of the classic texts. This triple-bill of short pieces was directed by Mitchell Lifton in early June. The rest of the year was drawn entirely from the European continent: Irving directed John Osborne's *The Entertainer* in February. Vincent Porcaro (who directed a handful of Workshop productions and served more frequently as a set designer for the company) directed Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* (starring Tom Rosqui as Oedipus) in April.

In May, Blau directed Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, starring Rosqui as Clov, who continued to appear in *The Infernal Machine* on Thursday nights at Marines, and in *Endgame* on Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays at the Workshop's new performance space, the Encore.¹⁰⁹ *Endgame* was the production with which the Actor's Workshop opened The Encore, a small studio theatre on Mason Street, one block from the Marines Memorial theatre. The Workshop refurbished the 145-seat Encore in the spring of 1959. The little theatre filled the void created by the loss of the Elgin Street theatre in 1956; the company finally had a dedicated second theatre again – one which soon became home to the Workshop's more avant-garde dramas and R.G. Davis' Midnight Mime Shows. The second, smaller theatre also created the opportunity to spend more time crafting a production: the 145-seat Encore was never going to replace the 630-seat Marines Memorial as the Workshop's mainstage and Blau enjoyed the luxury of "about four months" of rehearsals for *Endgame*.¹¹⁰

In June, before he departed for Europe on a grant from the Ford Foundation, Blau directed Sean O'Casey's *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy*. With Blau abroad, a number of guest directors were brought in to direct Workshop productions. The two American plays produced that year were both staged in September: Robert Goldsby directed Hitchcock's *Busy Martyr*, in which Hitchcock also starred, and Irving directed Michael's ill-fated *Plaster Bambino*. Vincent Porcaro both designed and directed John Osborne and Anthony Creighton's *Epitaph for George Dillon* in October. Finally, Robert Symonds directed *Jack*, or *The Submission* and Morgan Upton directed *The Chairs* when the Workshop produced the two Ionesco plays (translated by Donald Allen) on a double bill in December.

¹⁰⁹ "Tom Rosqui Playing Two Major Roles," *Oakland Tribune*, May 10, 1959, B5.

¹¹⁰ Blau, *As If*, 249.

Subsequent seasons followed this model. In 1960, the Workshop produced a few more American plays, though European works continued to dominate the repertoire. That year, the theatre produced Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple* (directed by William Ball, who founded his American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco as the remains of the Workshop crumbled in 1965), Dürrenmatt's *The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* (an article on Mr. Dürrenmatt's work had just been published in the October, 1958 issue of *The Tulane Drama Review*), Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (one of the Workshop's most successful productions), John Whiting's *Saint's Day*, and Jonson's *Volpone*.

Of these plays, Pinter's *The Birthday Party* was perhaps the most popular production the Actor's Workshop mounted (on par with Miller's *Crucible*, the dependable hit). Glynne Wickham, the head of the department of drama at Bristol University (the first such university department in Britain), a director at the Old Vic and friend of playwright Harold Pinter, came to San Francisco to direct the play. The original production of Pinter's play had been a flop in London, receiving only four performances before closing unceremoniously, and San Francisco critics believed the Workshop was "taking a chance" on a risky production.¹¹¹ Perhaps to minimize the risk, the Workshop's production – Pinter's first American production – opened in the small Encore theatre, which was devoted to more experimental plays. Robert Doyle starred as Stanley, Joyce Lancaster played Peg, and Robert Symonds and Edward O'Brien played Goldberg and McCann in the production. Alan Kimmel designed the setting and Rivka Berg the costumes.

Local critics proclaimed the play compelling and entertaining – if a bit obscure for some. While Knickerbocker declared "Pinter wishes to protect the sanctity of the individual," adding, "the symbolism represented ... is never obscure," Loeb Cone reported that she could not be

¹¹¹ "The Birthday Party Kicks Up a Record," *Oakland Tribune*, August 13, 1960, B5.

certain what Pinter's play was "driving at ... things are not exactly spelled out, to put it mildly."¹¹² Nevertheless, both unanimously praised the cast and the designers of the production, emphasizing the important atmospheric role played by James McMillan's lighting design in particular.

The obscurity of the play notwithstanding, the Workshop's audience had developed a taste for plays with this "enigmatic approach," for the production soon broke all records for audience attendance.¹¹³ The production of *The Birthday Party* continued at the Encore for four years, until it finally closed in 1963. The Actor's Workshop gave over 200 performances of the play, and when the Workshop was invited to perform at the World's Fair in Seattle in 1962, the company took *The Birthday Party* (along with *Waiting for Godot*, the same production which had played at the World's Fair in Brussels four years earlier). The success of *The Birthday Party* paved the way for other productions by the "new wave" British dramatist: Pinter's *The Dumbwaiter* and *A Slight Ache* followed in 1962, *The Caretaker* in 1963 (although originally proposed for 1962, the Workshop lost the rights to the American premiere to Broadway).

The only American play produced by the Workshop in 1960 which was not necessitated by Ford subsidy was O'Neill's *A Touch of the Poet*. Directed by Blau, the production suggests that the Workshop was trying to keep pace with Jose Quintero's well-respected Circle-in-the-Square theatre in New York, demonstrating the ability of regional theatre to compete with the highest quality of theatre occurring in Off-Broadway companies. For Blau had seen Quintero's production of *Our Town* in July, 1959 in New York, before embarking upon his Ford-funded year abroad in Europe, and been struck by the company's excellence. In a letter to Irving written

¹¹² Paine Knickerbocker, "Birthday Party a Powerful Play," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1960, 31. Theresa Loeb Cone, "Birthday Party Strong, Puzzling," *Oakland Tribune* July 18, 1960, D35.

¹¹³ Theresa Loeb Cone, "Birthday Party Strong, Puzzling," *Oakland Tribune* July 18, 1960, D35.

July 6, 1959, Blau had reported that, of all the theatre productions in New York, only Quintero's had "a cast we could not match."¹¹⁴ Quintero's own production of *A Touch of the Poet* in 1958 had been the American premiere of the play, as Quintero continued to resuscitate the O'Neill's reputation (following on the heels of his 1956 revival of *The Iceman Cometh*). Tom Driver had also written admiringly of Quintero's work in his article, "On the Late Plays of Eugene O'Neill," which appeared in the December, 1958 issue of *The Tulane Drama Review*, a journal which both Workshop directors considered so important that they attempted to use it as an incentive in a fundraising drive for the Workshop's 1960 season.

In 1961, the Workshop's offerings were again dominated by European plays. Henry Hewes, who visited the company in August and saw productions of both *The Birthday Party* and *King Lear*, praised the Workshop in an article for *Saturday Review*, proclaiming the theatre's varied highbrow repertoire "a heartening surprise" in a sea of conformity and sameness.¹¹⁵ The year began with a visit from a distinguished guest director. Alan Schneider, the primary American director of Samuel Beckett's plays, who had just directed the American premiere of *Krapp's Last Tape* at the Provincetown Playhouse in January, 1960, arrived to direct Hamilton Wright and Guy Andros' "mirage in three acts," *Twinkling of an Eye*. Unfortunately, the play was so poorly received that Irving closed the production after two performances in order to prevent the Workshop from losing funds.

It was Irving who directed the Workshop's own production of *Krapp's Last Tape*, the company's next production. Irving paired Beckett's short play with a new American play, Edward Albee's *Zoo Story*. Recognizing the generic similarities between Albee's work and the

¹¹⁴ Fowler, 419-420.

¹¹⁵ Henry Hewes, "Broadway Postscript: The Frisco Kids," *Saturday Review*, August 26, 1961, 26.

European Theatre of the Absurd¹¹⁶, the Stage Society Theatre in Los Angeles had just paired the two plays together on a double bill in December, 1960.¹¹⁷ For Irving's San Francisco audience, Beckett also provided an important context and frame of reference through which to understand Albee's play, for the Workshop's audience was already familiar with Beckett, as the Workshop had already produced Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* to acclaim.

With this double bill of Absurdist plays, Irving decided to provide his San Francisco audiences with an object lesson in the actor's work. Irving cast both plays twice, and alternated performance nights so that one could "see the same plays, directed by Jules Irving, presented by different casts." Not only did audiences find that the "second look" provided by a different cast could illuminate some of the mysteries of the two "puzzling plays," but the differences between the two productions very clearly illustrated the important contribution made to a production by a skilled actor. Irving generally refrained from lecturing his audiences, allowing them to draw their own conclusions from the demonstration. However, he did remind audiences of the company's history in order to contextualize some of the differences. For example, Irving suggested that Robert Symonds' greater experience with Beckett may have increased the actor's confidence in his role and caused his performance of Krapp to be "tougher, more vigorously obscene, more cantankerous and more engrossing" than Albert Paulsen's portrayal of a "simpler and somehow kinder man." The clever lesson was well-received: after all, Knickerbocker mused, "one would not hesitate to reread a poem, particularly one of some complexity. Here different nuances color

¹¹⁶ The term had been coined by Martin Esslin in an article which appeared in *The Tulane Drama Review* in 1960, which previewed the main arguments of his seminal book of the same name which Doubleday published in 1961.

¹¹⁷ "Dual Program Announced at Stage Theatre," *Van Nuys News*, December 29, 1960, 23B.

both plays, making the second visit an unusual opportunity to observe the work of two much-talked-about modern playwrights.”¹¹⁸

After starring as Krapp, Robert Symonds directed his third production for the Workshop in 1961, a double bill of Jean Genet’s *The Maids* and Edwin Honig’s *The Widow*. The veteran Workshop actor had honed his directing skills over the years in the private training sessions initiated in 1952 and which still continued, out of the public eye. In the 1960s, Symonds emerged as a major director of Workshop plays and joined Irving and Blau as part of the core triumvirate of Workshop directors. After Genet and Honig, Blau directed Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and Irving directed Shaw’s *Misalliance*. In October, the Workshop rushed to claim the honor of offering the American premiere of John Arden’s *Serjeant Musgrave’s Dance* (Blau directed), as the Workshop’s rights to produce the play (which Blau had acquired while abroad in 1959) were about to expire and Arden’s agents refused to extend them. Apparently, a Broadway producer had inquired about obtaining the rights to the play in order to produce it the following spring, and Arden’s agents had agreed; curiously, however, no production of Arden’s play actually occurred in New York until 1965. The Workshop closed the 1961 season with Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* (directed by Symonds) in November and Jean Anouilh’s *Becket* (directed by Goldsby) in December.

In 1962, the Workshop produced Mark Harris’ *Friedman & Son* (directed by Irving), Strindberg’s *Dance of Death* (directed by Symonds), and mounted their own production of *Henry IV, Part I* (directed by Irving) after Blau expressed his disapproval of the crude bawdiness of Planchon’s production, which he saw while abroad in France in 1959. With this production, the Workshop again seemed to compete with other theatres, attempting to prove by its own

¹¹⁸ Paine Knickerbocker, “A Pair of Plays with New Casts,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 10, 1961, 35.

productions that the company's work was the equal of theatre ensembles not only in America, but in Europe as well. The Workshop also mounted Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* (starring Manley as Winnie and directed by Lee Breuer, a young actor who had been honing his directing skills in the Workshop's private training sessions), Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (directed by Symonds), Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* (directed by Irving), and Brecht's *Galileo* (directed by Blau). The year closed with a pair of short Pinter plays, *A Slight Ache* (directed by Breuer) and *The Dumbwaiter* (directed by Timothy Ward) offered on a double bill in late December.

The first production offered in 1963 was written by one of the Workshop's own: Irving directed Blau's *Telegraph Hill*. This play – like Blau's *A Gift of Fury* in 1958 – was not well-received and closed early. However, even the denigrating headline of Speagle's critical view, "Mr Blau is no Edward Albee," demonstrates that Blau's play fit the theatre's standard repertoire – and that the San Francisco public was developing a standard of taste for the new European drama – and its American counterparts.

The Workshop mounted three classic European plays in 1963: Ben Jonson's *Volpone* and Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* (both directed by Symonds, who was developing a reputation as a talented director of Elizabethan drama), and Shaw's *Major Barbara* (directed by Blau). The Workshop devoted the rest of 1963 to the new drama. In April, Blau directed Genet's *The Balcony* to great critical acclaim and box office success. However, the consistent attention paid to the scantily-clad actresses in local reviews suggests that titillation may have been the major draw of the production. Knickerbocker's report that "the tarts are unrestrained in their portrayals" is typical of the tone.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Paine Knickerbocker, "A Sensational Production At the Actor's Workshop," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 4, 1963, 39.

After *The Balcony*, Breuer directed Carl Sternheim's *The Underpants* (though Sternheim's work was part of the first stage of European modernist drama, Bentley's translation had only just appeared in print in 1961, in volume four of his *Modern Theatre* series), and Irving directed Pinter's *The Caretaker*. In late November, the Workshop produced a double bill of new American works: Irving directed *The Master*, penned by James Schevill. Blau directed *There! You Died!* by Irene Maria Fornés, which was the first production of the young playwright's work.

The Workshop closed the year with Bertolt Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, in Eric Bentley's translation. The production was directed by Carl Weber, a veteran member and director at the Berliner Ensemble, who was at Stanford University from 1963 to 1964 as a visiting professor and director (he later joined the faculty for many years). Joseph Zeigler, who worked as the Workshop's director of public relations in 1963, reflected back on this production in *Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage* (1973) as "a high point" for the Workshop which united all "the peculiar, estranged, but vehement strengths of the company ... at fever pitch" (59).

The production of *Caucasian Chalk Circle* demonstrates the confluence of various contributing factors in this late Workshop production: the theatre's connection with Stanford university, the strength also of Blau's connections with the Berliner Ensemble, which he had first cultivated while abroad in Europe on his grant from the Ford Foundation; and the theatre's commitment to Bentley's translations of Brecht. However, Zeigler's evaluation of the production as "sublime" seems hyperbolic.¹²⁰ *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* was hardly the pinnacle of the Workshop's existence, nor the perfect expression of the "peculiar, estranged, but vehement

¹²⁰ Zeigler, 57.

strengths of the company,” as Zeigler claimed. In the history of the Workshop, productions like *Waiting for Godot*, *King Lear*, or *Galileo* better represent the company’s unique power and strength. Instead, what Zeigler’s comments reveal is his essential misunderstanding of the nature of the Workshop and its relationship to its local community.

Characterizing the Workshop’s relationship with its native San Francisco as “a hate affair with the city,” Zeigler claimed that the Workshop had been “radically opinionated, and sometimes ‘holier than thou’ in its anti-Establishment pronouncements,” and that San Francisco, as a city, was “in love with itself, just interesting enough to be pretentious. The programmed chic of San Francisco could not accommodate The Actor’s Workshop.”¹²¹ It is not surprising, then, that Zeigler should assume the Workshop’s *Caucasian Chalk Circle* was a pinnacle of success, for Zeigler seemed to have arrived in San Francisco with the preconceived idea that the city was wholly antagonistic to the theatre company. Yet the history of the Actor’s Workshop demonstrates that the theatre did, indeed, maintain positive ties to its community: the long runs of popular productions of second-wave plays like *The Birthday Party*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Balcony*, and *Galileo* (among others), the admiring praise from local newspaper critics in their reviews, even Knickerbocker’s contrite apology for his attacks on *Mother Courage* (after reading Esslin’s book on Brecht better acquainted the theatre critic with the aims of the Epic Theatre) all contradict Zeiger’s statement.

Problematically, Martha LoMonaco takes up Zeigler’s assessment in her evaluation of the Workshop in *The Cambridge History of the American Theatre*, in a paragraph which reveals a bias against San Francisco as a parochial backwater far from the sophistication and culture of New York. “The Actor’s Workshop, ironically, was well-respected everywhere except at home.

¹²¹ Zeigler, 55-56.

This situation, untenable for any regional theatre, ultimately spelled the Workshop's doom."¹²²

This gross oversimplification, which suggests the Workshop was a hapless victim of a city too ignorant to appreciate the value of the theatre, overlooks the fact that the Workshop crumbled when its directors raided the company of all of the strongest talent and removed to New York with them to run Lincoln Center. If any single moment doomed the Actor's Workshop, it was Blau and Irving's decision to leave San Francisco, the reasons for which are discussed below.

The 1963-1964 season was the final full season at the Workshop. After premiering Conrad Bromberg's *Defense of Taipei* early in 1964 (directed by Symonds), the final Workshop productions of the season were Mordecai Gorelik's translation of Max Frisch's *The Firebugs* (directed by Blau), Williams' *Night of the Iguana* (directed by Symonds), and Aristophanes' *The Birds*, which Blau adapted as a jazz/vaudeville send-up of local politics (much as he had adapted *Lysistrata* in 1953). Blau also directed the production.

In the summer of 1964, the Workshop received an invitation from Lincoln Center in New York to bring a production to perform as part of a festival repertory celebrating the opening of the Vivian Beaumont theatre. Unfortunately, as the Workshop reassessed its budget after three years of Ford subsidy, the directors decided to reject the offer: the Workshop could not afford the financial risk of travel.

The 1964-1965 season opened with Millard Lampell's *The Wall*, based on John Hershey's 1950 novel of the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II. The entire company seemed to have been so inspired by the heroic content of the play that they were blinded to its deficiencies. Though "participation in the play became an act of ethical

¹²² LoMonaco, 243.

significance for the majority of the company,” the production was weak and soon closed.¹²³

Robert Symonds then directed William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife*, winning acclaim from Robert Brustein as “one of the finest Restoration productions I have ever seen, especially interesting because it managed to remain indigenously American without sacrificing a sense of high style.”¹²⁴ The company mounted a double bill of Conrad Bromberg’s *The Rooming House* and Harold Pinter’s *The Collection* on February 11, 1965 at the Encore. Irving, who directed, again resorted to using the better-known European playwright to establish a generic frame for the new American play (Irving also knew that he could attract audiences to Bromberg’s play if he paired it with Pinter, for San Francisco had embraced the British playwright). This was the last production offered by the full Workshop; two weeks later, Irving, Blau and a dozen Workshop actors arrived in New York to assume control of the Repertory Theatre at Lincoln Center on March 1, 1965.

As it matured, the Workshop developed a national and international reputation for its daring repertoire of second-wave modernist plays. Partnership with the Ford Foundation was instrumental to the Workshop’s expansion, as Ford subsidy included stipulations that the Workshop generate funds from the San Francisco community which matched the subsidy coming from Ford. Ford forced the company to abandon the policy of “slow growth” which had directed its gradual development since 1952; yet the Workshop did not abandon its core values in its attempts to generate funding. Rather, the Workshop further reinforced its connection to the European dramas which had become the foundation of its professional reputation. For example, in 1960, Irving developed the idea of partnering with an academic journal to create an “Audience Guild” among the Workshop’s season subscribers. Irving made arrangements for a discounted

¹²³ Fowler, 771.

¹²⁴ Robert Brustein, “Health in an Ailing Profession,” *The New Republic*, January 30, 1965, 32.

group subscription to *The Tulane Drama Review* with editor Robert Corrigan, then sent out 12,000 brochures to Workshop subscribers and other preeminent San Franciscans on June 1, 1960, as he launched the Workshop's first Ford funding drive. The brochures offered membership in this new Guild at three different funding levels: \$30, \$100 or \$500. Membership in the Guild included a season subscription to the Workshop's productions, and a year's subscription to *The Tulane Drama Review*.¹²⁵ The fact that Irving offered an academic journal as an incentive in this guild demonstrates his own particular investment in creating an erudite audience, but also one which was better prepared to engage with the new European drama. In 1959 and 1960, *The Tulane Drama Review* had included articles from Ionesco, Brecht, and Gorelik, a review of Adamov's plays, articles on Dürrenmatt and on *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and Martin Esslin's "Theatre of the Absurd," the article which previewed his seminal book (published by Doubleday in 1961). Though Irving's dream of an Audience Guild did not materialize, his collaboration with Corrigan and *The Tulane Drama Review* further demonstrates the Workshop's commitment to the core of its repertoire, and the active involvement of both directors with the emerging academic journals devoted to the study of theatre.

Nor did Irving give up the dream of a "house" publication: three years later, at the start of the 1963-1964 season, the Workshop began to discuss the possibility of publishing its own in-house journal, *Prologue*, which was to "present articles of interest relevant to Workshop productions," much as *The Tulane Drama Review* articles corresponded neatly with the Workshop season in 1960. *Prologue* was envisioned as "more than a house publicity organ, but a serious review of dramatic opinion, incorporating guest articles from distinguished theatricians

¹²⁵ Fowler, 452.

and artists.”¹²⁶ Irving seems to have found a satisfactory platform for communicating with his theatre’s public after the move to New York, as he became a regular contributor to the *New York Times* arts columns during the years the Repertory Theatre at Lincoln Center ran under his aegis.

The Ford Foundation also required the Workshop to vastly increase the number of productions offered by their theatre. The Workshop had to discover ways to encourage San Francisco audiences to come to the theatre on weeknights - something which the theatre company had never accomplished before. Once again, a European model offered the best solution for the Workshop: for the first two years of Ford subsidy (1960-1962), the directors instituted a European-style repertory system of performance, offering three to four different plays throughout the week at their two theatres, the larger Marine’s Memorial Theatre and the tiny Encore. The theatre was applauded for its daring experiment: Joseph Zeigler reflected in 1973 that the decision to attempt repertory made the Workshop “the first regional theatre to try an experiment that was radical for its time.”¹²⁷ Howard Taubman, who visited the theatre in 1961, praised “San Francisco’s professional theatre,” which “changes its bill every night with the aplomb of the great European repertory ensembles.”¹²⁸

The variety of attractions, including special features like R.G. Davis’ Midnight Mime Shows on Thursday nights, helped to lure reluctant San Franciscans to the theatre. Economic necessity inspired the shift to a repertory system of production, but the change also reflected the changing identity of the character of the Workshop as a theatre. After Blau’s return from the continent in 1961, writes Fowler, “The decisions to keep three past productions alive and to revive another were in keeping with the European repertory tradition [which Blau had observed

¹²⁶ Fowler, 701.

¹²⁷ Zeigler, 54.

¹²⁸ Howard Taubman, “San Francisco: The Actor’s Workshop Gives *Misalliance*,” *New York Times*, May 12, 1961, 22.

in the theatres he'd visited while abroad], and based on the plays' artistic merit, their popularity, and their durability as symbols of the Workshop's more experimental aspect."¹²⁹

During the second year of subsidy (1961-1962), the Workshop shortened its season, produced fewer new plays, kept popular plays active in the repertory and revived others. The theatre continued to struggle to attain a viable budget and to raise funds to meet the Ford Foundation's requirements. The Workshop abandoned the repertory system and returned to straight runs in its third year of subsidy. Though repertory had proved a savvy economic maneuver, allowing the theatre to keep popular plays running (such as Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, which received over 200 performances in three years, and which had been taken on tour to the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle, Washington), the demands of repertory had exhausted the ensemble and the directors. Nevertheless, the third Ford season provided the first taste of economic stability the Workshop had had in years. Opening with Beckett's *Happy Days*, followed by Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, Irving was able to crow to the Ford Foundation's W. McNeil Lowry in November, 1962, that "my box office is the highest it has been in 10 ½ years."¹³⁰

Also in November, 1962, as the Workshop began its final year of Ford subsidy, an outside organization approached the Workshop with a unique proposition, one which might solve the perennial problem of funding. On November 15, 1962, Stanford University representatives met with the directors and members of the Workshop's Executive Committee, to offer the Workshop a new kind of professional association. The University wanted to discuss the possibility of incorporating the Workshop into their campus as a fully professional resident company where students of a new graduate program could receive quality training.

¹²⁹ Fowler, 556.

¹³⁰ Fowler, 637.

The University proposed the Workshop leave San Francisco for Stanford's campus, though the theatre company would retain its legal autonomy and be allowed to spend part of every year off-campus in San Francisco. Stanford offered to underwrite the Workshop and provide it with a theatre, technical assistants and apprentice actors, office space, equipment, accounting services, and even full professorships to Irving and Blau (including tenure). It seemed a perfect marriage: Blau and Irving both held degrees from Stanford, Manley had served as an artist-in-residence there in the late 1940s, and two years later, Carl Weber would be serving as a visiting professor at the university when he directed at the Workshop. In addition, in many ways, Irving and Blau crafted the Workshop on the model of their own ideal university theatre. For, despite the fact the university was, Blau felt, uniquely positioned to experiment with little-produced dramas, "Beckett and Brecht are still largely avoided, as are Pinter, Whiting, Albee, Adamov, and Genet, not to mention unknown playwrights."¹³¹ Yet the offer discussed in November of 1962 was tentative, however, and ultimately, Blau and Irving declined – primarily, it seems, over the problem of having to leave San Francisco, where they had worked so hard to carve a niche and establish an audience for serious theatre.

Though the directors turned down Stanford's offer, they subsequently accepted an overture from the Repertory Theatre at Lincoln Center in New York, dividing the tightly-knit ensemble they had been building for years and taking a chosen few with them back to the center of American theatre, after devoting fourteen years to a theatre which was in every way dedicated to the process of decentralization. As Blau had written of the Workshop (and of American theater in general) in *The Impossible Theater*, "we, all of us, need to rid ourselves of the idea that what

¹³¹ Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 72.

we do in the provinces is mere biding of time, a training ground or a tryout for the Metropolis.”¹³²

The first overture from the Board of Directors came in late autumn of 1964 and was made only to Herbert Blau – not Jules Irving. Blau’s *The Impossible Theatre* had been published earlier in the year, and the book’s fiery rhetoric and controversial attitude reinforced a general impression that the English professor was the source of the Workshop’s anti-establishment philosophy. “Left to his own devices, Irving would probably have developed a theater different from The Actor’s Workshop,” observed San Francisco novelist Mark Harris, who was a long-time friend of both directors. “In an accepted sense it would have prospered, earning mountains of money, and running all opposition out of town. But ... it would probably have left no permanent impression upon the spirit of the American theater.” On the other hand, Harris continued, “left to his own devices, Herbert Blau might have produced (had he troubled at all) erudite plays for selected friends. He might have composed poetry – and withheld it from an undeserving public.”¹³³ Though Harris waxed poetic as he imagined other futures for his friends, his language is revealing: even close associates, who knew that Irving (like Blau) was directing and acting in second-wave plays, believe the theatre’s mission and purpose stemmed solely from Blau.

With the publication of his “Manifesto,” Blau’s persona and literary tastes had come to dominate the public face of the Workshop, overshadowing Irving’s tireless work as actor, director, and fundraiser who kept the Workshop running. Indeed, when Irving and Blau’s “administrative advisor” at the Workshop, Gale Herrick, joined the directors at Lincoln Center in New York, Louis Calta’s *The New York Times* article announced, “Gale Herrick Comes From

¹³² Blau, *Impossible Theater*, 81.

¹³³ Mark Harris, “Blau and Irving Come Out of the West,” *New York Times*, February 21, 1965, SM16.

Coast with *Blau Team*” (my emphasis).¹³⁴ Thus, despite the fact that it was Irving who had overseen the survival of the Workshop for thirteen years, Lincoln Center first approached Blau, alone, about taking over the Repertory Theatre.

When Blau protested the oversight, the board of directors approached the two directors together, inviting them to consider replacing Elia Kazan at the helm of the Repertory Theatre. Blau and Irving hesitated. In an interview with Fowler, Blau recollected that “it was a most difficult time – a month or so we had to think. There were many vacillations. The offer was tempting, but at one point we called a halt to the bargaining and turned it down. We decided definitely not to accept it ... but they persisted, and we thought more about it. ... we also know we had something to say and here was the offer of this great public platform.”¹³⁵ Though the directors realized they could not tell the members of the Workshop without plunging the company into chaos and dividing it into factions, they did not want to make the decision solely on their own. They told their wives, Robert Symonds, and Alan Mandell (the general director at the Workshop, and of the Repertory Theatre under Irving and Blau). The secret was not entirely contained, however. Throughout the month of deliberation, erratic behavior and sudden intrusions into the Workshop’s community indicated that something was afoot:

phones would ring in the offices, and suddenly all doors would be shut and locked for ultimate privacy. Irving and Blau, on certain days, would simply not show up for rehearsals of the upcoming *Julius Caesar*, and the only explanation offered was that they had had to make another sudden trip to New York. Strange and elegantly vested older men, looking completely out of place in the dingy Workshop quarters, circulated among ragamuffin actors, nodding among themselves and whispering in corners with Irving and Blau.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Louis Calta, “Gale Herrick Comes from Coast with Blau Team,” *The New York Times*, December 15, 1965, 56.

¹³⁵ Fowler, 789.

¹³⁶ Zeigler, 146.

On January 31, 1965, the announcement was made to the Workshop: the directors would be leaving for Lincoln Center and would talk privately with each member of the company about whether or not they were invited to come along. Except for the double bill of short plays slated to open in two weeks at the Encore and a visiting tour of Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens, the rest of the Workshop's 1964-1965 season would be canceled.

Blau penned a letter (signed by himself and Irving) to send to all Workshop season subscribers announcing the decision, the early end to the Workshop's season, and delineating options available for refunds or donations of remaining subscription tickets. In it, Blau offers an explanation of the directors' motives for leaving San Francisco. Aside from the obvious lure of funding after thirteen years spent struggling to remain economically solvent, Blau explained that the call from Lincoln Center constituted an opportunity to attain the highest realization of the Workshop's central organizing idea – not a betrayal of its values. “The Workshop is above all an Idea given substance by the people who believed in it,” the letter stated. Blau and Irving believed that the Idea which their theatre had come to stand for - an attempt to “prevail against the tawdry habits of mind that made theatre in this country and inferior and desperate enterprise” – could be enacted in any physical location, not just in San Francisco. “We tried to conceive a theater whose influence would extend across the country,” the letter explained. The directors interpreted the offer from Lincoln Center as a national endorsement of the Idea which their theatre had been promoting: “the Idea which *is* The Actor's Workshop has made its way in the world. The offer from Lincoln Center, as we see it, is the most material certification of that Idea. Our appointment, then, is not a San Francisco issue or a New York issue but a national issue. And it is being seen precisely that way all over the world.” Finally, the offer from Lincoln Center constituted an opportunity for the Workshop to enjoy for the first time the kind of technical

riches that Blau had so admired – particularly in the German theatres - when he toured Europe in 1959. “Let all of us realized what the opportunity is now,” the letter cajoled. “The resources at Lincoln Center are by far the best that *America* has to offer to the Idea developed here. There is no other situation in the American theater which could have induced us to leave San Francisco.” However, the directors assured their audiences, that they would not abandon the principles which had guided the Workshop: “we can count the blocks from Lincoln Center to Shubert Alley as well as anyone, but ideologically we shall remain as we always have been, three thousand miles from Broadway and what it represents.” The directors thus interpreted the invitation from Lincoln Center as “a mandate to do ... what we have done here, and more so” and thus, by example (elevated now by the preeminent platform in America), to instigate a “revolution in the American theatre that will have repercussions everywhere.”¹³⁷

San Francisco novelist Mark Harris (whose play, *Friedman and Son*, the Workshop produced in January, 1962) introduced the directors to New York in a lengthy article for the *New York Times*. In it, Harris offered the same evaluation of the choice to move from San Francisco to New York. “As they exchange one coast for another, Irving and Blau will proceed exactly in the long-standing method of their partnership. Greater resources will be at their command, but fundamentally the stage is a stage, and the play is the thing. To the play itself ... they have always addressed themselves, and to nothing beyond. They have no program. They never had any.”¹³⁸ Yet it could be said that the directors had a program of plays – and true to their vision at the Workshop, they opened their season at Lincoln Center with Buchner’s *Danton’s Death* (which Blau adapted), Wycherley’s *The Country Wife*, Sartre’s *Condemned of Altona* (Sartre had not been produced in New York since 1948) and Brecht’s *Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

¹³⁷ The letter, dated February 2, 1965, is quoted in Zeigler, 151-2.

¹³⁸ Mark Harris, “Blau and Irving Come Out of the West,” *New York Times*, February 21, 1965, SM16.

In the space of eight years, from 1956 to 1964, the Actor's Workshop of San Francisco produced twenty one dramas of the second-wave, including a number of American premieres (e.g., Brecht's *Mother Courage*, Pinter's *Birthday Party*, Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, and Whiting's *Saint's Day*). Though in 1956 these dramas were considered avant-garde, even revolutionary, by 1970 they had been incorporated into the canon, and were considered classics of dramatic literature in the United States. This transformation was the result of the commitment of regional theatres like the Workshop to the production of these new plays across the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet the Workshop's history also demonstrates that the theatre's exceptional commitment to the dramas of the second-wave was not produced in a vacuum, not solely the product of a visionary scholar-director like Herbert Blau. The Workshop's production history reflects the complex and overlapping influence of all the contributing factors developed in the previous chapter: the productions of other directors (with whom Blau competed to prove the Workshop's excellence); the work of translators and scholar-critics like Eric Bentley, Martin Esslin, and Ruby Cohn, whose exploration of the second-wave dramas shaped Blau and Irving's ideas and productions; the emerging academic journals, the content of which inspired the Workshop's repertoire and to which Irving wanted his audiences to subscribe; the accessible paperback editions of second-wave literature by the Grove Press and Hill and Wang, which Blau was devouring almost as soon as they were available, and the importance of the University programs as centers for study of the second-wave, which nurtured Blau's theoretical exploration and attracted talented collaborators like Schevill and Weber.

Chapter Three: A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, Washington

On March 23, 1965, Dr. Gregory Falls and his wife, Jean Burch Falls, use a stock windfall to form a new professional theatre company in Seattle, Washington. In a way, the Falls were two years too late to create the theatre they wanted. The couple had moved to Seattle in 1961 when Dr. Falls assumed leadership of the University of Washington School of Drama, and Falls had been planning to found a theatre of his own. Yet after the 1962 World's Fair had closed in Seattle on October 21, 1962, it was local businessman Bagley Wright, not Falls, who established a board of dedicated theatre patrons and founded the Seattle Repertory Theatre. The theatre inherited the Seattle Playhouse facilities, which had been designed and built for the World's Fair. One of Falls' former theatrical collaborators, Stuart Vaughn, was hired to manage the theatre company.

Falls was undaunted. Though he had initially planned to open a theatre like the Seattle Repertory Theatre, committed to a repertoire of canonical "classic" plays (from Shakespeare to Arthur Miller), in the years after the World's Fair he began to recognize that Seattle was hungry for a different kind of drama, the same dramas he was incorporating into the changing repertoire at the UW School of Drama. When he and Jean Burch founded their theatre company in 1965, they decided to target this niche market. They decided to devote their energies to producing serious contemporary dramas which their competitors at the Seattle Rep and the Cirque Playhouse would not produce. Convinced that there was an audience for Albee, Kopit, Pinter, Dürrenmatt, Ionesco, Beckett, Mrozek and Weiss, they named their venture, "A Contemporary Theatre."

Updating the University Drama Program

Falls had arrived in Seattle from Vermont in 1961 to assume control of the University of Washington's School of Drama from its founder, Glenn Hughes, who was expected to retire. Yet Hughes gave no sign that he intended to do so. Under his leadership, productions at the University had enjoyed elite status in the Seattle community. "The prestigious theatre [patron] list was the opening night list at the Penthouse Theatre," recalled Falls in 1978, "which was for twenty years a black-tie-and-evening-dress affair with every six weeks an opening."¹³⁹

Despite the respect accorded School's productions by Seattle's theatre patrons, members of the faculty had become increasingly dissatisfied with Hughes' leadership. In 1960, the faculty pressed the University to review the School's academic practices. The following year the Academic Policy Review Committee recommended major changes to the School's academic program. The committee felt the School's curriculum was too focused on the technical and practical challenges of play production. The committee also prescribed a drastic reduction in the number of performances offered by the School. It recommended performances be limited to Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights only, and that all University theaters be closed annually for the entire month of September for maintenance.

Finally, the committee also recommended changing the criteria which governed the selection of plays for production. Though the School of Drama production history included classic plays by Sophocles, Shakespeare, Moliere, and the dramatists of the first wave of European and American modernism, the committee found Hughes too often favored commercially successful plays, like those of Terence Rattigan, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Noel Coward. Between 1950 and 1960, the School of Drama's three theatres mounted thirty plays of first-wave modernism: including eight by Shaw, three by Williams, three by O'Neill, two by

¹³⁹ Richard Randall Hansen, "The Development of Seattle's A Contemporary Theatre (ACT): Practice vs. Artistic Guidelines," (MA Thesis, University of Oregon, 1982), 18.

Chekhov, two by Ibsen, and two by Strindberg. In this same period, the theatres produced seven plays of Shakespeare, five of which were comedies; three plays by Moliere, three plays by Gilbert and Sullivan, four plays by J.M. Barrie, three plays by J.B. Priestley, six plays by Noel Coward, and six productions of Terence Rattigan's plays in the 1950s. The School of Drama also staged nine of Hughes' own plays during the decade: *A Touch of Heaven* at the Showboat (September, 1950), a revival of *A Touch of Heaven* at the Showboat (May, 1951), *The Dream and the Deed* at the University Playhouse (February, 1952), *On the Side of Angels* at the Penthouse (January, 1953), *Columbine Madonna* at the University Playhouse (November, 1953), *The Pleasure's All Mine* at the Penthouse (March, 1955), *On the Side of Angels* at the Penthouse (January, 1956), *The Pleasure's All Mine* at the Penthouse (August, 1956), and *Transatlantic Comedy* at the Showboat (November, 1956). Under pressure to alter his curriculum and to change both the type and number of plays produced annually, Hughes resigned as the head of the School on June 30, 1961, and Falls was hired to replace him.

Falls' task, as the new head of Drama, was to reestablish the national reputation of the program. As he reflected in 1978, the University was anxious that the School of Drama "come into the second half of the twentieth century . . . part of this meant building a professional faculty and attracting the students and faculty who were interested in the work that was of concern nationally."¹⁴⁰ To address the twin imperatives to professionalize and modernize the program, Falls recruited British actor-director Duncan Ross to develop school's acting program. In 1967, the School of Drama unveiled its Professional Actor Training Program, a graduate program in actor training headed by Ross. In 1968, Falls brought Arne Zaslove to the University to join Ross as a professor of acting and also to run a children's theatre. Falls also had no

¹⁴⁰ Hansen, 17.

problem following University directives to alter the character of the production repertoire at the School of Drama. In fact, in an article published in 1960, Falls had stressed the importance of staging quality plays with literary significance in educational theatre: “My rule-of-thumb criterion is that no play should be performed in a high school that would not at least be accepted for reading and discussion in a contemporary literature course. Or, to put it more specifically, I seriously question the artistic and literary qualities of any contemporary plays that have not been subjected to the severe critical test of professional production and criticism.”¹⁴¹

Falls, whom Hughes considered “a nice guy, but ... a rubber stamp of the administration,” was indeed an obedient replacement for Hughes. He made all of the changes prescribed by the University, including a restructuring of the School’s finances, which Hughes had resisted for years.¹⁴² In an interview with *Seattle Times* drama critic Louis R. Guzzo, Falls revealed that he was abandoning Hughes’ “self-sustaining policy” for the School’s budget. For decades, Hughes had refused to allow the University to control the School’s funds. The School “planned its own budget and drew much of its income from the box offices of its three theaters,” often generating large profits that could be invested back into the School.¹⁴³

By relinquishing control over the School’s budget, Falls had “declared, in effect, that the box-office policy hampers the educational functions of a university drama department.” No longer compelled to generate a profit, Falls announced he would stage “great pieces of dramatic literature,” including those plays that were “not good commercial risks.” Under Hughes, UW Drama’s productions had been celebrated events in the community, but Falls was wary catering

¹⁴¹ Gregory A. Falls, “High-School Dramatics: Must It Be Inferior?” *The Clearing House*, 35.2 (October, 1960), 108-109. Though Falls’ article was addressed to high-school level drama educators, there is no reason to believe Falls’ standards would be lower for a university setting.

¹⁴² Glenn Hughes to Dr. Charles Odegaard, November 11, 1961 (University of Washington School of Drama records, accession number 71-041), 1.

¹⁴³ Louis R. Guzzo, “Words and Music: Drama School Ends Self-Sustaining Policy,” *Seattle Times*, September 17, 1961, 38.

to his audience at the expense of his students. “For whom are the plays being done in an educational institution?” he asked in 1960. “Is the dramatics program primarily obligated to entertain the theater-going community, or is it obligated to teach art and literature to the students? Certainly my vote goes with education before entertainment, with the student, not the public.”¹⁴⁴

However, when Falls listed playwrights whose work he considered modern, noncommercial and exciting theatre, the brief catalogue hardly differed from the fare offered by the School of Drama under Hughes: “Strindberg, Fry, Sartre, Brecht, Lorca and Chekhov.”¹⁴⁵ Though the School of Drama had only produced three second-wave plays under Hughes’ leadership in the 1950s (a double bill of Ionesco’s *The Lesson* and *The Bald Soprano* in 1958 and Brecht’s *Private Life of the Master Race* in 1959), Falls’ list is hardly representative of “the second half of the twentieth century.” Indeed, four years later, when Falls committed his own professional theatre to a similar program of serious, non-commercial contemporary works, he seems to have been motivated primarily by his desire to find a niche market for his theatre rather than personal commitment to the second-wave dramas in particular.

The changing repertoire of the School of Drama theatres reflected the University’s mandate that Falls shift the focus of the production away from popular commercial successes and to update the repertoire with contemporary plays. The light comedies and modern classics (such as the plays of Shaw and O’Neill) which had formed the basis of Drama’s annual theatrical offerings under Hughes, began to be punctuated by serious pieces from the contemporary second

¹⁴⁴ Gregory A. Falls, “High-School Dramatics: Must It Be Inferior?” *The Clearing House*, 35.2 (October, 1960), 109.

¹⁴⁵ Hansen, 17.

wave of modernist drama as Falls brought the program's repertoire "into the second half of the twentieth century."

In November of 1961, the School produced Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* at the University Playhouse. Sartre's *No Exit* appeared at the Penthouse Theatre in June, 1962. In August, the School mounted Pinter's *The Room* on a double bill with Max Frisch's *The Great Rage of Philip Hotz* at the Penthouse. In May of 1963, a double-bill by Albee (*American Dream* and *Zoo Story*) was produced at the Showboat Theatre. In June, Ionesco's *Jack; or, The Submission* appeared at the Penthouse. In November, John Whiting's *Marching Song* was performed, directed by Duncan Ross. In 1964, Dario Fo's *Thieves, Corpses, and Fallen Women* was mounted at the Showboat in January, followed by Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* in February, and later, Pinter's *The Caretaker* in July. In 1965, the School of Drama paired Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* with Genet's *The Maids* on a double bill of absurdist drama (directed by visiting artist Mel Shapiro of the Arena Stage). In 1966, Sheilagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* appeared at the Playhouse in March, followed by Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Whiting's *Saint's Day* appeared at the Showboat in October, 1969 and was followed by Albee's *Everything in the Garden* in November. Also in November, 1969, student Jim Martin directed Brecht's early play, *Baal*, at the University Playhouse as a thesis project. In April 1970, another student – Jay Humprey – directed Camus' *Caligula* at the Penthouse for his thesis project. The 1971 season included Mrozek's *Tango* at the Showboat. Falls, an experienced director, only directed three of these plays: the double bill of Albee's *Zoo Story* and *The American Dream* in 1963, and Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* in 1964.

The Drive to "Publish"

Despite the demands of his new position as the head of the University's drama program, Falls longed for more practical theatrical work as a director. However, in the first nine years of his tenure at the University of Washington, from 1961 to 1970, Falls only directed five plays. In addition to the three second-wave dramas listed above, he directed *The Most Happy Fella* at the University Playhouse in February, 1962 and a children's play, *The Land of the Dragon*, at the Showboat in January, 1969. Clearly, when Falls expressed a longing to direct more theatre, he meant he wished to direct professional theatre. As he told the National Theatre Conference in a survey in the early 1960s, "an amateur theater (regardless of the plays produced) is, at best, a secondary kind of theater."¹⁴⁶ For Falls, directing professional theatre was akin to publication, and he felt it was his duty to remain active in the field as a director at the professional level. In fact, in an article published in *Educational Theatre Journal* in 1966, Falls insisted that "‘appreciation’ of art does not require the same level of ‘competence’ that executing does," stating that the performing artist who creates art is engaged in an act of critical intellect akin to that of the historian or dramatic critic.¹⁴⁷ While studying at London's Central School of Speech and Drama on a Fulbright scholarship in 1950-1951, Falls had realized "how much I needed professional contact, how much I wanted to publish, if you will, and that I would be an incomplete teacher if I didn't publish."¹⁴⁸

Twice before, Falls had supplemented his academic teaching career by forming professional theatre companies: in Toledo, Ohio, Falls and Stuart Vaughan had created a summer stock company called the Mad Anthony Players in 1953. The enterprise, funded by a friend's inheritance, had lasted all of three summers, offering one new play weekly for ten

¹⁴⁶ *Theater in America: Appraisal and Challenge*, eds. Robert E. Gard, Marson Balch, and Pauline Temkin (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1968), 86.

¹⁴⁷ Gregory A. Falls, "Intellect and the Theatre," *Educational Theatre Journal* 18.1 (March, 1966), 3.

¹⁴⁸ Hansen, 13-14.

weeks before folding, leaving Falls and Vaughan some two or three thousand dollars in debt. At the University of Vermont, where Falls had been the Director of the Drama program before coming to Seattle, he formed the Champlain Shakespeare Festival in Burlington, Vermont. The Champlain Shakespeare Festival had produced three Shakespeare plays annually. Each play was given nine performances, and the plays were performed in repertory throughout the month of August. The plays were presented on a thrust stage in a small theatre that only seated 227 audience members. The permanent company consisted of 20-30 members, half of whom were students from the University of Vermont at Burlington, where Falls was a professor in the Speech Department. Student workers could earn six University credit-hours of “Theatre Practicum.”¹⁴⁹

As the head of the School of Drama, a number of undergraduate students approached Falls during his first year in Seattle, asking for his help in finding summer employment as apprentices in summer stock companies. At the time, the closest program Falls could find for his students was in Eastern Minnesota. Falls realized that if he founded another theatre, he could potentially satisfy his own impulse to “publish” (i.e., to direct professionally), provide his students with the experience of working with a professional company, and take advantage of a ready pool of free labor. With the encouragement of the University, Falls conceived of his new theatre as an opportunity for both faculty and students to hone their craft: “It was going to provide both students and faculty with access to something that was simply not available [in Seattle in 1961] for those who were professionally competent . . . to do professional work.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Walter Boughton, “A Directory of Summer Theatres Sponsored by AETA Members,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 12.1 (March, 1960), 30.

¹⁵⁰ Hansen, 21.

The founding of the Seattle Repertory Theatre in 1962 posed a problem for Falls, however. Initially, Falls wanted to create a theatre with a classic repertoire on the model of the Champlain festival he had established in Vermont. The Seattle Repertory Theatre opened with a production of *King Lear*, and announced it would mount one or two Shakespeare plays each season. Falls realized he had to change his plans. Even though he planned to organize his theatre as a professional summer-stock venture, which would be active while the Seattle Rep was dark, Seattle was a small city, and probably could not support two regional theatres offering the same repertoire. As Falls felt that the quality of community theatre paled next to that of professional theatre, the founding of the Seattle Repertory Theatre also reinforced his conviction that his own theatre would need to be a professional venture from the start, as he explained in 1978: “with the Rep here we couldn’t start as a community theatre, besides I didn’t want to do that, I wanted it to be an Equity company from the beginning because this is such a cosmopolitan area.”¹⁵¹

Falls’ position at the University actually provided the solution to his dilemma. As the head of the Drama program, Falls was considered the city’s resident expert on the subject of theatre and was often invited to make speeches in the community. He soon noted a developing trend in the requests: “over and over again groups would say, ‘Would you come and talk to us about the theatre of the absurd?’ That was really around in those days. *Waiting for Godot* had gone around and I wasn’t particularly sympathetic with what I understood to be the Theatre of the Absurd. But I said, ‘You know, there are people there, and here I am – locked into Shakespeare all these years – and the people are asking about contemporary things.’”¹⁵² Falls’ recollection of the particular interest in *Waiting for Godot* suggests the influence of The Actor’s

¹⁵¹ Hansen, 27.

¹⁵² Hansen, 22-23.

Workshop, which performed Beckett's play and Pinter's *The Birthday Party* at the World's Fair in Seattle in 1962.

Though Falls preferred the classics to the contemporary drama, he realized that there was a demand for second-stage European modernist works in Seattle that the Seattle Repertory Theatre, with its commitment to the classics, would never fulfill. Here, then, was a basis upon which he could found a theatre company and satisfy his desire to "publish." As Gregory Eaton, General Manager of ACT, observed in a letter in 1966, ACT, like so many other regional theatres around the country, was created in an attempt to break the mold of the regional theatre as "tributary theatre." The fledgling company aspired to produce truly excellent professional productions of cutting-edge drama, in order to "extend the professional theatre in America. For too many years those of us outside of New York have had to be content to have 'our theatre' be either in New York or sent out to use in packages – sometimes like packages to the underprivileged!"¹⁵³

Yet Falls did not find it easy to commit to the new drama; nor could he turn his gaze from New York. In its tenuous early years, Falls continually strayed from the theatre's mission by peppering ACT's repertoire with classic plays, driving ACT to the brink of collapse in 1968. Even the contemporary plays which Falls chose were almost exclusively those which had already demonstrated a capacity for commercial success through recent, lengthy runs on Broadway and Off-Broadway in New York. Unlike the Workshop, which committed to a repertoire of the second-wave dramas at the cost of financial success in the 1950s, the Seattle theatre company's decision to produce a program of second-wave plays was motivated by widespread acceptance of and curiosity about these dramas in Seattle in the mid-1960s. Despite Falls' reluctance, ACT

¹⁵³ Gregory Eaton to Evelyn Watters, June 6, 1966 (A Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001, Box 1), 1.

produced almost as many dramas of the second-wave as the Workshop – and in about half the time.

ACT and the University

By the time Falls began to plan his contemporary theatre in 1965, he had also changed his mind about involving the University in his theatre company. In a 1978 interview with Richard Randall Hansen, Falls hinted darkly about the “murky situation” which had developed at the Champlain festival, which had been “officially a part of the University – but not really.”¹⁵⁴ Falls wanted to retain ultimate control over his new theatre, so when he and Jean Burch established ACT, they initially organized it as a for-profit venture and funded it privately with their own wealth. However, though Falls’ theatre was officially independent, Falls drew heavily upon University resources to help his private theatre function. For example, the University of Washington School of Drama professor of costume design, James Crider, designed the costumes for many of ACT’s productions, or lent the theatre costumes “from stock at the University.” In return, “at the end of the season every costume which had been built at ACT was donated directly to the University and went into their stock.” Falls explained.¹⁵⁵

When Falls reorganized ACT as a non-profit organization, he once again turned to the University community to help him with the transition. He further knit ACT into the fabric of his theatre when he invited his Dean to join the theatre’s inaugural Board of Trustees. Other ACT personnel were drawn from the UW faculty and students. In 1966, a UW graduate student, Gregory Eaton, replaced William Taylor as ACT’s general manager. In 1964, Falls hired Duncan Ross to head the acting program at the University of Washington. The British actor, director and scholar had been the head of the Old Vic School in his native England from 1954 to 1962. Ross

¹⁵⁴ Hansen, 24.

¹⁵⁵ Hansen, 46.

began directing for ACT in 1966 and acting with the company in 1967. Falls increasingly depended upon Ross' considerable acting talent in the later 1960s.

In 1966, the University of Washington hired Margaret Faulkes on a one-year appointment as visiting faculty for the Children's Drama program. Faulkes was the co-director and co-founder with Brian Way of the Theatre Centre in London, a company which had been developing educational plays that could be performed for children in their schoolrooms and halls since the 1950s. Falls took advantage of Faulkes' extensive experience in children's theatre, and under her guidance, ACT founded a children's theatre program, the Eleven O'Clock Theatre. Faulkes agreed to direct four plays during the summer that were designed specifically for young audiences. These pieces, "developed at the Theatre Centre," had already "been performed for many thousands of English school children," and Falls was eager to expose Seattle's children to a European cultural experience.¹⁵⁶ The cast of the Eleven O'Clock Theatre were all University of Washington undergraduate students in drama, whom Faulkes had trained "using the techniques which have been developed so successfully at the theatre Centre."¹⁵⁷ ACT also initiated an apprentice program in 1966. Apprentices trained with the stage managers, publicity departments, designers, and directors of ACT's programs; though many apprentices who applied dreamed of acting, the apprenticeships afforded few opportunities for aspiring actors to appear next to the professionals on-stage. These summer positions were filled by students from local universities, including the University of Washington.

In 1967, Falls hired Arne Zaslove, to teach acting at the University. A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, Zaslove had trained as an apprentice under *commedia dell'arte*

¹⁵⁶ Greg Falls to Mrs. Bea Hudson, May 25, 1966 (University of Washington School of Drama records, accession number 71-041), 1.

¹⁵⁷ Greg Falls to Mr. Forbes Bottomly, April 26, 1966 (University of Washington School of Drama records, accession number 71-041), 1.

master Carlo Mazzone from 1962 to 1964, then travelled to Paris on a Fulbright scholarship from 1964 to 1966. He was the first American student to train at the Ecole Jacques Lecoq. Together with Ross, Zaslove headed the newly-formed Professional Actor Training Program. Zaslove was also put in charge of ACT's children's theatre, after Faulkes returned to England. Robert Loper, director of the Stanford Repertory Theatre, joined the faculty at UW in 1968. Loper had already directed a production at ACT, Miller's *After the Fall* in 1967, before joining UW faculty. In subsequent years, Loper (who also acted in and directed productions at the Seattle Rep) directed *Black Comedy* and *The Homecoming*, and appeared in *A Delicate Balance*, *Waiting for Godot* and *Rhinoceros*. As the University of Washington's Professional Actor Training Program began to produce its first classes of graduates, many found work at ACT, including John Aylward, Marc Singer, Jo Leffingwell, Stuart Gillard, John Kauffman and Gary Reineke. Nevertheless, throughout the first six years of ACT's existence, even after the School of Drama began to train actors explicitly for the professional stage, Falls insisted upon making annual trips to New York, where he auditioned actors for the starring roles in his theatre's ensemble.

A number of visiting artists at the UW also contributed their professional talents to ACT productions. Irish actor Michael Dunne also performed with the UW before joining ACT's company in a number of performances. Dunne first immigrated to the United States when invited by Falls to perform in Pinter's *The Caretaker* in 1964 at the University. Dunne then appeared in Peter Shaffer's *The Public Eye* to great acclaim in 1965 and rejoined ACT's company again in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *The Caretaker*. In *The Public Eye*, Dunne was directed by Mel Shapiro, the former resident director of the Arena Stage. Falls had hired Shapiro to serve as a resident teaching artist at the University of Washington in 1965, before he headed south to become one of two directors leading the new professional theatre at Stanford University in the

fall. While at UW, Shapiro lectured and guest-directed a double bill of absurdist classics, *Krapp's Last Tape* and *The Maids*. Another visiting professor at the University, Malcolm Black, who taught in the theatre department for two years from 1968 to 1970, also directed at ACT. Black selected *Crabdance*, the work of his long-time friend Beverly Simon, to direct as ACT's closing show in the 1969 season.

In short, however independent Falls may have wanted ACT to be, he needed the University's resources and talent as the fledgling theatre company found its feet in the community. Terry Murphy, ACT's general manager in 1979, observed that the University's personnel constituted "perhaps the biggest contribution, outside of Greg Falls himself, to the quality of the theatre . . . at such an early stage."¹⁵⁸ By 1976, the symbiotic relationship of UW Drama and ACT and the development of both organizations under Falls' guidance was firmly established and even Falls no longer seemed to think it mattered that the two were intertwined. Indeed, as he explained to Donovan Gray, he had created the professional theatre expressly in order "to attract faculty to his department."¹⁵⁹

Contemporary Drama in Contemporary Staging

ACT announced its primary aim was to present "theatre in a contemporary mode, plays that reflect our times, new stages and modes of production."¹⁶⁰ Falls decided that a thrust stage would best serve these aims. The stage, which would be "approximately 20 feet deep and 30 feet wide," would be modeled on the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center in New York and the Guthrie Theatre, Falls announced.¹⁶¹ Falls' announcement that his theatre would be modeled on the Guthrie and the Vivian Beaumont seems to have been a calculated statement designed to

¹⁵⁸ Hansen, 30.

¹⁵⁹ *Encore*, September, 1976, 11.

¹⁶⁰ John Hinterberger, "Seattle Will Host Modern Summer Theater," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 19, 1965, 22.

¹⁶¹ John Hinterberger, "Seattle Will Host Modern Summer Theater," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 19, 1965, 22.

generate excitement about his theatre by linking it ideologically to some of the most prestigious theaters in the country. For, though Falls claimed the work of other directors – Guthrie, Kazan – had inspired his decision, the self-effacing director had actually been directing productions on thrust stages for years with his Champlain Shakespeare Festival in Vermont.

To house his new venture, Falls purchased the fifty-year-old Queen Anne Hall located at 709 First Avenue West, just blocks from the Seattle Repertory Theatre’s Seattle Playhouse facilities at the Seattle Center. Local architects James Saunders and David Hewitt directed the remodel of the building. The interior was cleared to the outer walls in order to accommodate a new 425-seat theatre. ACT’s proximity to the established Repertory Theatre also contributed to the impression that ACT was designed to be a complement (or even a competitor) to the Seattle Repertory Theatre – and consequently, the new theatre enjoyed some of the established theatre’s prestige.¹⁶² As *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* observed, ACT’s season opened just after the Seattle Repertory Theater closed its 1964-1965 season, offering Seattleites the opportunity to enjoy professional theatre continuously throughout the year, in almost the same location.

The First Seasons: 1965-1967

“This is an experiment,” Falls proclaimed to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on opening night, June 29, 1965. “We want to find out if there is an audience for this kind of theater in Seattle.”¹⁶³ However, it does not seem that Falls had much faith in the experiment himself: the first season at ACT included only one play which could feasibly classify as part of the second wave of modernism. This was the opening production of the season, Arthur Kopit’s absurdist farce, *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama’s Hung You in the Closet and I’m Feeling So Sad*. ACT

¹⁶² This location also meant ACT’s patrons could take advantage of the parking facilities in the Seattle Center area.

¹⁶³ “ACT Opens: Praise for New Theater,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 29, 1965, n.p. ACT Scrapbook. Seattle Public Library Arts Reference (AIS qR792.09797), vol 1 (1965-1969). Seattle Public Library (Central Branch), Seattle, WA.

followed this with productions of Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Frank Gilroy's *Who'll Save the Plowboy?*, Howard Richardson and William Berney's *Dark of the Moon*, and closed with a pair of one acts by Peter Shaffer, *The Private Ear* and *The Public Eye*. Gilroy's work had premiered Off-Broadway at the Phoenix in 1962 and been awarded an Obie. The play was contemporary and award-winning, but *Plowboy* hardly classified as a new "mode" of drama. It was a realistic slice-of-life drama about the disappointments of life's failures. Likewise, *Dark of the Moon*, first produced in 1945, was a curious choice for a theatre with an avowedly "contemporary" viewpoint in 1965. The local theatre critics seemed hesitant to pronounce too strong a sentence upon the new theatre's offerings. Instead, they struggled to find positive aspects of ACT's curiously dated offerings. Wayne Johnson, drama critic at the *Seattle Times*, seemed to feel compelled to make excuses for the play (which had a reputation for mediocrity and banality) in his review: "As a professor of mine used to say, 'It's not a great play; it may not even be a good play; but it's damn good theater.'"¹⁶⁴ Rolf Stromberg at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* was less inclined to mask his disdain. "Frankly, it's a flimsy play and it takes a vivid wrench of fancy to make it plausible."¹⁶⁵ Charitably, he added that ACT had "mined as much out of [the play] as the vein could stand."¹⁶⁶

Like Gilroy's *Plowboy*, the Shaffer plays had recently closed after a respectable run on Broadway – 163 performances, at the Morosco Theatre. However, also like Gilroy's *Plowboy*, Shaffer's plays were conventional comedies and hardly qualified as the "new forms" of the experimental theatre to which Falls had supposedly committed his organization. The highlight of

¹⁶⁴ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Scores with New Show," *The Seattle Times*, August 11, 1965, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Rolf Stromberg, "*Dark of the Moon Finds Itself*," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 11, 1966, n.p. ACT Scrapbook. Seattle Public Library Arts Reference (AIS qR792.09797), vol 1 (1965-1969). Seattle Public Library (Central Branch), Seattle, WA.

¹⁶⁶ Rolf Stromberg, "*Dark of the Moon Finds Itself*," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 11, 1966, n.p. ACT Scrapbook. Seattle Public Library Arts Reference (AIS qR792.09797), vol 1 (1965-1969). Seattle Public Library (Central Branch), Seattle, WA.

the production, in fact, seems to have been the skillful direction of Mel Shapiro, who was in Seattle directing and teaching at the UW (and ACT) before joining the newly-formed Stanford Repertory Theatre at Stanford University. Shapiro's experience as the Arena's resident director served him well in Seattle: Johnson applauded Shapiro's ability to properly "utilize" ACT's thrust stage – suggesting, perhaps, that Falls' own directing work earlier in the season may have paled in comparison to the work of his more experienced colleague. "Much of the success for the ACT production must be attributed to the ingenious direction of Shapiro," Johnson opined. "His direction is always fast without being breathless and it has immense vitality and invention," he added, suggesting again that quick pace and excellent comedic timing were the preferred qualities of serious contemporary drama in Seattle.

While ACT's first season garnered some positive press, Falls had underestimated the expense of running a theatre and overestimated the audience that his new theatre would be able to attract. ACT's attendance averaged only 35% of capacity for the first season, and the theatre closed at a loss, which Falls and Burch had to cover from their private finances. Before opening a second season, they incorporated their venture as a non-profit organization. The decision to change to non-profit status was motivated by economic concerns and by the precedent set by other regional theatres in the country like the Cleveland Play House, which had made the change decades earlier, in the 1920s. Falls had observed that the major support in the arts came from the private sector, from organizations like the Ford Foundation. He became convinced that "you could not raise money seriously without being non-profit, and there was no way Jean and I were going to continue to subsidize \$50,000 or so a year. Our manager Bill Taylor felt that this was the way the rest of the theatres in the country were going: the Arena Stage, Actor's Workshop,

the Guthrie – these were all non-profit theatres trying to be institutions in the community.”¹⁶⁷

Once again, Falls tended to follow trends. Looking to other institutions who seemed to be making a bid for becoming important institutions in their communities, he followed the established model as he worked to accomplish the same feat for his own theatre.

In its second season, ACT adhered more closely to its mission statement, producing Albee’s *Tiny Alice*, a double bill of Pinter’s *The Collection* and *The Room*, and Dürrenmatt’s *The Physicists* as part of an expanded season of seven plays which ran for two weeks each. The remaining four plays were *The Typists* and *The Tiger* (on a double bill), *A Thurber Carnival*, *In White America* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Previewing the season in April, Stromberg devoted most of his column Dürrenmatt’s and Albee’s plays and insisted that ACT was becoming a “theater with a vengeance” by adding “a touch of the controversial in its summer season.”¹⁶⁸

All three plays were well-received by critics and by ACT’s season subscribers. Ed Baker proclaimed *Tiny Alice*, “exciting theatre,” noting that this alone was “reason enough to stage it, even if the audience can’t know what the play means.”¹⁶⁹ He warned the audience that the play was “not for those who seek escapist entertainment. Nor is it for those who wish to avoid violent language. For show-goers who are not lazy in the head, however, the play poses a challenge – in trying to puzzle out all those questions – and exposure to beautifully formed prose.”

Johnson’s praise was similarly effusive for *The Physicists*: “This is certainly the most ‘meaty’ play of ACT’s season thus far, with the possible exception of *Tiny Alice*.”¹⁷⁰ For Johnson *The Physicists* was the more effective of the two plays because it was easier to comprehend: “*The Physicists*, for all its puzzles, has the virtue of being much more

¹⁶⁷ Hansen, 47.

¹⁶⁸ Rolf Stromberg, “Theater with a Vengeance,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, April 15, 1966, 12.

¹⁶⁹ Ed Barker, “Who’s Afraid of Edward Albee?” *The Seattle Times*, July 20, 1966, 25.

¹⁷⁰ Wayne Johnson, “‘Insane’ Drama is Fascinating,” *The Seattle Times*, August 17, 1966, 59.

comprehensible than the Albee play and, moreover, its subject matter has rather more modern relevance than that of *Tiny Alice*.” Yet despite his preference for the Dürrenmatt play, Johnson encouraged his readers to make their own decisions about the relative worth of the two plays in a parenthetical editorial comment: “You can start an argument with that last statement.”

ACT also encouraged its audiences to engage in debate about these controversial plays, instigating a series of post-performance talkbacks. The practice began with *Tiny Alice*. A small typewritten slip of paper, imperfectly cut by hand, was tucked into the program for the play. It announced that:

Because of the controversial nature of tonight’s play, A.C.T. has made special arrangements with Le Rapport to have coffee and discussion sessions immediately following each night’s performance. Such special guests as Greg Falls, Thomas Hill and Ronald Satlof, directors at A.C.T. this season, Greg Eaton, A.C.T. manager and John Gilbert, actor with the Seattle Repertory and A.C.T. , will participate at separate sessions. Frequently members of the cast will join them. You are invited to drop in after the show for one of these informal sessions.¹⁷¹

A similar slip was tucked into the program for Dürrenmatt’s play, announcing that this was “another of those plays that people enjoy talking about. If you’d like a cup of coffee and some good discussion after tonight’s show, Le Rapport invites you to drop in. Members of the cast and staff will frequently join you.”¹⁷² The casual, indirect reference to a precedent established with *Tiny Alice* indicates that ACT was developing a stable core of repeat audience members at both its productions and the post-production talk-backs.

The discussions must have been lively and intellectual; Johnson’s review for *The Collection* and *The Room*, the pair of Pinter plays with which ACT closed its 1966 season, assumes a level of erudition and familiarity of the theatre of the absurd among ACT’s 1960s Seattle audiences that the San Francisco Actor’s Workshop rarely enjoyed in the 1950s. In his

¹⁷¹ Theatre Program for *Tiny Alice*, 1966, A.C.T. Collection (792.09797 A11), Seattle Public Library.

¹⁷² Theatre Program for *The Physicists*, 1966, A.C.T. Collection (792.09797 A11), Seattle Public Library.

review, Johnson deftly identified both the influence of the realist tradition and the ways that Pinter had altered the familiar outlines of plot and character to produce an absurdist work. Johnson presumed his reading audience was familiar with Pirandello, and suggested the ways in which the Italian playwright served as a precedent for the absurdist genre: “Like Pirandello, Pinter is saying that the truth of any situation cannot be captured and pinned down like a butterfly. But while in Pirandello there is the sense that the truth is available to some all-seeing mind, Pinter insists there is no truth, only tensions and conflicts that can never be finally reconciled.”¹⁷³ Johnson’s review also presumed Seattle audiences were conversant in recent criticism on Pinter’s dramaturgy. “Throughout both *The Collection* and *The Room*, there is a sense of pervasive menace which has become a Pinter trademark,” Johnson asserted, invoking the term coined by British critic Irving Wardle in his article, “Comedy of Menace,” which appeared in the British journal *Encore* in September, 1958.¹⁷⁴ Johnson applauded Duncan Ross’ skilled direction of the play for maintaining the delicate balance of humor and threat which Wardle had pinpointed as the definitive quality of Pinter’s work: “Pinter’s plays are difficult to produce because of this coexistence of comedy with menace. Director Duncan Ross has done a brilliant job not merely of balancing the two but of seeing to it that they are constantly involved with each other.”

Falls rounded out the remainder of the second season with four recent New York hits and a revival of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. With the revival, Falls was already struggling to redefine the

¹⁷³ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Scores with Pinter Plays,” *The Seattle Times*, September 14, 1966, 21.

¹⁷⁴ See: Irving Wardle, “Comedy of Menace” in *The Encore Reader* (London: Methuen, 1965), 91. Though Wardle’s article mentioned four new playwrights (Pinter, David Campton, Nigel Dennis, N.F. Simpson), the critic held up Pinter’s *The Birthday Party* as the paradigm of the new “theatrical climate” in which all four participated: “*The Birthday Party* exemplifies the type of comic menace which gave rise to this article. For in the play, menace, itself a meretricious and easily manufactured fictional device, stands for something more substantial: destiny. . . . Destiny handled in this way – not as an austere exercise in classicism, but as an incurable disease which one forgets about most of the time and whose lethal reminders may take the form of a joke – is an apt dramatic motif for an age of conditioned behaviour in which orthodox man is a willing collaborator in his own destruction.”

niche he'd established for his theatre just one year earlier. Falls explained that he wanted to mount older plays as a kind of touchstone for the contemporary drama: "Each season I'd like to go back and pick out a 'classic' American play and see how it handled the attitudes and problems that existed when it was written."¹⁷⁵

The four remaining plays mounted in ACT's season had all recently ended long runs in New York. Three were award-winning off-Broadway plays from 1963: Martin Duberman's *In White America* and Murray Schisgal's *The Typists* and *The Tiger. A Thurber Carnival* had run for 223 performances on Broadway in 1960. Of these four plays, Duberman's play was the only one which brought Seattle's audiences "vital theater which concerns itself with the significant ideas, attitudes, and problems of our times."¹⁷⁶ Though Duberman's play resembled the old 1930s "Living Newspapers" in structure, his history of the African American experience from the days of the slave ships to the struggles to integrate Little Rock Central High School in 1957 was entirely relevant in 1966. The production became an object lesson for Seattle's own racial prejudice, as Wayne Johnson, the *Seattle Times* theatre critic pointed out. The three African American actors, whom Falls auditioned in New York and hired to perform in the piece, were unable to secure apartment lodgings in Seattle because of their race and were forced to stay in a hotel.

Rolf Stromberg, the reviewer at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, devoted his column on June 25, 1966, to an interview with Clark Morgan, one of the three ostracized African American actors. In his conversation with Stromberg, Morgan cited a few of the indignities he had suffered as an African American, such as "watching a white woman stand for 180 miles rather than sit

¹⁷⁵ Wayne Johnson, "Wanted: Director Who Directs," *The Seattle Times*, February 14, 1966, 27.

¹⁷⁶ Wayne Johnson, "In *White America*: ACT Play is Timely and Telling," *The Seattle Times*, June 22, 1966, 55.

beside you” and “encountering continual troubles in finding suitable apartments.”¹⁷⁷

Nevertheless, Morgan optimistically stated that “things have changed for the Negro in the theater since I started.” The real key to improving the lot of the African American actor, Morgan insisted, lay not in enforced integration, but rather in embracing the European model of the permanent acting ensemble. This ensemble approach to the acting company would allow African American actors the opportunity to explore a wider variety of roles, rather than those traditionally reserved for them on the basis of their skin tone. For example, though he was managing to get by as an actor in New York, Morgan complained to Stromberg that he was feeling stunted: “I’ve played a preacher at least 10 times. Now is the time for me to grow, to get out and do some work.” Though Falls’ theatre couldn’t offer Morgan a Broadway salary, ACT offered him the steady work and variety of roles of the European-style ensemble. Falls hired his actors (including Morgan) for the summer, as part of an ensemble which lasted throughout his season. After *In White America*, Morgan appeared in *The Physicists*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and *The Room*, the last three bills of the year. “Nothing beats steady work,” Morgan told Stromberg. “This is how European actors develop in their many small theaters and this is something most American actors don’t get.” Though Falls’ company was organized along the lines of a “loose ensemble structure rather than a tight resident company,” Falls did often reuse actors in several plays each season, and some returned for many summers.¹⁷⁸

ACT had expanded its operations during its second season. In 1966, the theatre produced seven plays over fourteen weeks, two more than it had produced in its five-play, ten-week program in 1965. It added a children’s theatre (organized by Faulkes), which mounted four productions over the course of the summer. The theatre more than tripled its audience from 8,000

¹⁷⁷ Rolf Stromberg, “How Negro Actor Feels,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 25, 1966, 21.

¹⁷⁸ Hansen, 43.

in 1965 to over 23,000 in 1966 (17,714 attended ACT's mainstage, and 5,500 children attended the Eleven O'Clock Theatre's productions). Additionally, a survey of ACT subscriber preferences confirmed that Falls' "experiment" in contemporary drama was a welcome addition to the Seattle theatre scene. Half of ACT's subscribers purchased full subscriptions to all seven plays of the season. The other half purchased cheaper subscriptions which allowed them to select five of the season's seven plays to attend. *Tiny Alice* was the most popular play selected by this group of subscribers, followed by (in order of preference) *The Physicists*, *The Typists* and *The Tiger*, *The Collection* and *The Room*, *A Thurber Carnival*, *In White America*, and *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

A Thurber Carnival brought in the most attendance of any play in the season. The discrepancy between the high attendance rates for *Thurber Carnival* and the play's rather unpopular position among subscribers suggests that these attendance figures reflect the high point of summer tourism in Seattle rather than the preferences of city natives, for *A Thurber Carnival* opened in early August (the month with the highest average temperatures and second-lowest average rainfall in Seattle). Falls' revival of the *Arsenic and Old Lace* was the least popular play among subscribers and with local critics, and brought in the second-lowest attendance of the season. Johnson's review of the piece almost pitied the play's decline. He complained about its "creaky dramaturgy" and "quaint and contrived" humor, neither of which seemed to fit ACT's mission to produce dramas of contemporary relevance.¹⁷⁹

Looking back on the second season, Falls concluded that the second season had proven that "a significant number of people in this area obviously want to see the significant contemporary plays. ... They know they'll like some better than others, but at least they want to

¹⁷⁹ Wayne Johnson, "Arsenic Losing Potency," *The Seattle Times*, August 31, 1966, 14.

see them. The kind of theater I want is the kind that will satisfy this audience hunger. In our second season, I think we proved what we thought after our first season: namely, that there is a discerning audience for the plays of our time done now. People want to see plays that are intellectually interesting to them.”¹⁸⁰ Falls’ language suggests the director felt no personal investment in the plays of the second-wave. Unlike Blau, who posited that *Waiting for Godot* held the answer to the Workshop’s (and its audience’s) search for identity and purpose at midcentury, Falls merely wanted to “satisfy ... audience hunger” - to please his audience, so that his theatre could stay in business and he could continue to direct professional theatre.

ACT’s success in 1966 garnered attention for Falls at the national level; in the late autumn, Falls received a grant from TCG (Theatre Communications Group) to travel to several regional theatres, so that he might observe their operations and their productions, and network with their staff. Falls selected five theatres in four cities along the Eastern seaboard, where he was already planning to travel to attend a meeting of the National Theatre Conference in New York in late November. Falls’ tour began at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, where he was met by director Jon Jory (decades later, in 2000, Jory would join the directing faculty at UW). Falls continued on to The Hartford Stage Company, then to the Trinity Square Repertory Company in New Haven, and finally to Boston, where he visited both the Charles Playhouse and David Wheeler’s Theatre Company of Boston. Falls was inspired by the other theatres’ productions: several plays which he saw on his tour were later incorporated into ACT’s seasons. For example, Falls was “particularly taken” with the Hartford Stage Company’s production of *Endgame*; ACT produced the play in 1970.¹⁸¹ At the Charles Playhouse in Boston, Falls attended

¹⁸⁰ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Planning Bigger Season,” *The Seattle Times*, October 2, 1966, 6D.

¹⁸¹ Greg Falls to William Boughton, January 9, 1967 (A Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001, Box 1), 1.

a production of Genet's *The Balcony*, which he also included in his 1970 season at ACT. At the Theatre Company of Boston, Falls saw a production of *Armstrong's Last Goodnight*; but apparently, he was more impressed with a play he did not see, but merely heard about: Peter Weiss' *Marat-Sade*. Upon his return to Seattle in mid-December, 1966, Falls immediately wrote Cory Revis at Samuel French via airmail. Falls' urgent questions reveal his pressing desire to mount the play immediately in Seattle: "Do you control the rights to the play? What are our chances of being able to do a production here this summer. I mean what are our chances of getting the rights to do a production?"¹⁸² Though Falls was not able to acquire the rights for the play in 1967, the *Marat-Sade* was the chief attraction of Falls' 1969 season, and the best-attended production in ACT's five-year history.

Falls' reputation as an educator and the head of an excellent drama school with a special program devoted to children's theatre also attracted the interest of J. Fenton McKenna, the Dean of the School of Creative Arts at San Francisco State College (where Irving and Blau had taught until the early 1960s), late in 1966. In December, McKenna wrote to Falls to announce that his institution was planning to host "a national conference on Drama Education, Status and Improvement" in September of 1967. The primary aim of this conference was to "assess the current status of the dramatic arts in the elementary and secondary school curricula, and to exchange concepts which may result in more effective approaches to the use of drama in education." Falls was invited to attend the conference and to deliver a dinner address entitled, "The Essence of Theatre."¹⁸³

¹⁸² Greg Falls to Cory Revis, December 14, 1966 (A Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001 – 2118-8, Box 25), 1.

¹⁸³ Fenton J. McKenna to Greg Falls, December 7, 1966 (A Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001, Box 1), 1.

Given the overwhelmingly positive response to the theatre's second season, Falls planned further expansion to the ACT program in its third season, including an attempted regional tour to the Alaska '67 Expo (unfortunately, ACT's appearance had to be cancelled when a flooding river damaged the performance venue beyond immediate repair or use). Post-play discussions became a *de rigueur* feature of ACT's third season, hosted at the Le Rapport Coffee House. Falls extended this opportunity for discussion (and increased ACT's participation in the University community) by developing "an evening class devoted to the seven productions" at the University.¹⁸⁴ Local television Channel 9 developed short programs on the ACT season which aired throughout the summer. In many ways, Falls' theatre was exemplary in its ability to educate its audiences, and to combine the resources of the University and the professional theatre to introduce the second-wave dramas to the Seattle community.

However, Falls' repertoire was once again divided between the contemporary plays and safe classics or popular hits. As in 1966, Falls offered three absurdist works: Mrozek's *Out at Sea* and *Strip Tease* (the latter an American premiere), and Pinter's *The Caretaker*; one documentary play on a controversial subject: Hochhuth's *The Deputy*; and four plays designed to appeal to popular taste: *The Fantasticks*, *Luv*, *After the Fall*, and a revival of William Vaughan Moody's *The Great Divide*. While in 1966 Falls had brought his season's repertoire closer in line with his theatre's mission, this progress stagnated in 1967. The reason, it seems, was the box office.

The 1967 season opened with Murray Schisgal's *Luv*. Once again, Falls knit his theatre to the University community, hiring William West (the director of the Stevens Playhouse, and visiting faculty at the University of Washington for the 1966-1967 academic year) to direct the

¹⁸⁴ Rolf Stromberg, "ACT: Theater with Drive," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 17, 1967, 35.

play. At first glance, Falls' choice is inexplicable for a director motivated by box-office receipts, for the double bill of Schisgal's *The Typists* and *The Tiger* brought in the lowest attendance of any ACT production in 1966. However, Falls still looked to New York as the established standard of a plays' marketability, and the original Broadway production of *Luv* had run for 901 productions and earned Schisgal a Tony nomination in 1965. Despite its popularity in New York, *Luv* didn't fit ACT's mission. In fact, in 1965, Brustein had denounced the play as poseur intelligentsia: "while Schisgal's material is potentially satiric, he renders everything down into a soothing demulcent, so that the Broadway audience can have the tribute of the avant-garde without its tribulations."¹⁸⁵ The local critics in Seattle adopted a similar, although less vehement, view: the play provided lighthearted entertainment, but lacked any significant value. Johnson pronounced it a "slick, well-crafted, light-hearted, light-headed, and altogether wacky show," adding that the play was "not an 'important' play or a 'significant' play."¹⁸⁶ Ann Faber predicted that "it's only on the way home that it becomes apparent that 'Luv' isn't a brilliant play and that in clumsy hands it would be only mildly and sporadically funny."¹⁸⁷ When the run of Schisgal's play sold out and an additional performance had to be scheduled, William Polfus (ACT's Press Representative) crowed, "We're happy to report that our first play, *Luv*, is a sell-out. In fact, we are scheduling an additional performance early Saturday evening to handle the requests for tickets. It's great! Would that they all are this successful this summer!"¹⁸⁸ Clearly, the administrative staff of ACT defined success in terms of the box office, rather than how the theatre might accomplish its avowed artistic mission.

¹⁸⁵ Robert Brustein, *The Third Theatre* (New York: Knopf, 1969), 92.

¹⁸⁶ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Begins Third Season," *The Seattle Times* June 14, 1967, 60.

¹⁸⁷ Ann Faber, "*Luv* is a Many Splendored Thing," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 14, 1967, 24.

¹⁸⁸ William Polfus to Penelope H. Teal, June 22, 1967 (A Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001, Box 1), 1.

One local critic, Rolf Stromberg, noticed the trend – and took ACT to task for Fall’s choice of mainstream fare. “Why, suddenly, must Seattle have such a profusion of ‘The Fantasticks,’ which is hardly that delightful, droll or entertaining,” Stromberg demanded to know. “The Lyric Opera has it, Seattle Pacific, and later ACT. Three times. In fact, I find a good deal of the musical to be a bore and the music is only mildly diverting.”¹⁸⁹ Falls submitted a rebuttal letter to the *Post-Intelligencer*’s editor in early June. Citing the musical’s record-breaking run, Falls claimed that ACT would be shirking its mission “to present professional productions of the important plays of our time, now” if it did not produce “this phenomena of the modern American theater.”¹⁹⁰ In this way, Falls reinforced the message that for him, New York remained the central arbiter of taste when it came to theatre in the United States (for a long run Off-Broadway rendered *The Fantasticks* an “important play”) and that economics drove his choice of repertoire, rather than aesthetic ideals.

Falls’ letter ended on a defensive, even petulant note, as he admitted his continued distaste for the dramas to which he had committed his theatre: “We do some plays every summer which should be seen professionally in Seattle, which we know will not be ‘popular.’ We even produce some plays which I do not like very much, but if they qualify as an important play of our time, ACT will do them. . . . We have ‘risked’ Pinter, Albee, Mrozek, and Gilroy plays at ACT. We think we should risk this delightful prodigy of American Off-Broadway.” It is curious that Falls would claim that Gilroy, Pinter, or Albee constituted “risky” plays for Seattle in the mid-1960s. Gilroy’s dramaturgy hardly belonged to the same genre as that of Pinter, Albee, and Mrozek; Gilroy’s play was fairly recent (it had premiered in New York in 1962 and won an Obie award), but neither its content nor its stylistic qualities were particularly revolutionary. The

¹⁸⁹ Rolf Stromberg, “Debut of a Re-Run,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 22, 1967, 16.

¹⁹⁰ Greg Falls, “Why Produce *The Fantasticks*?” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 11, 1967, NW Today section, 3.

Actor's Workshop had established Pinter's national reputation with the American premiere of *The Birthday Party* in 1960 (a play which the Workshop had also performed for Seattle audiences at the 1962 World's Fair), the same year that the Provincetown Playhouse produced the American premiere of Albee's *Zoo Story*. The Mrożek premiere was an exciting accomplishment for Falls' young theatre. The Polish absurdist's major work, *Tango*, had not even been published in an English-language translation in the United States yet. The Grove Press, which also held the rights to *Strip Tease*, would publish *Tango* the following year, in 1968. However, in a city so clearly predisposed to welcome the absurdist drama, the play hardly seemed to constitute a "risk." Furthermore, it is strange that Falls invoked the institution of "Off-Broadway" as his justification for producing *The Fantasticks*. ACT was created to "extend the professional theatre in America" as part of the movement to decentralize the theatre in the United States theatre, as Gregory Eaton had written in 1966.¹⁹¹ Yet Falls' letter implied that *The Fantasticks*' long run Off-Broadway qualified it as "an important play of our time," reinforcing the centrality of New York in the American theatre.

Stromberg did not reply to Falls' letter, but notably, the *Post-Intelligencer*'s regular theatre critic only reviewed two ACT productions in the summer of 1967: the Mrożek plays and Arthur Miller's *After the Fall*. Furthermore, when Patrick MacDonald's review of *The Fantasticks* appeared in the *Post-Intelligencer*, it was squeezed into a narrow column at the margin of the page and ran to only 38 brief lines. The critics' snub indicated their dissatisfaction with Falls and his theatre for failing to live up to the exciting repertoire ACT had promised.

ACT followed *Luv* with a drama that seemed to perfectly embody the theatre's mission: Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*. The controversial documentary drama about the papacy's tacit

¹⁹¹ Gregory Eaton to Evelyn Watters, June 6, 1966 (A Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001, Box 1), 1.

approval of Nazi genocide during World War II had premiered at the Freie Volksbühne (Free People's Theatre) under the direction of Erwin Piscator on February 20, 1963, and was rapidly followed by productions all over the European continent (and outrage in Rome). The American premiere of the play occurred just over one year later, on February 26, 1964. For the American production, producer Harold Shumlin advised Hochhuth to condense the play, which was then adapted by American poet Jerome Rothenberg, a process which shortened the play's "original five-act length, which would take something like eight hours to perform" to a tight two-and-a-half-hour playing time.¹⁹² Just before the production opened, the Grove Press released the first American publication of Hochhuth's full-length script.

Though the opening night performance in New York had been picketed by 150 people, and 100 policemen had been placed inside the theatre to maintain order, the play opened without incident and ran for 318 performances on Broadway. The run was not without incident, however. After *Life* published an article which rebutted the play's central thesis in May, 1964, Shumlin purchased advertising space in *The New York Times* and published his own response.¹⁹³ In July, Shumlin sued the New York Transit Authority and New York Bus Advertising for removing posters advertising the play from the sides of buses.¹⁹⁴ In October, Shumlin announced that he was cancelling the planned tour of *The Deputy*, citing that "the cancellation was caused by the refusal of several theaters in other cities to accept engagements and by the insufficient number of cities offering subscription arrangements. ... Mr. Shumlin disclosed that theaters in Cleveland, Baltimore, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Milwaukee had refused to book the attraction."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Howard Taubman, "Hochhuth's *Deputy* Opens," *The New York Times*, February 27, 1964, 26

¹⁹³ "Shumlin Replies to Article in *Life*," *The New York Times*, May 18, 1964, 35.

¹⁹⁴ Sam Zolotow, "*Deputy* Posters Return to Buses," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1964, 43.

¹⁹⁵ "*Deputy* Calls Off a Tour of Country," *New York Times*, October 1, 1964, 28.

Falls had to wait until 1967 to stage the production. The rights to the play had been frozen through his 1966 season, when he first wanted to produce the play. Though Shumlin's tour had failed, the Theater Group (from the University of California at Los Angeles) had mounted a national tour in 1965 which had renewed national interest in the work. Boston theatre critic Elliot Norton, who had reviewed both the original Broadway production and Gordon Davidson's completely restaged UCLA production, found the Theater Group's presentation far superior. Davidson had chosen to emphasize the symbolic rather than the naturalistic qualities of the work. Norton predicted that "If *The Deputy* had been done with as much art and intelligence on Broadway, it might have toured the country successfully instead of beginning and ending as it did with the sensation-seekers of New York."¹⁹⁶

Given Falls' interest in mounting box-office successes, it is entirely possible that he, like those "sensation-seekers of New York" whom Norton disparaged, was motivated to produce the play by the controversy surrounding it. However, with *The Deputy*, Falls was able to fulfill the stated mission of his theatre and to satisfy his desire to keep his theatre in the black. Though the play was already four years old, and UCLA had mounted a national tour two years earlier, Ann Faber at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported that ACT's 1967 production was "one of the first to be performed by a professional company off Broadway."¹⁹⁷

For the local critics, the production constituted an exciting and groundbreaking event – and best exemplified ACT's function in the community, as they understood it. "One of A Contemporary Theater's most important functions – perhaps its *raison d'être* – is to give Seattleites the opportunity to see the significant plays of our times. Seldom has this function been more clearly satisfied than in ACT's production of *The Deputy*," began Wayne Johnson's

¹⁹⁶ Sam Zolotow, "Deputy to Tour in Restaged Form," *The New York Times*, December 10, 1965, 58.

¹⁹⁷ Ann Faber, "ACT Moves Out with Strident *Deputy*," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 28, 1967, 20.

review. Both critics were aware of the flaws in Hochhuth's play, which could be one-sided in its depiction of Pope Pius XII. In his review, Johnson echoed Taubman's 1964 observation that Bernard Shaw's plays provided a better model of confrontation – one in which “the case of the Church is presented with ... force and substance,” providing a “dialectical equality” in the play's argument.¹⁹⁸ Faber observed that Rothenberg's cuts had excised “the playwright's gift of humanity to some of the characters.”¹⁹⁹ Faber's comment echoed Taubman's assessment that the condensed script “sharpens the play's incendiary thesis. More intensely than in the uncut version, the play is a remorseless, furious *J'accuse* flung directly at the person and policy of Pope Pius XII.”²⁰⁰

Both critics also noted the weaknesses of Falls' direction and his cast's performances, which exacerbated the melodramatic quality of Hochhuth's script. Both critics agreed that the production lacked variation, that Falls' and his cast seemed to have mistaken volume for intensity. “ACT's production begins at top volume and does not settle down to letting the playwright get about his business until the third of the seven scenes in two acts,” Faber reported, noting that Falls seemed to have directed Thomas Connolly (as S.S. Lieutenant Kurt Gerstein) “to play his scenes at the peak of hysteria.”²⁰¹ Johnson predicted that John Long, who played the hero Father Fontana, would “become more effective” as the run continued, and “as he relaxes a bit into the role and doesn't shout quite so much,” and if Fontana could be balanced by a slightly less “mincing” portrayal of the Pope (performed by David Vaughan).²⁰² Faber made a similar observation: “It is probable that by the end of a few more performances most of the cast will

¹⁹⁸ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Presents *The Deputy*,” *The Seattle Times*, June 28, 1967, 23.

¹⁹⁹ Ann Faber, “ACT Moves Out with Strident *Deputy*,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 28, 1967, 20.

²⁰⁰ Howard Taubman, “Hochhuth's *Deputy* Opens,” *The New York Times*, February 27, 1964, 26.

²⁰¹ Ann Faber, “ACT Moves Out with Strident *Deputy*,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 28, 1967, 20.

²⁰² Wayne Johnson, “ACT Presents *The Deputy*,” *The Seattle Times*, June 28, 1967, 23.

have stopped playing at the top of their voices. This mercy and subsequent end of the confusion of volume with pace can make ACT's production of *The Deputy* a very special production."²⁰³

The flaws suggest that Falls – unlike Gordon Davidson at UCLA – played up the sensational potential of the text in his direction, much as Shumlin had in the American premiere on Broadway. Despite the fact that the UCLA production had received higher critical acclaim, the Broadway production (with its long run of 318 performances) seems to have been Falls' model.

However, both critics enthusiastically recommended the play – despite the production, not because of it. "*The Deputy* is the most important play to be performed on a Seattle stage this year: not the most beautifully acted nor the most imaginatively directed, just the most important play," concluded Faber at the end of her review.²⁰⁴ Similarly, Johnson stressed the importance of the play: "The ACT production is not without flaws. Too frequently the actors substitute loudness for intensity and simple rapidity for dramatic pace. But the production does have the essential virtue of bringing the play to life: of bringing vitality and believability to the characters and the ideas and – most important – of involving the audience in both."²⁰⁵ For the critics, ACT existed to bring the serious dramas of the contemporary theatre to the stage, even if the productions themselves were not strong.

ACT's production of *The Deputy* strikingly demonstrates the spread and general acceptance of the second-wave dramas in America which had occurred by the mid-1960s. In 1956, the Actor's Workshop of San Francisco had struggled to keep *Mother Courage* open for seventeen performances under fire from local critics. Hochhuth's play bore some key similarities to Brecht's play. Erwin Piscator had claimed it as an example of Epic Theatre, though Robert

²⁰³ Ann Faber, "ACT Moves Out with Strident *Deputy*," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 28, 1967, 20.

²⁰⁴ Ann Faber, "ACT Moves Out with Strident *Deputy*," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 28, 1967, 20.

²⁰⁵ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Presents *The Deputy*," *The Seattle Times*, June 28, 1967, 23.

Gorham Davis, reviewing the Grove Press' first edition of the full play for the *New York Times* in 1963 argued that the "epic requires a very different kind of mediation than Hochhuth performs, for all his documentation. He has none of Brecht's irony, virtuosity, and restless sophistication."²⁰⁶ Also like *Mother Courage*, Hochhuth's play emphasized "how Germans, from Rhine industrialists to little men and women, profited from the mass murders" of wartime.²⁰⁷ This was the message which Blau claimed that his audiences (and the local San Francisco critics) had found so unpalatable in the Workshop's 1956 production, the true source of the antagonism against the production. Yet eleven years later, in Seattle, Hochhuth's play was endorsed by critics and audiences (*The Deputy* even broke *Luv*'s record attendance figures) – in spite of general agreement among the critics that the quality of the production itself was poor.

Falls' directing work was stronger in ACT's next offering – a double bill of Mrozek's *Out at Sea* and *Strip Tease*. Though critics had agreed that Falls' direction had exaggerated the imbalances in Hochhuth's script, Stromberg and Johnson agreed that his "crisp" direction was a boon to the Polish playwright's new dramas, providing pace and bounce to liven up passages of dialogue that were, at times, overlong.²⁰⁸ Of the two plays, *Strip Tease*, which ACT gave its American premiere, was considered the stronger text. Stromberg was less impressed with Mrozek's plays than he had been with other second-wave dramas, and proclaimed that the Polish playwright's work "appropriately belong to the Theater of the Preposterous not the Absurd."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Robert Gorham Davis, "The Deputy by Rolf Hochhuth. Forward by Albert Schweitzer. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston from the German, *Der Stellvertreter*. 352 pp. New York: Grove Press. \$6.96.:An Appraisal," *The New York Times*, March 1, 1964, BR1.

²⁰⁷ Robert Gorham Davis, "The Deputy by Rolf Hochhuth. Forward by Albert Schweitzer. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston from the German, *Der Stellvertreter*. 352 pp. New York: Grove Press. \$6.96.:An Appraisal," *The New York Times*, March 1, 1964, BR1.

²⁰⁸ Both Johnson and Stromberg used the word "crisp" to describe Fall's direction. See Wayne Johnson, "ACT presents Mrozek Plays," *The Seattle Times*, July 12, 1967, 37; and Rolf Stromberg, "ACT's Two with Irony," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 12, 1967, 6.

²⁰⁹ Rolf Stromberg, "ACT's Two with Irony," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 12, 1967, 6.

At *The Seattle Times*, Johnson was more enthusiastic. The Mrozek plays engaged with the same thematic concerns that Johnson had identified at the heart of Hochhuth's drama: "both plays deal with serious, important questions – the nature of free will, choice, individual freedom, etc." And while Johnson, like Stromberg, found that *Out at Sea* occasionally felt contrived, once again, he reiterated that the reason for ACT's existence was to produce dramas like Mrozek's: "In ACT's well-crafted and excellently acted production, the two Mrozek plays provide an eminently enjoyable evening of theater. The plays are pointed and pertinent, saucy and spirited, funny and touching – and just a little kooky. They are clearly expressions of our times, and that's what A CONTEMPORARY Theater is all about."²¹⁰

The local critics were understandably disappointed, then, when ACT followed its production of these exciting new dramas by Mrozek and Hochhuth with a revival of William Moody's *The Great Divide*, Arthur Miller's *After the Fall* and *The Fantasticks*. ACT's production of *The Great Divide*, like its revival of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1966, proved how poorly the play had withstood the test of time. The play, which had premiered in 1906, was irrelevant to the contemporary point of view at ACT. At the *Post-Intelligencer*, Patrick MacDonald described the play as a dusty "melodramatic museum piece valuable for its vintage more than its brilliance."²¹¹ Arthur Miller's *After the Fall* hardly made a better impression: Johnson found Miller's "embarrassingly autobiographical" account of his failed marriage to Marilyn Monroe painful to watch.²¹² He credited the ACT cast for doing what they could with the "formless, discursive and vapid script," and, as if to absolve Falls for selecting the play for

²¹⁰ Wayne Johnson, "ACT presents Mrozek Plays," *The Seattle Times*, July 12, 1967, 37. Emphasis in the original.

²¹¹ Patrick MacDonald, "1906 Melodrama more Laughable than Moving," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 10, 1967, 19.

²¹² Wayne Johnson, "*After the Fall* Opens at ACT," *The Seattle Times*, July 26, 1967, 26.

production, explained the reason for the play's inclusion in the season was spatial rather than dramaturgical. *After the Fall* was the first play by a major American playwright to have been written explicitly for a thrust stage. In fact, the thrust stage at the Vivian Beaumont theatre at Lincoln Center, where Miller's play had premiered in early 1964, had been one of the models for ACT's own thrust stage space. Yet this justification suggested that ACT was nothing more than a derivative tributary theatre, copying the model of the Beaumont stage and the plays that were staged there as well.

With its final production in 1967, ACT returned to the dramas of the second-wave, producing Pinter's *The Caretaker*. The production seems to have salvaged ACT's reputation with Johnson, who began his review by reminding his readers both of ACT's mission and what types of plays he considered "important" and timely. Johnson stressed that important plays need not be stuffy or dull, suggesting that ACT need not continually resort to insubstantial entertainment like *The Fantasticks* to please its audience:

The purpose and the community utility of A Contemporary Theater were vividly demonstrated again last night in the opening performance of the theater's final production of the season, *The Caretaker* by Harold Pinter. The play is an important contemporary play by an important contemporary playwright, and ACT's production is skillful, engaging and thoroughly professional. And that just about sums up the nature of ACT's commitment and its pledge to Seattle playgoers. Labelling [*sic*] a play or a writer "important" is a dodge that's frequently used to disguise the fact that the play is boring and the writer dull but both are somehow or other good for you if you haven't had your weekly dose of cul-choor. *The Caretaker*, on the other hand, is important because it is an excellent play: funny, touching, frightening and expertly crafted. And Pinter – and Englishman now in his mid-thirties – is important not only because he is one of those rare writers with a mastery of the dramaturgical craft but also because he has something even rarer: unique, unmistakable style.²¹³

In addition, the high quality of ACT's production demonstrated that the theatre was entirely capable of delivering its avowed mission. Falls, whatever he may have thought of the

²¹³ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Does Well with Caretaker," *The Seattle Times*, September 6, 1967, 26.

Theater of the Absurd, again directed “with skill and sensitivity.”²¹⁴ Johnson singled out set designer S. Todd Muffatti (a UW graduate) and actor Duncan Ross for particular praise. Muffatti’s set for the play depicted a single room in a dirty London flat: “The room is a mess. It is filthy and junk is piled in all the corners and on one of the two beds. A bucket is suspended from the ceiling to catch water from the leaking roof.” The real water which dripped into the bucket throughout the play became a kind of aural icon for the squalor of the design; Faber, who reviewed the play for the *Post-Intelligencer*, felt the ACT production “makes the drip-catching bucket as important as the unseen trees in *The Cherry Orchard*.”²¹⁵ Duncan Ross, the head of the UW’s Professional Actor Training Program and director of a number of ACT productions, appeared in a rare acting role as Davies. Faber claimed Ross stole the show; Johnson ardently proclaimed Ross’ characterization “beautifully detailed, convincing and altogether overwhelming. It’s as good a job of acting as I’ve seen on a Seattle stage.”

Crisis: 1968

Falls and ACT’s board of directors planned an even larger season for 1968, never suspecting their theatre was about to struggle through an economic crisis that would, bring Falls’ “experiment” to the brink of disaster. As he prepared for ACT’s 1968 season, Falls turned his attention to the professionalism of his theatre. ACT’s demanding schedule only provided performers with two weeks of rehearsal time before each opening. As a result, local reviewers had often observed that ACT’s productions began shakily, and that the actors seemed unprepared for their opening-night performances. In an attempt to improve the quality of productions, Falls decided in 1968 to expand the run of each production to three weeks. He reduced the number of

²¹⁴ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Does Well with Caretaker,” *The Seattle Times*, September 6, 1967, 26.

²¹⁵ Ann Faber, “ACT’s Last Play Blasts Establishment,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 6, 1967, 8.

productions to seven, which still resulted in a much longer season of twenty-one weeks rather than the ten- or fourteen-week seasons ACT had previously offered.

As always, Falls was aware of the economic risk posted by this longer season: ACT would need to attract a significantly larger audience than it had in the past to each of its productions in order to sustain the extended runs. Inexplicably, Falls decided the best way to increase the widespread appeal of ACT's offerings would be to abandon the principles on which his theatre was founded. For his 1968 season, Falls secured the rights to a number of commercially successful hits from New York City. Despite subscribers' demonstrated preference for contemporary plays of the European second wave, and critics' praise of ACT's mission and purpose each time it produced a Pinter play, Falls still believed that "we can't get ... people to take a chance on seeing a play that has not proven itself a commercial success."²¹⁶ Falls eliminated the classics and pared his offerings back to those plays which he thought he could most easily sell to a Seattle audience, filling his "contemporary" theatre's repertoire with a smattering of recent hits in New York.

The season began with William Hanley's *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground*, followed by Henry Livings' Obie-award-winning *Eh?*, Peter Shaffer's *Royal Hunt of the Sun* and then James Goldman's *The Lion in Winter*. A double bill of comedies followed, comprised of another Shaffer play - *Black Comedy* – and *Captain Fantastic Meets the Ectomorph*, written by Barry Pritchard (a former Seattleite). Of these plays, *Royal Hunt of the Sun* created additional economic difficulties for ACT. *Royal Hunt* seemed to serve as a kind of stand-in for the musicals which Falls had been producing every year: the production was the most expensive of the season as it required the largest cast of any play ACT had ever produced, and was staged lavishly,

²¹⁶ Barry Pritchard, "Interview with Greg Falls," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 3, 1968, Northwest Today section, 13.

suggesting that Falls was relying on spectacle (rather than the content or quality of the script) to sell the show to his audiences.

Falls did return to the absurdist drama at the end of the season, closing the year with Albee's *A Delicate Balance*, followed by Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Yet by the time ACT's season finally returned to the dramas on which ACT had established its identity, the damage had been done. *Eh?* caused Maxine Cushing Gray, the Arts Editor at the *Argus*, a local weekly paper, to observe that ACT had "rather hung up at the moment . . . its dedication to what's new by having picked up an overblown and dated English farce."²¹⁷ ACT seemed to have discarded its mission entirely. The local critics continually pressed ACT to fulfill its mission. Box office records suggest that Seattle's audiences shared the critics' dissatisfaction, as attendance at the theatre actually declined slightly from over 25,640 in 1967 to 24,173 in 1968.

Only Beckett's *Godot*, the final play of the season, received accolades from the critics. The play, which had premiered in Paris in 1952 and in the United States in 1956, was the oldest production of the season's repertoire. Still, *Godot* seemed ageless: critics stressed that the play continued to provide "new insight" into the human condition, and that seeing *Godot* could bring one "up to date" in 1968. Murray Morgan, who surprisingly confessed that he knew little about the play before being given his assignment to review it, praised ACT's "superb manifestation" of the play and exhorted Seattle, "See it. It should rekindle a thousand arguments and warm the intellectual life of the area throughout the damp months descending."²¹⁸ Johnson opined that *Godot* provided more than a textbook study of the theatre of the absurd; it provided insight into humanity itself: "Seeing *Godot* will, in short, not only bring you up-to-date on what's been happening in modern playwriting, but it will also give you new insight into what's been

²¹⁷ Maxine Cushing Gray, "Pro Actors Have Field Day at Seattle Rep and A.C.T.," *Argus*, June 7, 1968, 6.

²¹⁸ Murray Morgan, "Center Aisle," *Argus*, September 20, 1968, 7.

happening with – and to – the modern human condition.”²¹⁹ Audiences seemed to share the critics’ assessment. *Godot* was the best attended production of ACT’s 1968 season. The unanimous embrace of the production by critics and audience demonstrated, once again, that the second-wave dramas had spread throughout the United States and that a vibrant and established audience existed for these plays. Yet Falls, who directed *Godot*, remained strangely, even perversely, ambivalent about the theatre of the absurd. “The success of *Godot* perhaps indicates that there is an audience for plays like it,” Falls observed to Johnson in November.²²⁰

Falls’ lack of faith in his own project placed ACT’s very existence in jeopardy. By changing the theatre’s repertoire so that it no longer reflected ACT’s mission, Falls had alienated his audience. *Godot* may have ended ACT’s season on a high note, but it could not offset the losses incurred by the theatre with its unpopular earlier offerings. ACT wavered on the brink of collapse. Doggedly, Falls decided to attempt another season in 1969, reverting to the repertoire which he had promised Seattle in 1965. The results were immediate and impressive: by the end of 1969’s season of absurdist and epic works, Falls had recouped over half the deficit of 1968, and had begun to finally commit his theatre to the mission he had been repeating for the last four years.

1969 and 1970: A Return to the Mission

Robert Gustavson knew in 1969 that ACT needed to reconnect with its core audience: the subscribers. “I think we have to make ACT as exciting and valuable to the community as it can be,” he told Stromberg in an interview. “As I see it, ACT has got to be the place where things are happening.”²²¹ If ACT was going to entice Seattleites back to the theatre, it needed an attractive

²¹⁹ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Presents Good *Godot*,” *The Seattle Times*, September 13, 1968, 38.

²²⁰ Wayne Johnson, “ACT’s Woes: Longer Season Lost Money,” *The Seattle Times*, November 3, 1968, G11.

²²¹ Rolf Stromberg, “ACT to Stage *Celebration*,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, April 6, 1969, 6.

schedule of plays. Fall's selections for the 1969 season demonstrate the director's renewed commitment to his theatre's original mission. Falls planned seven plays for 1969, and returned to the fourteen-week schedule of 1967. Four of the seven plays were drawn from European dramas of the second wave: Pinter's *The Homecoming*, Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence* and Weiss' *Marat-Sade*. Three of the four plays – those by Pinter, Osborne and Weiss – were five years old. Ionesco's play was ten years old. While critics insisted Ionesco's play still spoke forcefully to contemporary society, the choice to produce Ionesco in 1969 (eight years after Zero Mostel had appeared as Berenger in the celebrated Broadway run of the play) was hardly as revolutionary as the Workshop's choice to produce *Jack* and *The Chairs* in December, 1959.

The season opened with *Celebration*, a new musical by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, and closed with Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and the world premiere of a play written by a local playwright: *Crabdance*, written by Vancouver, B.C. native Beverly Simon. The production of *Crabdance* was one way ACT reconnected with its mission to "extend the professional theatre in America," as Eaton had written Watters in 1966 – and an attempt to promote the theatre as the successor to the Actor's Workshop. In 1967, Stromberg had lamented the closure of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop as the loss of the only theatre in America which "regularly brought out new work by West Coast playwrights."²²² At the time, Stromberg reported that both Falls and Allen Fletcher (at the Seattle Repertory Theatre) had been working to produce new plays, but failing to find good material to produce. ACT also changed the language of its programs in 1969 to stress its investment in the local region, and began to display the work of local artists in its lobby. Hangings and throws from local weavers Judy Thomas and

²²² Rolf Stromberg, "How You Gonna Keep 'Em From Broadway?" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 2, 1967, 27.

Betsy Bess were hung during *The Homecoming* in early July, and Don Shepherd's color studies and Ann Gregory's paintings hung during *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* in early September. In this way, ACT sought to demonstrate that it was not simply a tributary theatre, remounting stale Broadway hits, but was actively contributing to theatre decentralization in the United States.

Local critics seemed to agree that Pinter's play was baffling, but encouraged audiences not to let the puzzling nature of *The Homecoming* dissuade them from attending. Johnson urged his reader not to look too hard for a message that they distracted themselves from the experience of the play itself: "Anyone who feels the necessity can come up with his own psychological – or psychiatric – explanation for the characters and their actions. An infinite number of explanations are possible (one per audience member), but none is essentially necessary. The play exists – vitally, fascinatingly – without them; and there's the wonder of Pinter as a magician of the theater."²²³ At the *Argus*, Murray Morgan began his review with a harsh critique of Pinter's play. "Though superbly acted, *The Homecoming*, now on stage at ACT, is as ugly a play as I can recall."²²⁴ Despite his vehement dislike for the play itself (particularly Pinter's characters, whom Morgan compared to "scorpions in a bottle"), the critic wrote that he was glad that duty had forced him to attend ACT's production, as he appreciated the "extraordinary" skill of ACT's actors. In the end, Morgan endorsed the production, if not the play: "this is a play you are unlikely to like but sure to remember."

Eugène Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, the second of the four second-wave plays produced in 1969, was well-received. Even the last-minute substitution of director Arne Zaslove (on book) for Peter Ban (who had taken ill just days before opening) in the role of Berenger in Ionesco's play did not deter audiences nor critical praise of ACT's productions in the local newspapers.

²²³ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Shows Pinter is Funny," *The Seattle Times*, July 9, 1969, 52.

²²⁴ Murray Morgan, "Center Aisle," *Argus*, July 11, 1969, 7.

Like ACT's production of Beckett's *Godot* during the previous season, local critics pronounced that Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* was still relevant, despite its age. "*Rhinoceros* was written a decade ago," reported Morgan at the *Argus*. "The menacing appeal of the mindless has not waned."²²⁵ Similarly, Johnson noted that Ionesco's play grappled with a perennial human dilemma, a problem which only became more critical with the passage of time and in "our increasingly crowded and pressurized society: that of how a man can maintain his own individuality and resist the manifold pressures to run with the herd."²²⁶

Intriguingly, the season's low point was John Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence*. Though the dramas of the second wave of European modernism had a record of popular acclaim among Seattle critics, Osborne's play (but not ACT's production) was panned by the local critics. In 1967, Ann Faber and Wayne Johnson had recommended ACT's production of Hochhuth's *The Deputy* on the strength of the play itself (and in spite of a poor production). *Inadmissible Evidence* posed an inversion of this situation in 1969. Despite the generally good quality of the production overall, and the "skill and stamina of Duncan Ross," who performed the role of Bill Maitland (Osborne's anti-hero), Johnson had to concede that the play was "essentially deadening" and "not so much inadmissible as insufferable."²²⁷ The weakness lay in the script: Maitland was an underdeveloped character, like Pope Pius XII in Hochhuth's play. Osborne had failed to humanize his anti-hero enough to garner any sympathy for the unlikeable attorney. Worse, the suggestion in the second act that Maitland's sexuality might be the root and cause of his malaise hardly raised an eyebrow among the critics, who instead dismissed Osborne's insinuation as a tacky ploy. At the *Argus*, Murray Morgan sneered at Osborne's attempt to shock:

²²⁵ Murray Morgan, "Center Aisle: *Rhinoceros* at ACT," *Argus*, August 1, 1969, 7.

²²⁶ Wayne Johnson, "ACT makes *Rhino* Gallop," *The Seattle Times*, July 28, 1969, 30.

²²⁷ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Opens Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence*," *The Seattle Times*, August 6, 1969, 36.

“Even if ... the dialogue is meant to tell us that Maitland’s problem is latent homosexuality, the point is pointless. Bill’s not a bore, he’s a queer bore. So?”²²⁸

Recalling the power of Osborne’s earlier *Look Back in Anger*, Johnson located the play’s failure in Maitland’s lack of courage. Jimmy Porter was not an admirable human being, but he had “a busting vitality and an irrepressible life that gave a cutting edge to his constant complaints and a vigorous point to his bitterness.” If Jimmy Porter had had Maitland’s problems, Johnson surmised, he would have “attacked” them – “even if he had no hope of solving them.”²²⁹ By contrast, Maitland merely wallowed. Perhaps the play would have fared better if it had not followed on the heels of Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros*, and the courageous Berenger’s doomed stand against conformity. Seattle enjoyed the dramas of the second-wave, and even embraced decade-old plays for their contemporary relevance – but only if they engaged with such deep philosophical questions as how one might retain integrity or individuality in an imperfect or conformist society. Osborne’s *Inadmissible Evidence* merely complained. Critics who were ready to endorse a poor production of a thoughtful play in 1967 panned Osborne’s flat script in 1969, and Seattle audiences stayed away.

ACT soon recouped its losses on the Osborne flop with the last of its four productions of the second-wave dramas in 1969: Peter Weiss’ *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis du Sade*. Once again, the national popularity of the play meant that ACT had had to wait three years before it was able to acquire the rights to produce the play, during which time any fears Falls may have had about the play’s commercial potential for success were surely assuaged. *Marat/Sade* had opened on Broadway in 1964, and earned Weiss a Tony Award for

²²⁸ Murray Morgan, “Center Aisle: *Inadmissible Evidence* at A.C.T.,” *Argus*, August 15, 1969, 7.

²²⁹ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Opens Osborne’s *Inadmissible Evidence*,” *The Seattle Times*, August 6, 1969, 36.

Best Play in 1965. In fact, it is curious that Falls had not heard of the play before his tour of east coast theatres in 1966. Falls decided to produce the play after he heard about – but did not see – David Wheeler’s production at the Theatre Company of Boston. The 1967 Adrian Mitchell/Peter Brook film adaptation only enhanced the play’s notoriety; but the work had not yet been performed in Seattle.²³⁰ Competitively, ACT jumped to prepay the royalty payment on *Marat/Sade* in June of 1969, after Clark F. Sergel at The Dramatic Publishing Company notified Gustavson that another theatre in the vicinity had also been making inquiries about the play.

ACT’s production was directed by Arne Zaslove, and modeled on Peter Brook’s production of the English-language premiere at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1964. ACT used the same English translation of the script that Brook and the RSC had used (by Geoffrey Skelton, with verse adaptation by Adrian Hall), and also used the music composed by Richard C. Peaslee for the RSC production. Like the staging of the 1967 film, Jerry Williams’ set design for the play was sterile and imposing: “the cold, grey room looks as if it had just been scrubbed with disinfectant; a barred door and large expanses of net separate the inmates” from the audience.²³¹

Of all of the productions mounted by ACT in the first six years of its existence (1965-1970), the *Marat/Sade* best demonstrates the potential of Falls’ theatre as it had originally been envisioned: as a forum where students and faculty from the School of Drama could have the opportunity to do professional work. The *Marat/Sade* was the first main stage ACT production to be cast with a large number of University of Washington students, showcasing the talents of its first class of students from the university’s fledgling Professional Actor Training Program. In a letter to Sergel, Gustavson reported that the production would be cast with eight professional

²³⁰ As Johnson reported in his review, part of the attraction of ACT’s production was “the curiosity factor.” Wayne Johnson, “ACT Presents Forceful, Gripping *Marat/Sade*,” *The Seattle Times*, August 20, 1969, 34.

²³¹ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Presents Forceful, Gripping *Marat/Sade*,” *The Seattle Times*, August 20, 1969, 34..

actors, ten amateurs, and eleven unpaid non-professional extras (the students).²³² Even stage designer Jerry Williams was a recent graduate of the School of Drama, who had earned his M.A. in design in 1965. The University system also afforded Zaslove additional rehearsal time to develop the ensemble – a critical component in Weiss’ play. Though ACT’s tight summer schedule only allowed Zaslove two weeks to rehearse the play with the entire cast, the director (whose particular specialty was physical theatre and *commedia* techniques) had been working with his UW students for months in advance to prepare for the production, developing the particular ticks and idiosyncratic afflictions of their mentally unstable characters.

The critics were divided over the quality of the product, however – and their accounts of the first night performance differed in key ways. Johnson claimed that the cast was “never static,” and turned “the stage into a 29-ring theatrical circus which pulses and throbs and explodes and bristles with conflict.”²³³ By contrast, Sylvia Lewis at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* found the production uneven, the work of the student ensemble too separate from that of the Equity principals. “If the madmen moved constantly, the play’s levels could fuse instead of flying off like separate spokes without a hub. As it is, however, the different elements of the play function consecutively instead of simultaneously and thus we are made too aware of watching a play within a play within a play; too conscious of the gap between the Marat/Sade dialectic and the screams of the lunatics.”²³⁴ Still, the production made a splash in Seattle, and *Marat/Sade* was a triumph for the symbiotic collaboration of ACT and UW Drama, combining the talents of UW professors, UW students, the luxury of an extended rehearsal period to develop the

²³² Robert Gustavson to Clark F. Sergel, August 8, 1969 (Contemporary Theatre archives, accession number 2118-001, Box 1), 1.

²³³ Wayne Johnson, “ACT Presents Forceful, Gripping *Marat/Sade*,” *The Seattle Times*, August 20, 1969, 34.

²³⁴ Sylvia Lewis, “ACT’s Staging of *Marat/Sade* Too Diffuse to be Horrible,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 20, 1969, 42.

ensemble performance (which the University program could provide) and the professionalism of an Equity company (which ACT maintained).

Financially and critically, ACT's 1969 season resuscitated the theatre's reputation in Seattle. "More and more people speak of ACT as our city's principal antidote for "cultural" boredom," wrote Johnson, admiringly. "More and more people regard ACT as a theater which presents interesting plays interestingly, a theater which more often than not makes good the promise of entertainment and stimulation which prompts people to go to the theater in the first place."²³⁵ As a result, at the close of the summer, over half of the \$40,000 deficit from 1968 had been paid off, and the theatre set a new record for attendance.

The 1970 season adhered to the pattern established in 1967 and 1969: ACT produced seven plays in a fourteen-week season. The repertoire included four absurdist works and an epic play: Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, Beckett's *Endgame*, Genet's *The Balcony*, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. However, for the first time in 1970, the critical response to the second-wave dramas started to reflect the effects of the passage of time on these plays. In 1968, local critics had insisted that the sixteen-year-old *Godot* was still relevant, and in 1969 that the dilemma posed in the ten-year-old *Rhinoceros* had only become more critical in the intervening years. In 1970, the second-wave dramas were so widely accepted in the United States, so far from revolutionary, that they began to feel a little dull, even boring.

The season opened with Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, and the British playwright once again proved a Seattle favorite. Critics applauded the production along with the rising standards of professionalism at the theatre, including the work of two UW graduates (Jo Leffingwell and

²³⁵Wayne Johnson, "ACT Season was Success," *The Seattle Times*, October 12, 1968, D10.

Marc Singer) and one teacher from the University (Joan White) who had joined the theatre's ensemble for the summer. Reviewing *The Birthday Party* for the *Seattle Times*, Johnson opined that "if the quality of this opening production is maintained throughout the seven-play season, theatergoers are in for another summer of theatrical stimulation and entertainment at ACT."²³⁶ Seattle clearly preferred its serious contemporary drama to be delivered with a dash of sardonic humor. For, while Johnson praised Pinter's play for being "strange and funny – and strangely funny," John Voorhees panned Beckett's *Endgame* later in the season for the unrelieved tedium of Beckett's "basic-black gloom."²³⁷

Voorhees' review marked the turning point in the local critics' responses to the second-wave dramas at ACT. Complaining that Beckett's play was tedious and lacked theatricality, Voorhees stated that "*Endgame* might just as well be read as acted."²³⁸ For the first time, the strength of the now-classic drama itself was not sufficient reason to attend ACT's production. While Faber and Johnson had recommended *The Deputy* in 1967 on the strength of its ideas rather than its production, Voorhees now wondered why he was at a theatre at all, if he was not going to be provided with theatricality in staging. The age of the second-wave dramas finally seemed to be affecting the critical reception of the plays. The passage of time (Beckett's drama had been given its American premiere in New York in 1958) had taken some of the revolutionary edge off the second-wave dramas – though, as the reviewer for the *Argus* observed, there was still plenty to think about in Beckett's play:

Endgame is the play in which Samuel Beckett has two of the four characters encased in garbage cans, a dramatic device that puzzled and infuriated some critics when the work was first performed in London in 1957. Time and more exposure to the works of Beckett and other absurdist have made less obscure the symbolism of the discarded older

²³⁶ Wayne Johnson, "ACT Celebrates with *Party*," *The Seattle Times*, June 24, 1970, B10.

²³⁷ John Voorhees, "Endgame Cross Word Puzzle," *The Seattle Times*, September 2, 1970, B12.

²³⁸ John Voorhees, "Endgame Cross Word Puzzle," *The Seattle Times*, September 2, 1970, B12.

generation but there is much that remains enigmatic in the production now on stage at A Contemporary Theatre.²³⁹

Both Johnson at the *Times* and Morgan at the *Argus* leveled a similar critique of ACT's production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. While Morgan's review concluded with the assessment that "Brecht's book remains remarkably relevant on justice, conscription and ecology," he added that Falls' production would have been improved if the director had left out the entire first act.²⁴⁰ Johnson expressed frustration at the serious and political tone which seemed to be universally adopted when addressing the subject of Brecht: "So many ponderous, brow-knitting treatises have been written about Brecht's politics and his theories about the theater as an instrument for social change that the normal expectation to take to one of his plays is that it will be super-political and super-preachy about the goods and ills of society."²⁴¹ The reviewer seemed to be almost relieved to report that the second half of ACT's production "has an abundance of humor." Throughout his review, Johnson politely avoided making any comment on the first half of the production, which Morgan reported was "a stately bore."²⁴² However, in his brief synopsis, Johnson's language (he describes Grusha as a "familiar Brechtian character" who is "too good for this evil world") suggested that the reviewer found Brecht's dramaturgical technique – like his politics – heavy-handed and oversimplified. It is telling that neither Johnson nor Morgan found much to recommend in the production until John Gilbert emerged as a "triumphantly funny" Azdak.²⁴³ Brecht's drama was no longer interesting because of its critical commentary on society; the critics enjoyed the play most when "Brecht's theatrical instincts

²³⁹ "A.C.T. Near the End," *Argus*, September 11, 1970, 6.

²⁴⁰ Murray Morgan, "Center Aisle: A.C.T. on Brecht," *Argus*, August 7, 1970, 7.

²⁴¹ Wayne Johnson, "Chalk Up Another for ACT," *The Seattle Times*, August 5, 1970, F2.

²⁴² Murray Morgan, "Center Aisle: A.C.T. on Brecht," *Argus*, August 7, 1970, 7.

²⁴³ Murray Morgan, "Center Aisle: A.C.T. on Brecht," *Argus*, August 7, 1970, 7.

overcame his didactic motivations.”²⁴⁴ In 1970, the serious dramas of the second wave seemed to be most appreciated when they stopped being quite so serious.

Nowhere was this evaluation stated more clearly than in John Voorhees’ sympathetically critical review of ACT’s production of Jean Genet’s *The Balcony*. Voorhees was very clear that he felt Genet’s ideas continued to be relevant in 1970: Genet’s “comprehension of revolutionaries as being motivated by the fact that they are out of power; his description of politics, the military, of religion and justice as an interlocking, reinforcing arrangement strike a familiar 1970 note.”²⁴⁵ At the *Argus*, Murray Morgan agreed that the play’s ideas still enjoyed “a certain gamey timeliness.”²⁴⁶ However, the genre of the script reinforced some stylistic qualities which Voorhees felt had become dated – and the style of the production now diluted the impact of Genet’s ideas:

Time has stolen some of Genet’s thunder. When I first saw “The Balcony” in 1960 in a run-down “theater” in New York . . . the play was gripping, often shocking. . . . But ACT’s *Balcony* comes to us after a decade that has included new awareness of what power is and what it means, of the presence of revolution, of new freedom of expression in all areas of the arts, a decade that has included Vietnam and Masters and Johnson, Laugh-In and underground newspapers, the Chicago Seven and Spiro Agnew. A decade ago, “The Balcony” was startling and provocative. Today, one tends to agree with Genet’s ideas and ask, “But is it a good play?”²⁴⁷

The answer, Voorhees insinuated, was not an unequivocal affirmative. Once again, boredom threatened to swamp the delivery of the play’s ideas, and the problem lay with the script’s pacing rather than with Fall’s direction. Too often, Voorhees observed, the “action stops while everyone talks, talks, talks. It may be provocative discussion, but one becomes impatient for the play to move on.” The nudity and perversity of the brothel, which had attracted much leering admiration

²⁴⁴ Wayne Johnson, “Chalk Up Another for ACT,” *The Seattle Times*, August 5, 1970, F2.

²⁴⁵ John Voorhees, “View Interesting from ACT’s *Balcony*,” *The Seattle Times*, July 8, 1970, D6.

²⁴⁶ Murray Morgan, “Center Aisle: A.C.T.’s *Balcony*,” *Argus*, July 10, 1970, 6.

²⁴⁷ John Voorhees, “View Interesting from ACT’s *Balcony*,” *The Seattle Times*, July 8, 1970, D6.

from the San Francisco critics when the Workshop staged the production in 1963, failed to alleviate the boredom of Genet's static scenes, much as Osborne's attempt to titillate with hints about Maitland's sexuality in *Inadmissible Evidence* hadn't caused critics to bat an eye.

A similar critique ran through Carol Beers' review of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. The critic reported that Stoppard's characters' lack of agency recalled the situation in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*; Stoppard's dialogue, "reminiscent of Pinter's mundane repetition and playing with words" offered evidence that Stoppard – like Seattle – was well-acquainted with the theatre of the absurd but added nothing new to the genre.²⁴⁸ In 1970, five out of seven plays produced by ACT were dramas of the second wave. The theatre was finally producing the serious and important dramas of the 1960s – but it was too late. The dramas which ACT had claimed as its *raison d'être* were no longer revolutionary; they were canonical. If audiences were hesitant to accept these plays in 1970, it was because they were beginning to seem tired – not because they were novel and challenging.

Reflecting back on the theatre, its founder, and its mission in 1979, Gustavson opined that Falls and his society had always been tools of the conservative establishment rather than rebels against it. This had limited Falls' ability to embrace his own avowed purpose in establishing ACT, as Gustavson explained:

Greg wanted, I think, to read a level of play content that would titillate . . . to a certain degree but not push it over the line where he might risk offending anybody. And that held him back from taking on more adventurous programming. Some people . . . feel that Greg really sold out years ago in terms of really doing contemporary work, and I think they're right. It's not necessarily a criticism. It's only a criticism if you base it from the standpoint that the theatre started out to be a showcase for contemporary work and probably has not fulfilled that goal to the extent that a large potential contemporary audience in Seattle would like to have seen.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Carol Beers, "Rosencrantz, Guildenstern Alive at ACT," *The Seattle Times*, July 22, 1970, D19.

²⁴⁹ Hansen, 39-40.

Given Falls' own reluctance to stage the second-wave dramas, and his stated dislike of the theatre of the absurd, what is remarkable is how many of these plays ACT produced in the first six years of its existence, 1965-1970. ACT produced 19 dramas of the second wave in this period. By comparison, the Actor's Workshop of San Francisco only produced 21 dramas of the second wave in the ten years between 1956 (when the theatre mounted *Mother Courage*) and 1965 (when Blau and Irving departed for New York). Falls, who constantly looked to other directors and other theatres (particularly those located in New York) to assure him of the commercial viability of a script before he produced it, directed almost as many plays of the second wave as the revolutionaries at the Actor's Workshop did (and in about half the time). This fact is a testament to the rapid change which had already taken place in America by the time Falls opened his theatre in 1965 – and while A Contemporary Theatre contributed to the movement by continuing to introduce the second-wave dramas to American audiences in a remote corner of the United States, the theatre was a late-comer to the movement. The production history of ACT's early years in the 1960s is, if anything, a reflection that these plays had already been embraced by American audiences in general.

Falls' theatre is also significant for its longstanding collaboration with the University. Even ACT's commitment to bringing Seattle professional productions of the "vital theater which concerns itself with the significant ideas, attitudes, and problems of our times," served as an outgrowth of the University mandate given Falls when he assumed control of the School of Drama in 1961 – to bring the theatre's repertoire "into the second half of the twentieth century."²⁵⁰ In the 1960s, Falls believed that "the future of legitimate theater" in the United States lay in "a grassroots movement toward regional theatre," which could best be accomplished

²⁵⁰Wayne Johnson, "In *White America*: ACT Play is Timely and Telling," *The Seattle Times*, June 22, 1966, 55; Hansen, 17.

by “the large American university hiring a truly professional theater company that will serve as a regional theater.”²⁵¹ Though ACT was never “hired” (and thereby subsidized) by the University, the two organizations were closely connected. University administrators served on the theatre’s Board of Directors; University professors, graduates and students performed in and designed for its shows; resources like costumes and properties were shared; and visiting artists at the University, like Mel Shapiro, contributed to the young theatre’s prestige by lending their talents. In return, Falls’ theatre offered students and faculty the opportunity to expand their production experience to include work at the professional level. In many ways, Falls’ theatre and his School achieved the kind of collaborative and mutually-beneficial relationship which the NTC was still theorizing in 1968. Though Falls left the University of Washington in 1976, the two organizations still maintain close ties today, a testament to the lasting influence of this midcentury experiment in Seattle.

²⁵¹ *Theater in America*, 85-86.

Chapter Four: The Cleveland Play House in Cleveland, Ohio

Founded in 1915, the Cleveland Play House is America's oldest professional regional theatre still in operation today. Originally organized as a voluntary association of Clevelanders interested in the dramatic arts, the Play House's mission was to bring to Cleveland plays of "outstanding merit that would not otherwise be available to Cleveland audiences because of their lack of commercial appeal."²⁵² In the 1920s, the theatre reorganized itself as a professional rather than voluntary organization and emerged as part of the Little Theatre Movement, one of the few surviving theatres of that movement. As Norris Houghton observed in his 1941 *Advance from Broadway*, "Cleveland Play House ... generally considered the outstanding product, along with the Pasadena Playhouse, of the 'Little Theatre Movement.'"²⁵³ The theatre also incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the 1920s. Decades before the Ford Foundation began making contributions to test the viability of establishing and expanding the professional theatre outside of New York), the Play House was the recipient of two handsome grants from the Rockefeller Foundation. A grant of \$38,000 in 1936 helped the theatre off the \$100,000 mortgage on its plant at 86th Street, which housed the Brooks and Drury theatres. In 1945, Rockefeller made another grant to the Play House in the amount of \$25,000, in recognition of the contribution the Play House Children's Theatre provided the city of Cleveland.

Like the Play House itself, the directors who managed the theatre in the 1950s and 1960s were also products of this era, for Frederic McConnell and K. Elmo Lowe had been managing the Play House since 1921. The two directors had enthusiastically contributed to the introduction of the first wave of European modernism in the 1920s with productions of Przybyszewka,

²⁵² Alexander C. Brown and K. Elmo Lowe to Eric A Grubb, February 20, 1961 (McConnell papers, Box 1), 3.

²⁵³ Norris Houghton, *Advance from Broadway: 19,000 Miles of American Theatre* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941), 68.

Chekhov, Čapek, Maeterlinck, Synge, Ibsen, Pirandello, and, particularly, the plays of George Bernard Shaw. As audiences declined in the 1950s, McConnell and Lowe at first tried to keep the Play House afloat by reducing the theatre's operations and eliminating redundancies. Yet by 1958, the year that McConnell stepped down as the Director of the Play House and assumed a subsidiary position as Lowe took over the daily management of the theatre, McConnell had become convinced that the Play House must adopt a new stance toward finances: the theatre was no longer self-sufficient. In order to attract the support of charitable organizations like the Ford Foundation, he realized, the Play House must renew its commitment to outstanding, non-commercial dramas. In the 1950s and 1960s, these dramas were, frequently, the plays of the second stage of European modernism. This foundation, McConnell believed, was the key to reestablishing the Play House's status as an art theatre, as it had been in the 1920s.

A Model Regional Theatre

Given the longevity of both the Cleveland Play House and the consistency of its directorship, the Play House in many ways anticipated the model of the regional theatres that blossomed across America in the 1960s. The Play House had already incorporated as a not-for-profit cultural and educational institution in the mid-1920s. The theatre maintained a subscriber base which supported its functions, and a number of its actors were members of the professional Actors Equity union, though the Cleveland Play House remained staunchly opposed to the unionization of its technicians and stagehands.

From its early days, the Play House offered cultural and educational opportunities at little or no cost to the citizens of Cleveland, particularly its young people. The theatre maintained three separate programs which encouraged young people to engage with live theatre: the Children's Theatre, the apprentice program (also referred to as the Play House School of the

Theatre), and the Shakespeare festival. Hundreds of children, from ages eight to seventeen, enrolled annually in the Children's Theatre's Saturday morning classes. There was no tuition expense but students paid "a modest registration fee to cover activities from October to May," for which they received tickets to attend the program's productions.²⁵⁴ The Children's Theatre produced three plays each year, each featuring eight or ten performers who were cast from the ranks of the Children's Theatre.

The Play House also maintained an apprenticeship program which offered "a unique, tuition-free training program each year to about twenty students who pay with their labor for the opportunity of working with a professional staff and learning theater techniques."²⁵⁵ Though individual apprentices' assignments varied, the overall mission of the School of the Theatre was to provide the apprentices with a hands-on experience of the process of producing a play for the professional, regional stage. "Producing a play for production on stage, acting in it, seeing it, being a part of the whole creation" was what Frederic McConnell termed "the essence of real stage training."²⁵⁶ An effort was made in the late 1950s to reshape the apprenticeship program to improve the quality and quantity of actor training provided to the apprentices. In 1958, Lowe turned the School's acting classes into "project sessions," in which casts of apprentices, directed by senior members of the Play House ensemble, developed short plays and scenes for performance. Promising apprentices were often recruited into the professional company. After serving the Play House as an apprentice for a year, students were eligible to receive a cash fellowship from the theatre for the next season, which would serve as a kind of modest salary as

²⁵⁴ Paul Mooney, "Children's Theater to Start 28th Season," *Cleveland Press*, September 27, 1960, 11.

²⁵⁵ John Beaufort, "Cleveland's Unusual Play House," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 27, 1957, 10.

²⁵⁶ Frederic McConnell, "A message from Frederic McConnell to members of the staff and the trustees of the Play house," August 15, 1957 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 15.

the student progressed through the theatre's ranks. Thereafter, Fellows were "in line for appointment to the paid professional company."²⁵⁷

The Play House provided these activities largely at its own expense, leaning on the profits of its regular season of plays to provide the funding for these service programs. Yet the directors considered these activities some of the most important contributions that the theatre made, as a cultural organization, to its city. Charitable foundations also took note of the theatre's service to its community.

The Play House also designed and built one of the country's first model stages, anticipating by several years the architectural design trend which arrived with the second-wave dramas. In 1949, four years before Tyrone Guthrie captured international attention with his new open stage at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, the Play House set another precedent when it opened its third theatre – a model open stage – in a converted church at Euclid and 77th Streets. McConnell collaborated with local architect Frank Draz to renovate the old Second Church of Christ Scientist into a 560-seat auditorium surrounding a projecting apron stage.²⁵⁸ The "open stage," as McConnell preferred to call the form, was built without a proscenium and front curtain. In 1959, American Institute of Architects (AIA) featured the Play House's theatre in a travelling exhibition on "Arts and Cultural Centers." As the Play House was "one of the first theatres in this country to use a space stage," the AIA felt that the Euclid-77th Stage served as "an important example of this type."²⁵⁹ In 1960, Brooks Atkinson wrote to McConnell, "you built a platform stage long before platform stages became a shibboleth."²⁶⁰ The space also inspired Elia

²⁵⁷ Frederic McConnell to George Seminoff, January 29, 1961 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

²⁵⁸ Julia McCune Flory, *The Cleveland Play House: How it Began* (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1965), 116.

²⁵⁹ Frederick Gutheim to Mr. K. Elmo Lowe, November 24, 1959 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

²⁶⁰ Brooks Atkinson to Frederic McConnell, July 28, 1960 (McConnell Papers, Box 3), 1.

Kazan, who visited the Play House in 1960 to observe the theatre's operations. Though the Vivian Beaumont stage at Lincoln Center is commonly believed to have been inspired by Guthrie's open stages in Stratford and Minneapolis, Ruth Fischer's record of Kazan's visit to the Play House suggests that the New York theatre was influenced by Cleveland's facilities:

In the course of luncheon conversation, Mr. Kazan digressed from movie talk to comment at some length on the physical facilities of the building at Euclid-77th. . . . He pronounced the theatre and its stage 'magnificent' whereupon Mrs. Fischer told him that the building originally was a Christian Science Church and that Frederic McConnell was responsible for the plan. Mr. Kazan then related that he last visited the Play House in about 1929 (the 86th St. building). He added that he was particularly interested in the Play House operation at this time because of his plans for a repertory theatre as part of the projected Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. Mr. Kazan said that he is patterning the New York operation, to a large degree, upon that which exists here at the Play House.²⁶¹

1957-1959: A New Repertoire and New Collaborators, Changing Paradigms of Theatre's

Business

The late 1950s constituted a period of change for the Play House; changing economic circumstances forced a reevaluation of the theatre's core values, mission and identity. Out of this period of reflection, McConnell became convinced that the Play House must once again renew its commitment to the serious artistic and intellectual drama, the non-commercial drama of substance, to which the theatre had been dedicated in the early days of its formation. McConnell became adamant about the importance of establishing a consistent repertoire of these plays as a sign of the Play House's function as a cultural institution dedicated to the arts. The pressure to define the Play House's identity was in part a response to developments which refreshed the Play House's national profile and prestige: among them was an invitation from the State Department to apply for nomination to represent the United States' professional regional theatre at the World's Fair in Brussels, a three-year subsidized collaboration with the Ford Foundation, a

²⁶¹ Ruth Fischer, "Memo of a Meeting with Elia Kazan," October 4, 1961 (McConnell papers, Box 3), 1.

proposal for a new theatre from Tyrone Guthrie and Oliver Rea, and an overture from Western Reserve to redefine the nature of the theatre's longtime collaborative relationship with the university. Ironically, these new developments occurred during a trying period of straitened resources for the Play House.

In the midst of the postwar economic boom, the Play House was losing money. Audiences were shrinking. McConnell and Lowe tightened their belts, reducing staff and cutting expenses, but struggled to keep pace with the falling attendance figures. The Play House sold 111,171 tickets in the 1952-1953 season and 111,357 in the 1953-1954 season. In 1954-1955, the number dropped to 91,993; and dipped further to 84,936 in the 1956-1957 season. By February 28, 1958, six months into the theatre's nine-month season, the theatre had sold approximately 48,200 tickets – putting the Play House on track to sell only 72,400 tickets for the 1957-1958 season. One year later, on February 28, 1959, the theatre had only sold 46,600 tickets. Neither the directors nor the Trustees could explain the change; as McConnell advised Lowe against planning a long (seven-week) run of *No Time for Sergeants* in 1958, he sadly reflected that “times today seem to be different – for reasons we don't seem to fathom.”²⁶² As the decade wore on, each season presented the Play House staff with the increasingly challenging task “of trying to level off, if not reverse the curse of declining attendance which we have suffered the last several seasons.” In the end, a number of factors coalesced to convince McConnell (and to a lesser degree, Lowe) that it was time for the Play House to commit itself to a new repertoire of serious artistic plays, and to a new model of theatre business (one which involved increased subsidy). These factors included the Play House's founding mission, the State Department's 1957 invitation to the Cleveland Play House to apply to represent the professional regional

²⁶² Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, November 13, 1958 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 1.

American theatre at the World's Fair in Brussels in 1958 (an honor which was ultimately awarded the San Francisco Actor's Workshop instead), the Play House's three-year tenure as a subsidized Ford theatre, Tyrone Guthrie's interest in Cleveland as a potential site for his new American repertory theatre operation, and an overture from Western Reserve University.

The debate about how best to curb the decline of audiences sparked discussion and reflection about the Play House's original mission, its current identity and its future. Since 1915, the Play House's mission had been to bring to Cleveland plays of "outstanding merit that would not otherwise be available to Cleveland audiences because of their lack of commercial appeal."²⁶³ Yet gradually The Play House had retreated to safer economic ground. Already in January, 1950, Lowe complained to McConnell that this box-office pragmatism was crippling the theatre's artistic integrity. "Our present lack of positive creative thinking is, I feel, to a degree due to the fact that for years everybody has worked so hard that they have had little time for thinking," Lowe observed.²⁶⁴ "We must try harder for the truly theatric in the best sense of the word," he urged. "Haven't we always done this? No. I don't think so. Not hard enough, at any rate. Too often we are stuck, and throw something in just to keep the doors open. ... Possible complications made the status quo desirable [*sic*]. 'Things might get out of hand.' You felt you had to keep a firm grip and up to a point you were undoubtedly right; The Play House now has three theatres."²⁶⁵ By 1957, as McConnell explained to John Beaufort of the *Christian Science Monitor*, the policy which directed the program for each season was one of general appeasement

²⁶³ Alexander C. Brown and K. Elmo Lowe to Eric A Grubb, February 20, 1961 (McConnell papers, Box 1), 3.

²⁶⁴ K. Elmo Lowe to Frederic McConnell, Jan 10, 1950 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 4.

²⁶⁵ K. Elmo Lowe to Frederic McConnell, Jan 10, 1950 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 6, 1.

and entertainment: plays were “chosen to attract as broad as possible a cross-section of the community . . . The box office is the dominant factor because it has got to be.”²⁶⁶

However, McConnell didn’t want the box office to be the dominant factor in determining Play House repertoire. He believed that the American theatre, as an institution, “has been benefited by its removal from the market-place.”²⁶⁷ As he wrote the Trustees of the Play House and of the Play House Foundation in August, 1955, he did not consider the 1954-1955 season, during which attendance had averaged 40% of Play House capacity, a failure. “Artistically the season there had merit and purpose,” he asserted.²⁶⁸

At the end of the 1957-1958 season, as McConnell stepped down as the head of the Play House (he remained on-staff for four more years as a consulting “Executive Director” and director of Play House productions), he urged Lowe, who replaced him as “Director” of The Play House, to take up the crusade he had proposed in his January, 1950 letter. “As before, but more now, you will be a boon to the Play House,” McConnell insisted. “We need your tremendous energy and lively and volatile mind. We are due a kick in the pants, a resurgence of stimulation from within and without, which in your decisive way you will give. You will grab for new ideas and if necessary scrap outworn old ones. The past is not to be disparaged, but a lot of new bricks have to be laid, and new growth envisaged.” The kick in the pants which McConnell envisioned was a new repertoire, one which constituted a return to the original guiding principles of the Play House’s existence: “The only thing that will save the P.H. from oblivion is a program of high quality plays and productions together with good and strenuous promotion. And such a program

²⁶⁶ John Beaufort, “Cleveland’s Unusual Play House,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 27, 1957, 10.

²⁶⁷ Frederic McConnell, “Memo to the Trustees of the Play House and Play House Foundation,” August 15, 1955 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 5.

²⁶⁸ Frederic McConnell, “Memo to the Trustees of the Play House and Play House Foundation,” August 15, 1955 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 3.

must be maintained with consistency. We must abolish our several years [*sic*] policy of ‘entertainment’ which is already exhausted.”²⁶⁹

The Play House had already secured one such “high quality” play for the 1958-1959 season: Bertolt Brecht’s *Mother Courage*, which opened December 10, 1958. After the initial bustle of the season’s opening had settled and as the autumn wore on, McConnell wrote Lowe to urge him to curtail his planned four-week run of Dorothy and Michael Blankfort’s *Monique* to allow *Mother Courage* to open earlier and run for three weeks instead of two. “The play has a reputation, Brecht has a reputation,” McConnell urged. “Further, Mother Courage has considerable publicity potential ... it is the first time for ‘Epic Theatre’ in Cleveland.”²⁷⁰

In addition to being the first time for Epic Theatre in Cleveland, the Play House mistakenly believed its 1958 production of Brecht’s *Mother Courage* was the play’s American premiere. The play had actually premiered in the United States more than two years earlier, on January 13, 1956, when it had been produced at the Actor’s Workshop in San Francisco. Orson Welles’ had planned to direct the play on Broadway (in an adaptation by Marc Blitzstein) in 1958, but this plan never came to fruition. Thus, the Play House production was only the second production of the play in the United States, and the ignorance in Cleveland of the Workshop’s earlier production suggests that the Workshop, despite its rising national profile, was still little-known in the United States in 1958.

In their excitement, various local critics repeated the misinformation about the premiere (which still appears today on the Cleveland Play House’s website), stressing the importance of the Play House’s contribution to American theatre history. As the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported on December 7, 1958, “Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Mother Courage’ is giving the Play House a

²⁶⁹ Frederic McConnell, “Notes on Staff Meeting,” September 22, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 2.

²⁷⁰ Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, October 26, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1.

coveted American premiere and its Drury auditorium the electric atmosphere of an international theatrical festival Wednesday night.”²⁷¹ The excitement over what had been assumed to be the play’s American premiere was only increased by reports of the play’s popularity abroad in Europe. The *Plain Dealer* eagerly reported that *Mother Courage* had “won first prize at an international drama festival in Paris last year” and that the new English-language translation by Eric Bentley, “an American critic and dramatist” who “produced and directed one of the early German-language productions,” had “won more success” for the play in London.²⁷² The *Cleveland News* reported that when play was “first produced in war-sickened, post bellum Germany it was an instant hit.”²⁷³

The Cleveland public was also excited about the contributions guest director Benno Frank would bring to the production. Though McConnell was familiar with Brecht’s theories, he found them confusing.²⁷⁴ As he wrote Frank in 1960, he had always been troubled by the fact that he felt he was “unable to understand what really were [Brecht’s] theories as expounded upon by English and American writers. That is to say, I was never able to get away from emotion and illusion which Brecht was supposed to deny – especially in *Mother Courage* in which there was plenty.”²⁷⁵ In fact, it was not until McConnell read Martin Esslin’s *Brecht: The Man and his*

²⁷¹ “Play House Wins Brecht Drama for American Bow,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 7, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁷² “Play House Wins Brecht Drama for American Bow,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 7, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁷³ “*Mother Courage* at Play House,” *Cleveland News*, December 6, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁷⁴ Frederic McConnell, “A message from Frederic McConnell to members of the staff and the trustees of the Play house,” August 15, 1957 (McConnell papers, Box 2). On page 10 of McConnell’s letter to the staff and trustees, he quotes Brecht as he muses on the nature of actors and acting, demonstrating that the director was at least familiar with some of Brecht’s theories of the Epic Theatre before the Play House produced *Mother Courage* in 1958.

²⁷⁵ Frederic McConnell to Benno Frank, April 5, 1960 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

Work that he felt confident enough to assert that, “Now, perhaps, we can go ahead and produce Brecht and get some theatrical sense out of it.”²⁷⁶

Frank, by contrast, was a native German, friend of Brecht, and had enjoyed a distinguished international career as a director of opera. Born in Mannheim, Germany, Frank had directed the Schiller Opera at the Hamburg State Theatre in the early 1930s before emigrating to Palestine in 1933, where he directed and managed the Palestine Opera company. In 1938, Frank emigrated to the United States. In New York, Frank worked with the New York College of Music and the American Opera League. Frank served in the United States Army from 1943 to 1945, and was Chief of Theatre and Music for the United States’ military government in Germany until 1948. After the war, Frank returned to America, and directed at the Play House and the Karamu theatre in Cleveland. A naturalized American citizen, in 1960 Frank was decorated by the German government in recognition of his work reconstructing German theatres after World War II.

Frank had met Brecht when the latter came to the United States in 1941, and counted the late playwright as a close friend of long standing, a fact which few reviewers failed to cite. Frank’s long friendship with Brecht, and his familiarity with his friend’s theories of the Epic theatre, meant that the director was able to provide Cleveland audiences with a textbook example of Epic Theatre production. As the *Plain Dealer* explained, “Director Benno Frank ... was a close friend of the distinguished late playwright. They met when Brecht fled from Nazi armies to take refuge in the United States, where he wrote the play in 1938. They discussed its future, Brecht’s unique theories regarding epic theater and the manner in which these theories could be

²⁷⁶ Frederic McConnell to Benno Frank, April 5, 1960 (McConnell Papers, Box 1), 1.

best implemented in production.”²⁷⁷ Even Arthur Spaeth, one of the reviewers for the *Cleveland News*, noted the unique opportunity afforded the Cleveland public to sample the classic Epic theatre – though he clearly indicated that he took issue with the confrontational anti-realism of the style: “Director Frank has been fidelity itself to the Brecht-Piscator style of mixing realistic and expressionistic theater – the dramatized harangue that was mirrored in our federal theater in the 30’s.”²⁷⁸

The production was faithful to Brecht’s ideals in both design and its approach to acting. As Tom Ong’s review for the *Catholic Universe Bulletin* reveals, the production combined live action and projections, provided summaries of the action of each scene, identified locale with written signs, and provided an ironic visual counterpoint to the musical accompaniment which bluntly reaffirmed the martial atmosphere of the play’s setting:

What is the new stage form? ‘I don’t want the settings to be picturesque or to convey any atmosphere,’ Brecht once demanded of a designer. ‘I want them to be completely functional and minor like properties.’ Thus each scene last night had a sign identifying ‘Sweden,’ ‘Poland,’ ‘Franconia,’ or wherever *Mother Courage* happens to be while tramping all over a ravaged Europe in the wake of the Protestant and Catholic armies, peddling her wares from a wagon like a USO canteen with a profit motive.

Then, too, there is a white sheet affixed to a proscenium curtain on which are flashed, at intervals, the date and a brief written summary of the action. A huge movie screen at the rear forms a background for leaping colors that heighten the conflagration scenes. During the musical passages, down comes a velvet trapping loaded with shields, drum, bugle and other instruments of war.²⁷⁹

In contrast to the military pomp and circumstance of velvet and arms, the instruments which produced the musical passages had been altered in order to warp the sound they created: the meager band included “a flute, a drum and a piano with sandpaper or something wedged between

²⁷⁷ “Play House Wins Brecht Drama for American Bow,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 7, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁷⁸ Arthur Spaeth, “*Mother Courage* Proves Genius Has Ups and Downs,” *Cleveland News*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁷⁹ Tom Ong, “Brecht’s *Mother Courage* Has Play House Premiere,” *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

the strings to give a muted, pounding effect.”²⁸⁰ Furthermore, the instruments were located off-stage in the wings of the theatre, refocusing audience attention on the artificiality of the stage production. Spaeth observed that Frank’s production also exposed the lighting instruments, which hung in full view on a bar over the audience’s heads.

In addition to utilizing Epic techniques in the design of his production, Frank’s actors frequently broke the fourth wall and engaged the audience with direct address: “he orders his actors to ignore stage interplay and harangue audience,” Spaeth complained.²⁸¹ And while Spaeth found the direct address “undramatic,” still the critics found much to praise in the cast’s performances. Harriet Brazier (McConnell’s wife), cast as the eponymous heroine, won nothing but praise for her epic stature, her mettle, and her convincing portrayal as an unlikeable cutthroat. “So compelling does the actress depict this haggling profiteer that you feel genuinely sorry for her when she gets a bitter comeuppance,” reflected Glenn C. Pullen, a reviewer for the *Plain Dealer*.²⁸² Ong found Max Ellis “in rare good form” as Pete the Pipe, the army cook, “a role I didn’t think anyone could make tasteful in the theatre.”²⁸³ The local critics had nothing but praise for the entire cast, which included Kirk Willis as the Chaplain, Leslie Cass as Yvette, Martin Ambrose as Eilif, and Peter David Heth as Swiss Cheese. However, the major standout (aside from Brazier) was clearly Barbara Busby, who played the role of Katherine. Some of the praise may stem from the fact that Katherine is clearly a more likeable character, and several critics praised Busby for qualities which Brecht had written into the part. Only Timothy Murnane,

²⁸⁰ Tom Ong, “Brecht’s *Mother Courage* Has Play House Premiere,” *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁸¹ Arthur Spaeth, “*Mother Courage* Proves Genius Has Ups and Downs,” *The Cleveland News*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁸² Glenn C. Pullen, “*Mother Courage* Absorbing Drama,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁸³ Tom Ong, “Brecht’s *Mother Courage* Has Play House Premiere,” *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

writing for the *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, provided a more detailed account of the actress' work. Murnane praised Busby for her inventive wordless byplay, writing that "her whines, squeals and masterful use of pantomime to convey the fear, courage and agonizing frustration of a pitiful victim of man's inhumanity to man" constituted "the outstanding performance" of the production.²⁸⁴

Yet despite warm reviews of the cast and musicians, critics confessed that they found the play dull, much as Loeb Cone and Knickerbocker had found the Workshop's production in 1956. "The long drama, with its interminable curtains, drags along in the same creaky manner as *Mother Courage's* wagon – in fitful bursts and infuriating pauses ... Despite an excellent English version by Eric Bentley and the bright spots of musical drollery by Paul Dessau, the message, whatever it is, is too long in coming," complained Mooney at the *Cleveland Press*.²⁸⁵ The critics agreed that the play simply took too long to express its message, though few ventured to state, definitively, what Brecht's message was – aside from a general condemnation of Hitler and war. Ong's evasive commentary is typical: "For a while I thought it was going to take 30 years for Mr. Brecht to finish making his point – but the Play House got it across, finally, in three hours and 17 minutes flat."

In sum, then, the play was not recommended by the critics to Cleveland's general audiences. However, the production was singled out as the purview of serious lovers of theatre – or lovers of serious theatre. In contrast to the critics in San Francisco, who simply could not recommend the Workshop's production in 1956, the critics in Cleveland in 1958 acknowledged the importance of Brecht and the historic significance of *Mother Courage* to contemporary

²⁸⁴Timothy A. Murnane, "Cynical chronicle of war's futility," *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, December 12, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁸⁵Paul Mooney, "Able Drury Cast Fails to Lift *Mother Courage* from Doldrums," *The Cleveland Press*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

theatre, which justified the production even if the play itself was not as entertaining as the critics would have liked. “Theater, above all, should be entertaining and this depressing story neither uplifts at long last nor resolves any problems,” complained Mooney, yet added a summary “brief estimate” that proclaimed the play “a must for those dedicate to serious theatre.”²⁸⁶

Mooney’s complaint – that the play failed to resolve its problems or to provide an uplifting ending – indicates that the critic did not have very extensive knowledge of the Epic Theatre before the Play House’s production. The Play House, which had shifted its offerings away from the serious experimental plays of first-wave modernism to lighter fare during the Great Depression and World War II, had obviously established a precedent of producing plays with tidy endings and moral uplift. It was this reputation, which continued into the 1950s with Play House productions of *Finian’s Rainbow*, *Mrs. McThing*, and *Time Out for Ginger*, that McConnell sought to counter with his production of *Mother Courage*.

Mooney’s complaint also indicates that Frank’s production attempted to provide a textbook example of Epic Theatre and incite its audience to action, instead of pacifying them with a tidy closure to a neat narrative. However, the play seems to have failed to generate conversation or response. “We are not inspired so much as tranquilized,” observed Ong.²⁸⁷ Murnane agreed; he found Busby’s performance the sole highlight “of an otherwise gloomy and overlong tract that will be of more interest to the confirmed theater patron than the entertainment seeker.”²⁸⁸ Spaeth could not recommend the program, despite the fact that he applauded the Play House for finally breaking a dull repertoire of recent Broadway hits: “It is [my] unhappy duty,

²⁸⁶ Paul Mooney, “Able Drury Cast Fails to Lift *Mother Courage* from Doldrums,” *The Cleveland Press*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁸⁷ Tom Ong, “Brecht’s *Mother Courage* Has Play House Premiere,” *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁸⁸ Timothy A. Murnane, “Cynical chronicle of war’s futility,” *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, December 12, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

after belaboring the Play House for mirroring Broadway yesteryear, to give the back of my hand to this provocative, if unhappy excursion into the experimental theater.”²⁸⁹ Though *Mother Courage* proved to be a play for art patrons rather than the general population of entertainment-seekers, Spaeth’s critique reveals that the Play House’s foray into a potential new repertoire and new identity had been recognized.

With such circumspect endorsement, it is not surprising that *Mother Courage* failed to generate the excitement (or box office return) that McConnell had originally hoped it would. In the end, Lowe only scheduled the play for two weeks; it ran for all ten performances at the Drury Theatre, but attendance averaged a mere 13.9% and in total, the Play House only sold 737 tickets to Cleveland’s first Epic Theatre production. A new repertoire of high quality plays would not, in and of itself, solve the dilemma of the shrinking Play House audience, as McConnell recognized. This did not mean that the Play House should abandon the challenging play of quality and substance, however; in fact, McConnell urged Lowe to commit more thoroughly and with greater consistency to a policy of quality artistic productions. “At a certain time,” McConnell wrote to Lowe, “the theory of a ‘balanced’ program may have seemed right. Good against Bad. Now, not so sure. Variety among the good, yes, but unbalance as to good against bad, with a lean toward the good or strong play.”²⁹⁰ And while the Play House was “starving” with productions of *Oedipus*, *Mother Courage*, and Sean O’Casey’s *Pictures in the Hallway* (for which the Play House only managed to sell 796 tickets, another financial low point) in the 1958-1958 season, as

²⁸⁹ Arthur Spaeth, “*Mother Courage* Proves Genius Has Ups and Downs,” *The Cleveland News*, December 11, 1958, n.p. Scrapbook 95. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

²⁹⁰ Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, “re: Production Program,” December 3, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1.

McConnell observed, “we starve with other things too. We might starve less, if our policy was consistent, and not so neither fish nor fowl.”²⁹¹

The Play House never committed a majority of its repertoire to the production of the second wave modernist dramas, as it had committed to the first wave in the 1920s. However, the Play House’s production history in the 1960s reflects a consistent incorporation of these dramas into the Play House’s regular programs. For, though *Mother Courage* had failed at the box office, it had garnered respect from local critics, who proclaimed the show required viewing for serious theatre patrons. For the serious theatre patron, then, the Play House offered productions of Albee’s *The American Dream*, Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* and *Rhinoceros* and Pinter’s *The Caretaker* in the 1962-1963 season, all of which were directed by Thomas Hill before he joined the ensemble of the Seattle Repertory Theatre in 1963. The 1963-1964 season included John Mortimer’s *The Dock Brief* and Arthur Kopit’s *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama’s Hung You in the Closet and I’m Feelin’ So Sad*; the 1964-1965 season included Brecht’s *Galileo* and Dürrenmatt’s *The Physicists*; the 1965-1966 season included Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; 1966-1967 included George Tabori’s arrangement, titled *Brecht on Brecht*; 1967-1968 included a double bill of short plays from Pinter: *The Collection* and *The Dumbwaiter* and later, Samuel Becket’s *Waiting for Godot*; in the 1968-1969 season, the theatre produced Pinter’s *The Birthday Party*; and *Endgame* ran for two months in the 1970-1971 season.

McConnell was well aware that committing the Play House to a repertoire of serious, artistic drama would alienate a significant contingent of the theatre’s audience: “this may mean

²⁹¹ Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, “re: Production Program,” December 3, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1.

building a new audience, and will take time,” he admitted to Lowe.²⁹² However, McConnell was willing to sacrifice economic solvency for artistic virtue – because he was increasingly becoming convinced that the regional theatre could no longer survive in America as a purely commercial venture. As early as 1955, McConnell had complained to the Board of Trustees of both The Play House and the Play House Foundation that the economic pressures placed upon the arts organization as it struggled to support its charitable civic programs had become unrealistic: “We are expecting too much under present day theatre conditions when we look to our entertainment of the public in the production of plays not only to pay its own way but to support our educational activities of the School and the Children’s Theatre and, in addition, help pay the balance owed on our plant.”²⁹³

As the Play House’s financial difficulties only increased in the intervening years between 1955 and 1958, McConnell had come to reconsider the nature of the theatre as an arts organization. In his letters and memos, he began to stress the critical importance of subsidy to Play House survival. In his December 3, 1958 memo to Lowe about the “Production Program,” McConnell observed that committing the Play House to a program of artistic excellence, “may mean Subsiday [*sic*]. But we have that already, but mostly because of extra-curriculum work. We might get more subsiday [*sic*], if the emphasis was on a distinguished play program, and not a lot of auxiliary activity.”²⁹⁴ Alexander C. Brown, President of the Play House Foundation, agreed with McConnell’s evaluation of the theatre’s predicament – and in the importance of subsidy. In

²⁹² Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, “re: Production Program,” December 3, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1.

²⁹³ Frederic McConnell, “Memo to the Trustees of the Play House and Play House Foundation,” August 15, 1955 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 12.

²⁹⁴ Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, “re: Production Program,” December 3, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1. The “subsiday” to which McConnell refers were funds raised in recognition of the contribution to Cleveland’s civic life by such “extra-curricular” programs as the Children’s Theatre, the School of the Theatre (for the Apprentices), and the theatre’s *gratis* performances in summer arts celebrations, etc.

a year-end letter to the members of the Boards of Trustees of both the Play House and the Play House Foundation, Brown agreed that the Play House would need to receive “much greater support from the public and particularly from those institutions and foundations which realize that the theatre arts should no longer be cast as mendicants any more than the musical or pictorial arts.”²⁹⁵

In part, the Play House and Play House Foundation seem to have become convinced of the important benefits of subsidy through the theatre’s association with the Ford Foundation. This was not the first time the Play House had enjoyed the largesse of a charitable foundation; in 1936 and in 1945, the theatre had received grants, totaling \$48,000, from the Rockefeller Foundation. However, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Rockefeller grants had provided capital for the construction of new theatres. The theatre itself had been thriving financially. By 1958, in the midst of a rapidly shrinking budget, Ford Foundation money brought new people and expanded operations to the ailing theatre, finally counteracting the recent trend toward contraction and reduced programs at the theatre.

In addition, the prestige and national recognition of Ford subsidy brought additional benefits to the Play House. The apprentice program, for example, blossomed in 1958; these students were critical to Play House operations as they provided unpaid labor to all branches of the theatre. As Leonore Klewer wrote to McConnell in August, 1958 before the opening of the Play House’s first season with the Ford actors in residence, “there has been a great deal of apprentice correspondence, more so than usual this time of year. We now have 36 accepted

²⁹⁵ Alex. C. Brown, “Letter to the Members of the Boards of Trustees of The Cleveland Play House and Play House Foundation,” December 24, 1958 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1.

apprentices.”²⁹⁶ By contrast, in 1960 (the last year of the Ford subsidy, when the Ford actors were on tour and not in Cleveland), the Play House attracted only twenty apprentices.²⁹⁷

However, the Play House’s successful adjustment to Ford subsidy alleviated the economic crisis which had been inducing the Play House leadership to revitalize the theatre’s repertoire with second-wave dramas. During the years of Ford subsidy, the theatre stopped experimenting with the second-wave dramas, despite the fact that this experiment had begun to resuscitate the theatre’s national profile, even earning the Play House an invitation from the State Department in 1957 to compete for nomination to represent the professional regional theatre in America at the Brussels World’s Fair. By contrast, the Actor’s Workshop, which received the State Department nomination to go to Brussels, was almost driven into bankruptcy by the stipulations attached to Ford’s subsidy. The crisis cemented the Workshop’s commitment to the second-wave dramas, while the Play House would not begin to explore these plays again until the 1960s.

The 1960s: A Place for the New Drama

In the 1960s, the second wave dramas were regularly incorporated into the Play House repertoire, beginning in the 1962-1963 season, when the theatre produced Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros* and *The Bald Soprano* (the Grove Press had published Donald Allen’s translations of both plays in 1958), Albee’s *American Dream*, and Pinter’s *The Caretaker*. Thereafter, however, the Play House generally only produced one of the second-wave dramas annually. Unlike McConnell, Lowe was unwilling to risk alienating the majority of the theatre’s subscriber base (thereby sacrificing the theatre’s financial base) by renewing Cleveland’s commitment to the serious and artistic dramas.

²⁹⁶ Leonore Klewer to Frederic McConnell, August 25, 1958 (McConnell papers, Box 1), 1.

²⁹⁷ K. Elmo Lowe to Frederic McConnell, August 16, 1960 (McConnell papers, Box 2), 3.

McConnell had been urging Lowe to put *Rhinoceros* into production for over a year, encouraging him to use it as the opening production for the 1961-1962 season.²⁹⁸ However, the critical response to Hill's four productions when they were finally mounted later in the 1962-1963 season reflected the wariness the Cleveland community still felt toward the European avant-garde movement, which reviewers alternately termed the "existentialistic theatre" or, if they were familiar with Esslin's seminal 1961 book, "theatre of the absurd." For example, despite the publicity which had been generated by Zero Mostel's highly successful American premiere of the play on Broadway in 1961, when the *Plain Dealer* announced the upcoming production of Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, the journalist took care to assure Clevelanders that the play, though "pretty avant-garde," was nevertheless "thoroughly understandable owing to what might be called its Marx Brothers approach to reality."²⁹⁹ Peter Bellamy's favorable review of *Rhinoceros* revealed the critic's bias against what he believed to be the essentially depressive nature of absurdist theatre in general: "If others of his ilk had as delicious an imagination and mastery of the absurd as playwright Eugene Ionesco, the avant garde theater would have a much larger and appreciative audience. He has aimed at the brain and the ridiculous and hit both dead center."³⁰⁰ And while Bellamy applauded *Rhinoceros* for the intelligence of both the production and the play itself, praising Ionesco for his "musical ear for words," and proclaiming the show "a fine play for intelligent people," Arthur Spaeth condemned Ionesco as "affected, pretentious and what-a-clever-boy-am-I" in his review of Hill's production of *Bald Soprano*.³⁰¹ Spaeth preferred the American Albee to European Ionesco, but still dismissed Hill's double bill of *Bald Soprano*

²⁹⁸ Frederic McConnell to K. Elmo Lowe, May 30, 1961 (McConnell Papers, Box 2), 1. Regarding the opening production for the 1961-1962 season, McConnell observed, "I don't mean of course, that *Andersonville* is the only opener in the world – *Rhineoceros* [sic] could be another. – And the cast is not quite so tough."

²⁹⁹ "Satire *Rhino* Set to Open at Play House," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 4, 1962, H5.

³⁰⁰ Peter Bellamy, "Rhinoceros Pricks Man's Herd Instinct," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 8, 1962, 52.

³⁰¹ Arthur Spaeth, "Around Theatres: Play House Has Avant Garde up in *Soprano & Dream*," *The Sun*, December 12, 1962, B7.

and *American Dream* (which opened on December 12, 1963 for the holiday season) out of hand as theatrical fare fit only for “drama and lit majors ... the dilentante [*sic*] trade who go for the bizarre.”³⁰² Spaeth recognized the reason for Hill’s combination of the two plays: as cynical satires of suburban affluence, the dramas shared a thematic focus. Yet Spaeth felt the combination was a “gimmick” rather than a demonstration of a common problem in postwar Western society on both sides of the Atlantic. In his final evaluation, Spaeth pronounced the plays “very fey and intellectually pretentious in the intimacy of the Brooks theater these nights,” observing, “God help the misguided soul seeking light entertainment who strays into this house.”³⁰³

After this season, the Play House did not mount another Ionesco play during the decade, and more than four years passed before it produced another Albee play. However, the last of Hill’s four absurdist productions, Pinter’s *The Caretaker*, enjoyed a much more enthusiastic reception.

The Play House’s first Pinter production, *The Caretaker*, like the two Ionesco dramas which preceded it, had received its American premiere on Broadway. The production, which opened in October, 1961 at the Lyceum Theater, “won Pinter critical acclaim but little popular success” in New York, closing after 45 performances.³⁰⁴ The regional theatres scrambled to secure the rights to produce the play in 1962, but a national tour was launched first, starring Barry Morse, Patrick Horgan and John Rees.³⁰⁵ The Play House production, which opened March 27, 1963, preceded a summer, 1963 production at the Cincinnati Playhouse and the

³⁰² Arthur Spaeth, “Around Theatres: Play House Has Avant Garde up in *Soprano & Dream*,” *The Sun*, December 12, 1962, B7.

³⁰³ Arthur Spaeth, “Around Theatres: Play House Has Avant Garde up in *Soprano & Dream*,” *The Sun*, December 12, 1962, B7.

³⁰⁴ William Glover, “2 Playlets Provide Little Fire,” *Delaware County Daily Times*, November 27, 1962, 10.

³⁰⁵ “Calendar,” *Oakland Tribune*, November 18, 1962, EL8. In fact, the Actor’s Workshop had planned to produce the play in early 1962, but the rights were cancelled.

November, 1963 production by the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco, making it one of the earliest professional productions of play outside of Broadway.

Before *The Caretaker* opened, local newspapers enthusiastically recounted the play's international prestige, and its controversial nature – both of which seemed to contribute to excitement over the Play House's early production of the play. One journalist, whose article title, "Prize-Winning Play to Open at Drury," suggests that the play's status was reason enough to attend the production, eagerly announced that "audiences on both sides of the Atlantic have flocked to Pinter's plays and critics have acclaimed him one of the most exciting new writers of the decade."³⁰⁶ *The Jewish Review and Observer* stressed the play's controversial nature and observed that it was one of the most "talked-about modern plays by one of the best young playwrights."³⁰⁷ The *Southwest Press* reported upon the awards in London and New York which Pinter had received for the play. The *Jewish Independent* and *Southwest Press* both reprinted praise for the play from Henry Hewes at the *Saturday Review*, John Chapman at the *New York Daily News*, and John McCarten at the *New Yorker*.

Another point of excitement seemed to be the opportunity to see director Thomas Hill (one of the most popular leading men in the acting ensemble at the Play House) perform, as no fewer than ten reviewers noted that Hill would not only direct but also perform the role of Davies. Albert McFadden, in the role of Aston, and Charles Caron, in the role of Mick, rounded out Hill's cast. Paul Rodgers, the theatre's long-time scenic designer and painter, designed the set and the lighting.

³⁰⁶ "Prize-Winning Play to Open at Drury," n.d., n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³⁰⁷ "Cleveland Play House," *Jewish Review and Observer*, March 22, 1963, n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

The production provided a new twist on naturalist/realist conventions in the theatre, much as Richard Haber observed that Pinter's script constituted a "special kind of realism," to which Cleveland was unaccustomed.³⁰⁸ In his scenic design for the production, for example, Rodgers littered the attic tenement with all manner of junk – "a lawn mower, a step ladder, a gas stove without pipes, an unconnected kitchen sink, a vacuum cleaner, piles of paper, a couple beds and a statue of a Buddha – and – oh yes – a pail hanging from the ceiling to catch the dripping water from the leak in the roof."³⁰⁹ The room was, according to Glenn Pullen, grimy, cluttered, and designed "with a Hogarthian vividness."³¹⁰ Yet, in a clever perversion of naturalistic staging techniques – and a staging choice which seems to have been unique to the Play House's production, Rodgers confined the clutter of the tiny room to one small acting area of the large stage in the Play House's Drury theatre. In order to prepare Cleveland for the strange violation of familiar stage conventions, the *Jewish Review and Observer* explained, "Playgoers will be interested to know that the use of a limited acting space on the large Drury Theatre stage is a deliberate effort by Director Hill and designer Paul Rodgers to suggest not only the play's cramped physical surroundings but also the cramped minds of each of 'The Caretaker's' three characters."³¹¹

The acting also violated traditional conventions of staging – most remarkably, at the opening of the production. As the play begins, Pinter's stage directions describe a silent pantomime: Mick is alone in Aston's attic room. He stands, with "his back to the audience . . .

³⁰⁸ Richard Haber, "The Caretaker," March 29, 1963, 2. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³⁰⁹ Richard Haber, "The Caretaker," March 29, 1963, 2. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹⁰ Glenn C. Pullen, "Play House's Caretaker Witty Study of Human Absurdities," *Cleveland Record*, March 29, 1963, 5. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹¹ "Cleveland Play House," *Jewish Review and Observer*, March 22, 1963, n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

Silence. He slowly turns, looks about the room, looking at each object in turn. He looks up at the ceiling, and stares at the bucket. He crosses to L. bed, inspects paint bucket, sits on bed.”³¹² Hill, determined to make the most of Pinter’s pauses and silences, unnerved his Cleveland audience with this opening sequence, much as Clov’s silent preparations at the beginning of *Endgame*, punctuated only by sporadic laughter, affected the Workshop’s audience in 1959.

As Haber recounted, “When the curtain comes up, one character is on stage, Mick, the younger brother, sits alone contemplating that junk-filled room. There is complete silence which seems to last for minutes. He doesn’t say anything. Unusual? On stage yes. But off the stage – well, people alone don’t ordinarily talk to themselves. On the stage, however, we are used to certain conventions.”³¹³ A subsequent review from late in the production’s run reveals that Hill and his actors continued to tinker with this opening sequence to establish the unsettling atmosphere of the play. By the end of the run, Charles Caron’s no longer contemplated the junk surrounding him during his two-minute silence at the beginning of the play; instead, he contemplated the audience. As John Coyne reported in *The Carroll News*, the student newspaper of John Carroll University in Cleveland, “after the curtain opens for Act I, an actor sits on stage for about two minutes just staring at the audience.”³¹⁴

Through these unfamiliar conventions, and despite a slight plot that Pullen compared to “a series of fascinating character vignettes rather than a play,” Pinter’s characters emerged with tragicomic appeal.³¹⁵ Glenn Pullen opined that the “excellent performances” of Hill, McFadden and Caron compensated for the play’s lack of plot, and Arthur Spaeth, who had attacked

³¹² Harold Pinter, *The Caretaker* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1963), 5.

³¹³ Richard Haber, “*The Caretaker*,” March 29, 1963, 2. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹⁴ John Coyne, “Playhouse’s *Caretaker* presents unusual tale,” *The Carroll News*, April, 1963, n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Playhouse Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹⁵ Glenn C. Pullen, “Play House’s *Caretaker* Witty Study of Human Absurdities,” *Cleveland Record*, March 29, 1963, 5. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

Ionesco's characters as nothing more than abstract philosophical straw men, found Pinter's characters became "comically, tragically human in the manner of their writing and complementary rapport of the actors portraying [*sic*] them."³¹⁶ Haber agreed, noting that, "whatever else they are, these are real human beings who are being portrayed on the Play house stage – not coldly observed from a distance, but from the inside."³¹⁷ In fact, Haber attributed the success of Pinter's play to its characters and situation. Both, he explained, were more familiar and recognizable to an audience long used to the naturalist and realist tradition in the theatre than the abstractions of Ionesco and Albee:

The Play House this season has given us the chance to sample the work of several of the new playwrights – the playwrights who are sometimes grouped loosely under the label 'The Theatre of the Absurd'. There was Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, then a double bill of *The American Dream* by Edward Albee and Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* – and now there is *The Caretaker* by the young English playwright, Harold Pinter.

All these plays differed from the conventional theatre piece – but also each differed from the other. In *The American Dream* some familiar, distorted family relationships were projected through flat, cardboard thin, cartoon characters and the result was savage social criticism. In *Rhinoceros* the characters were human enough, but they were put into a patently absurd situation – human beings transforming themselves into rhinoceroses in a wild desire to conform – a highly effective metaphor of the human condition today. Now, in *The Caretaker* we are given fully human characters in a human situation.³¹⁸

The humanity, which Cleveland critics unanimously attributed to Pinter's characters, seems the key to the play's success. Like other absurdist playwrights, Pinter "gives us the raw material – he shows us the encounters but he does not explain them."³¹⁹ But unlike earlier productions of Ionesco and Albee, Pinter's play effectively provoked critical intellectual

³¹⁶ Arthur Spaeth, "The Caretaker is Provocative Play, Reflects Pinter's Powers," *Heights Sun Press*, March 28, 1963, n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹⁷ Richard Haber, "The Caretaker," March 29, 1963, 3. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹⁸ Richard Haber, "The Caretaker," March 29, 1963, 1. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³¹⁹ Richard Haber, "The Caretaker," March 29, 1963, 3. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

engagement with the play and its message for the world, without inciting accusations of pretension. In part, the critics' engagement with the intellectual issues contained in the play was produced by familiarity with the playwright and the theories behind his dramaturgy. One local critic drew upon a speech Pinter had given to prepare audiences for the playwright's hallmark pauses and silences: "Pinter rejects any suggestion that his play is about failure of communication, which he calls, 'that tired, grimy phrase.' In a speech made at Bristol, England, he said, 'I think that we communicate only too well in our silence, in what is unsaid, in that what takes place is continual evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves.'"³²⁰ Spaeth, who had pitied the "misguided soul seeking light entertainment" that had stumbled into the auditorium for *The Bald Soprano*, reported a quite different experience at *The Caretaker*. At the close of the play, he wrote, Pinter sent his audience "into the night wondering. Is playwright concerned with selfish man's inability to communicate with his fellowman [*sic*] and escape his eternal loneliness? Or is there a geo-political significance and are these the human symbols of power nations unable to find a common ground and letting selfish interest force them into isolated belligerence toward mutual destruction? Or did he have some other psychological axe to grind – or none at all?"³²¹

Yet despite the positive influence of local critical acclaim, and the excellence of the production itself, the production did not sell out – at least, not on April 3rd, when "Breakfast Commentator" columnist Wes Lawrence attended the production. In his "Commentator" column of April 10, 1963, Lawrence reflected, "I wonder often that Clevelanders do not have to stand in line for tickets to their Play House, where many plays that have captivated standing-room

³²⁰ "Prize-Winning Play to Open at Drury," n.d., n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³²¹ Arthur Spaeth, "The Caretaker is Provocative Play, Reflects Pinter's Powers," *Heights Sun Press*, March 28, 1963, n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

audiences on Broadway are performed with as much professional skill as is displayed by all but the very top actors in New York.”³²² Lawrence’s observation encapsulates the dilemma which lay before Lowe in the 1960s: the Play House was once again offering Cleveland the opportunity to see a serious, artistic drama produced with integrity by professionals of high caliber. And yet the houses were not packed.

This was not the case with every production of second wave dramas which the Play House produced. In fact, in October, 1964, the Play House opened its 1964-1965 season with a production of Brecht’s *Galileo*. The opening night performance sold out, making *Galileo* the first Play House season opener to sell out since 1958.³²³ Yet a poll in 1968 revealed that for the most part Cleveland’s audiences were not interested in the absurd, the epic, the theatre of menace, and other genres of European second-stage modernism. Peter Bellamy published an account of the poll and its early results, observing that “those who are always complaining, sometimes in print, that the Play House should put on more experimental and off-Broadway shows get their come-uppance on the basis of a poll recently taken among the theater’s patrons.”³²⁴ The theatre had sent a list of 75 plays to its 6,000 subscribers and the 20,000 members of its mailing list, requesting that Cleveland choose the plays they would most like to see. “Although all of the returns are not yet in,” Bellamy wrote in April, “thus far the experimental, off-Broadway and existentialist plays are practically out of the running. This does not mean that the Play House will

³²² Wes Lawrence, “Breakfast Commentator,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 10, 1963, n.p. Scrapbook 104. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³²³ “The performance was a sell-out, the first capacity audience a Play House opening has had in six years.” From Peter Bellamy, “Exciting *Galileo* Opens Play House Season,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 22, 1964, 52. Scrapbook 106. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³²⁴ Peter Bellamy, “Critical come-uppance,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 14, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

not produce such plays. It is simply that there is little demand for them.”³²⁵ At the top of the list was Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. First produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1966, the Royal National Theatre had brought Stoppard’s play to Broadway in October, 1967, where it was still running in 1968. The fact that Stoppard’s play had also nominated for eight Tony Awards probably also enhanced curiosity about it in Cleveland.

Other plays in the top ten requests were Miller’s *After the Fall* and *The Crucible*, Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, O’Neill’s *The Iceman Cometh*, and even Shaw’s *Man and Superman*. Peter Weiss’ *Marat/Sade* was in thirteenth place on the list, and Pinter’s *The Birthday Party*, which the Play House mounted the following season to great critical acclaim, was fifteenth on the list. “A vote for a play does not mean, obviously, that it’s a good play or a bad play,” Lowe explained, adding, “It means in many cases that a lot of people have heard about it and want to see it and make their own decision, as in the case of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*.”³²⁶ Yet Weiss’ play had premiered in London in 1964 and Broadway in 1965, earned a Tony Award for Best Play and Best Director (Peter Brook), and the Brook/Mitchell film adaptation had just been released in 1967; it seems unlikely that Lowe’s audience had not “heard about” the drama. Similarly, the Actor’s Workshop had premiered Pinter’s *A Birthday Party* in 1960. Since then, it had been produced by Center Stage in Baltimore, the Theatre Company of Boston, the Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, and the Trinity Square Repertory Company in Providence, Rhode Island.

The poll, rather than revealing Lowe’s subscribers’ ignorance of the second-wave dramas, seems instead to reflect the tastes of the theatre’s subscriber base, which continued, generally, to prefer the naturalist and realist plays which the Cleveland Play House had first

³²⁵ Peter Bellamy, “Critical come-uppance,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 14, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³²⁶ Peter Bellamy, “Critical come-uppance,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 14, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

helped to introduce to America in the 1920s. By contrast, a small but vocal minority continued to cry for the theatre to produce more of the second-wave modernist dramas. Just eleven days after Bellamy reported the early results of the Play House audience poll in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The Sun* published an editorial-cum-review of *Waiting for Godot* by Henry Volk, entitled, “We Want More Such Plays.”

On Sunday, April 21, 1968, Volk had attended the Play House’s production of Beckett’s canonical play, directed by Stuart Vaughan. Vaughan, who had been actively directing in the regional theatres in the 1960s, had made a career of directing Shakespeare and the plays of the first wave of European modernism, particularly Shaw, rather than the dramas of the second wave. For example, at the Seattle Repertory Theatre he directed *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *The Lady’s Not for Burning*, *Man and Superman*, *Twelfth Night*, *Heartbreak House*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Julius Caesar* between 1963 and 1965. In 1968, Vaughan was the head of the Repertory Theatre of New Orleans, where he directed *Charley’s Aunt*, *Our Town*, *The Rivals*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Saint Joan* and *Arms and the Man* between 1966 and 1969.

The production, the first professional production of the play to be staged in Cleveland, starred Richard Oberlin and Jonathan Bolt as the two tramps, in costumes that suggested a rather more lighthearted version of the original Paris production (under his suitcoat, a slightly stout Oberlin sported a knit shirt in a stereotypically French fisherman’s stripe; his unshaven appearance cartoonishly blotted on with makeup. Paul Rodgers’ set also introduced a new element into Beckett’s play, which similarly undercut the bleakness of Beckett’s drama: Rodgers

added a city skyline on the backdrop at the back of the stage, reducing the sense of isolation inherent in Beckett's drama.³²⁷

After the April 21st performance, Volk stayed for the Play House's symposium on the play. The Play House had been offering such symposia about twice annually over the last three years, during which time they had attracted a large and enthusiastic following. As a critic at *The Sun* reported, "these discussions (and the S.R.O. sign that usually goes out) have become legendary."³²⁸ In his review of the production and symposium, Volk admitted that he was one of those nameless people whom Bellamy had cited for "always complaining, sometimes in print, that the Play House should put on more experimental . . . shows." Recently, Volk revealed, he had written an editorial "belaboring The Play House for neglecting its role of producing new and exciting theatre and going commercial with Broadway comedies that were sure-fire at the box office."³²⁹ While a single production did not constitute a revolution, Volk praised *Godot* as "one of the finest productions The Play House has put on in a decade. Richard Oberlin, Jonathan Bolt, Mario Siletti, and David Shell gave guest director Stuart Vaughan everything he could wish in a tragicomedy performance of a play that each member of the audience must interpret for himself."

Furthermore, Volk argued, that the Play House's "sad yet laughing full house . . . gave evidence that Clevelanders do want plays that create excitement in the mind. More than two-thirds of the audience stayed for the symposium to check their thoughts against those of a three-member panel of analysts." The analysts were Dr. Herbert J. Weiss, the head of the department of psychiatry of Mt. Sinai Hospital; Professor Michael Birtwistle, head of the drama department

³²⁷ Peter Bellamy, "Non-Play needs a Fuse," April 20, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³²⁸ "Play House Sets Symposium on *Waiting for Godot* April 21," *The Sun*, April 18, 1968, B-6. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³²⁹ Harry Volk, "We Want More Such Plays," *The Sun*, April 25, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

at Case Western Reserve University; and Vaughan, who, since his dismissal from the Seattle Repertory Theatre, had been directing with the Phoenix Theatre in New York. The play, Volk wrote, was “superb,” and the symposium afterward was “excellent.” But most importantly, Volk averred, “the audience, in its questions, clearly indicated that it had become deeply involved in the play as Beckett intended. The whole evening was a ‘happening’ of which The Play House could be proud. May we have more this coming season?”³³⁰

Clearly, there was an audience in Cleveland for the serious, the artistic dramas of the second wave of modernism. Just as clearly, it did not constitute a majority of the Play House’s subscriber base. In fact, Bellamy and Tony Mastroianni, critics for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Cleveland Press*, both panned the play for being too avant-garde and enigmatic. Despite the fact that Beckett’s drama was by this point sixteen years old, and despite exposure to other plays of the second-wave (Bellamy compared David Snell’s performance in the role of Lucky to “an idiot out of *The Marat-Sade Show*”), both compared Beckett’s play to a “happening” and expressed concern that Cleveland might not be “ready” for the play.³³¹ Mastroianni accused Beckett of “nihilism,” and stated that he had given up trying to find meaning in the “exasperating” play, which he had seen staged by the amateur theatre company at the Karamu five years earlier.³³² Bellamy, assuming a curiously defeatist attitude, suggested that perhaps the majority of the Play House’s audience was simply too old for the production: “It is probable that young people will get a larger charge out of *Waiting for Godot* than older people. The former can

³³⁰ Harry Volk, “We Want More Such Plays,” *The Sun*, April 25, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³³¹ Peter Bellamy, “Non-Play needs a Fuse,” April 20, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³³² Tony Mastroianni, “*Godot* is Still an Enigma,” *Cleveland Press*, April 29, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

inject into it their rightful impatience with the world as it is, quite obvious that their complaints go back to the dawn of man.”³³³

Both critics, however, praised the production (if not the play), and – as with the production of *Mother Courage* in 1958 – both recognized the importance accorded Beckett in the Western canon. “Regardless of one’s reaction to Samuel Beckett’s controversial and influential play, *Waiting for Godot*, there is no doubt its direction and performance at the Play House Drury Theater are brilliant,” Bellamy wrote.³³⁴ And despite his dislike for the play, Mastroianni observed that, “In putting on *Waiting for Godot* the Play House is fulfilling an important function of the resident theater, the function of offering the unusual, of leading popular taste rather than always following it.”³³⁵ The fact that Mastroianni considered the production of a sixteen-year-old play a groundbreaking event that could establish the Play House as a leader, rather than follower, of popular taste suggests how conservative some elements of the Play House audience had become.

In 1964, in *The Impossible Theatre*, Herbert Blau, inspired by a feature on the Play House in a recent issue of *Theatre Arts*, held up McConnell and his theatre as an example of those “brave and visionary voices” who championed not only the decentralized theatre in America, but a theatre of artistic integrity:

The truth is that there was never a more completely amateur theater than the Cleveland Playhouse [*sic*] unless it was the Moscow Art Theater. There were never actors more entirely amateur in their approach than the Clevelanders, however professional their training. Frederick McConnell, the director, has had not one but dozens of offers for work in the New York trade theater. So far, he has scorned them. But if he ever should produce

³³³ Peter Bellamy, “Non-Play needs a Fuse,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 20, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³³⁴ Peter Bellamy, “Non-Play needs a Fuse,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 20, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

³³⁵ Tony Mastroianni, “*Godot* is Still an Enigma,” *Cleveland Press*, April 29, 1968, n.p. Scrapbook 111. Cleveland Play House Archives, Case Western Reserve University.

for Al Woods with Jed Harris as stage manager, he would still be an amateur. And to know what that means is to study and understand the record of the Cleveland Playhouse from its first days in a packing box, and also to know that some day we will again divide the theater not into professional and amateur but into amateur and trade.³³⁶

In the 1950s, in response to the increasing pressure of the theatre trade, McConnell's response was to renew his theatre's commitment to the production of quality non-commercial dramas which Cleveland audiences might not otherwise have a chance to see. The experimental foray began with a production of *Mother Courage* in 1958. While the production was not the American premiere of the play, it seems to have been only the second production of the play in the country. Often throughout the 1960s, the Play House was among the first resident theatres to mount productions of the second-wave dramas, though it never secured an American premiere. The Play House mounted early productions of Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and Pinter's *The Caretaker* after their Broadway premieres. The theatre's production of Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists* during its 1964-1965 season also came right on the heels of the Grove Press' publication of the play (in translation by James Kirkup) in 1964. Despite the fact that a majority of its audience resisted the second-wave dramas, an audience that critics presumed was "not ready" for *Godot* in 1968, the Play House maintained a steady commitment to the dramas of the second-wave throughout the 1960s, mounting thirteen European second-wave dramas in as many years between 1958 and 1971.

³³⁶ Blau, *The Impossible Theater*, 57.

Conclusion: New York City

In the third volume of *The Cambridge History of American Theatre: Post-World War II to the 1990s*, Martha LoMonaco provides a chapter on “Regional/Resident Theatre.”³³⁷ This is the only chapter (of twelve) which addresses theatrical activities outside of New York City in this period. In her two paragraphs on the Actor’s Workshop LoMonaco asserts that San Francisco, which was “as far Off-Broadway as possible,” was culturally underdeveloped in the 1950s.³³⁸ Its citizens, lacking the sophisticated tastes and critical judgments of people in New York City, were ill-equipped to appreciate the intellectually challenging repertoire of avant-garde drama that the Workshop produced. For supporting evidence, LoMonaco turns to Joseph Zeigler’s *Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage* (1973), a study which also presupposes a strict line of demarcation that separates the regional theatres from the theatres and theatrical activity of New York City. LoMonaco quotes Zeigler’s assertion that the Workshop maintained a “hate affair” with San Francisco. “Ironically,” she writes, the Workshop “was well respected everywhere except at home.”³³⁹

Zeigler’s assessment, however, is a gross overstatement, one which ignores the long runs and critical praise for various Workshop productions such as *Waiting for Godot*, *The Birthday Party*, and *Galileo*. LoMonaco’s observation that the Workshop was respected everywhere *but* San Francisco is simply not borne out by history. These reductive statements by LoMonaco and Ziegler are part of a well-established narrative of American theatre history, one which is organized by a binary opposition between New York City and the rest of the country.

³³⁷ Martha LoMonaco, “Regional/Resident Theatre” in *Post World War II to the 1990s* ed. Don B. Wilmet and Christopher Bigsby, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of the American Theatre* ed. Don B. Wilmet and Christopher Bigsby (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 224-246.

³³⁸ LoMonaco, 233.

³³⁹ LoMonaco, 234.

Unfortunately, LoMonaco depends upon this misleading narrative in order to explain the supposed failures and demise of the Workshop. But this dichotomy, which isolates the theatrical activities of New York City from those of the rest of the country, establishes a false narrative about the arrival and spread of second-wave European drama in the United States.

The spread and acceptance of the second-wave European modernist dramas in the United States occurred in both the regional theatres and New York City. Many of these dramas were given their first productions in regional theatres around the country. The Actor's Workshop in San Francisco produced the American premieres of Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children* (1956), Whiting's *Saint's Day* (1960), Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1960; the first American production of any Pinter play), and Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* (1961). The Theatre Company of Boston premiered Arden's *Live Like Pigs* (1964), *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* (1966) and *Left-Handed Liberty* (1967), Sartre's *The Devil and the Good Lord*, and Pinter's *The Dwarfs* (1967). In Seattle, Washington, A Contemporary Theatre premiered Mrozek's *Strip Tease* (1967). In Baltimore, Center Stage premiered Pinter's *The Room* and five of his *Sketches* in the 1963-1963 season.

While I have focused my study on the question of how and why so many of the dramas of the second wave of European modernism were first produced by the regional theatres outside of New York, it is important to recognize that the regional theatres were not the only agents introducing these plays to the United States. The regional theatres were influenced by the contributions of the work of a few key directors like Schneider, Blau, Wheeler and Murray, who committed their careers to directing these plays; the work of critics and literary scholars like Bentley and Esslin, whose reviews and academic articles helped to introduce and explain the new drama; the rapid translation of these plays into the English language by such translators as

Frechtman and Allen; the emergence of academic journals like *The Tulane Drama Review*, devoted to the subject of theatre and drama; the commitment of key publishers like the Grove Press and Hill and Wang to producing English-language translations of these plays and books of scholarship on them; and the expansion of theatre programs (particularly at the graduate level) in the American universities. In addition to the contributions made by publishers, critics, and the universities, the New York theatres like Cherry Lane Theatre and the Tempo Playhouse, directors like Alan Schneider and producers like Richard Barr and David Merrick also contributed to the introduction of the second-wave drama to the United States.

The Cherry Lane Theatre, founded in 1924 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and several alumni of the Provincetown Players, was particularly active in producing the dramas of the second wave in New York during the 1950s and 1960s. Beginning in 1957 with its production of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* (the American premiere), the theatre mounted Beckett's *Happy Days* (1961, the world premiere), Genet's *Deathwatch* (1962), Ionesco's *The Killer* (1962), Pinter's *The Collection* and *The Dumb Waiter* (1962, both American premieres), a revival of *Endgame* (1962), Beckett's *Play* (1964, the American premiere), Pinter's *The Lover* (1964, the American premiere), *Krapp's Last Tape* (1965), a second production of *Happy Days* (1965) and Edward Bond's *Saved* (1968). With two exceptions (Genet and Ionesco in 1962), Alan Schneider directed all of these plays. Perhaps the single American director most associated with the production of Beckett's works, Schneider also directed the American premiere of *Krapp's Last Tape* in 1960, at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York. Cherry Lane was also an early home for Edward Albee's plays, producing *The American Dream* in 1961, 1962 and 1963; *Zoo Story* in 1962 and 1963; and *Life and Death* in 1966.

These productions of second-wave dramas at Cherry Lane were produced by Richard Barr – who, with Clinton Wilder and Edward Albee, committed to “mad” programs of second-wave dramas in the 1960s in New York.³⁴⁰ Barr had a history of directing and producing the plays of the absurd. He directed the first American production of Ionesco’s *The Killer* at the Seven Arts Theatre, which opened on March 22, 1960. He and Wilder hired Alan Schneider to direct the premiere of Albee’s *The American Dream* at the York Playhouse in January, 1961. In October, 1960, Barr directed a triple bill of short plays: Beckett’s *Embers*, Harry Tierney Jr.’s *Nekros* and Albee’s *Fam and Yam* at the Theatre de Lys for the Matinee Series of the Greater New York chapter of the ANTA. In addition to his commitment to the dramas of the second-wave of modernism (both European and American) at Cherry Lane, Barr and Wilder also produced the premiere production of Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, directed by Alan Schneider, which opened on October 15, 1962 at the Billy Rose Theatre.

Other New York theatres also helped to introduce the second-wave dramas to American audiences, and even occasionally mounted the American premieres of these plays. On October 31, 1955, the Tempo Playhouse opened Derek Prouse’s and Dominique Clayel’s adaptation of Ionesco’s *Amédée*, directed by Earl Sennett. On April 2, 1958, *Fools are Passing Through*, an inexplicably retitled adaptation of Dürrenmatt’s *The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* by Maximilian Slater (who also directed the production) opened in the Jan Hus Auditorium. In June, the American premieres of Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* and *Jack, or The Submission* opened at the Sullivan Street Theatre, directed by David Brooks. In 1960, Jose Quintero directed the American premiere of Genet’s *The Balcony* at Circle-in-the-Square. In 1961, Joseph Anthony directed the American premiere of Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros* at the Longacre Theatre, and Gene Frankel directed

³⁴⁰ David Crespy, *Richard Barr: The Playwright’s Producer* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 108.

the American premiere of Genet's *The Blacks* at St. Mark's Playhouse. Almost without exception, these premieres occurred in the theatres of Off-Broadway, which served as a kind of regional theatre movement within New York City itself.

By the late 1950s, however, even commercial Broadway producers like David Merrick contributed to the introduction of second-wave dramas to the United States by importing a number of English productions of second-wave dramas. On October 1, 1957, the English Stage Company's production of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, directed by Tony Richardson, opened at the Lyceum Theatre. English productions of five second-wave dramas were brought to Broadway in 1958. On January 9, Richardson's productions of Ionesco's *The Lesson* and *The Chairs* (in translations by Donald Watson) opened at the Phoenix theatre. On February 12, Richardson's production of Osborne's *The Entertainer*, starring Olivier, opened at the Royale. On November 4, William Gaskill's production of Osborne and Creighton's *Epitaph for George Dillon* opened at the John Golden theatre. On October 4, 1961, Donald McWhinnie's production of Pinter's *Caretaker* opened at the Lyceum, and on January 5, 1967, the Royal Shakespeare Company brought their production of Pinter's *The Homecoming*, directed by Peter Hall, to the Music Box. Each of these seven bills (comprising eight plays in total) constituted an American premiere – though none were American productions, each offered American audiences their first opportunity to see these plays performed in the United States. In addition, the premiere English-language production of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* (in an adaptation by Maurice Valency) was a collaborative Anglo-American affair. The play, which opened at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York on May 5, 1958, was produced by a trio of Americans (Robert Whitehead, Roger Stevens and Robert Dowling). It featured a mixed cast of American and English actors, starred the Lunts, and was staged by the British director Peter Brook. Brook also directed the

American premiere of Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists* (in James Kirkup's translation), which opened at the Martin Beck Theatre on October 13, 1964.

The arrival of Blau and Irving from San Francisco also contributed to the introduction of the second-wave dramas in New York. Blau and Irving's arrival also demonstrated the fallacy of the conception of New York and the regional theatres as two disparate worlds – despite the fact that the directors themselves repeated it. In their letter dated February 2, 1965, the directors had announced to the Workshop's subscribers their plan to depart for New York. In it, they assured the subscribers that, despite their relocation to the heart of America's commercial theatre, “ideologically we shall remain as we always have been, three thousand miles from Broadway and what it represents.”³⁴¹ Yet the arrival – or rather, the return – of the two native New Yorkers, demonstrated that the introduction of second-wave dramas to the United States was a mission in which New York united with the regional theatres, especially by the 1960s. As Stanley Kauffman reflected at the end of the directors' first season at Lincoln Center, Irving and Blau had not abandoned their San Franciscan theatre so much as transposed it to New York, blurring the demarcation between New York and regional theatre:

The work of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater, in its first season under Herbert Blau and Jules Irving, is related to the subject of resident theaters as discussed here recently. (Technically the Lincoln Center company is also a resident theater, but here I use the term in the usual way – to mean a theater outside New York.) ... Messrs. Blau and Irving came here after 13 years' experience, bringing with them from San Francisco more than a dozen actors who had worked with them for varying periods, a designer, and a composer. ... In short, the Actor's Workshop has in essence been moved to New York . . . Their principles and aims have not been compromised.³⁴²

Indeed, the repertoire at Lincoln Center during that first year is an expression of the Workshop's commitment to the plays of the second-wave. All four plays that were mounted were European

³⁴¹ The letter, dated February 2, 1965, is quoted in Zeigler, 151-2.

³⁴² Stanley Kauffman, “Blau and Irving – Some Inescapable Truths,” *The New York Times*, April 17, 1966, 119.

works, a repertoire which reflected the Workshop's identity rather than that of Lincoln Center, which was intended to become the national center of American theatre. Two of the plays were classics of the repertoire: Georg Büchner's *Danton's Death* (adapted and directed by Blau, this production opened the season on October 21, 1965) and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (a revival of Symond's 1957 production at the Workshop). The other two were premiere performances of second-wave European modernist plays. Blau's production of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Condemned of Altona* (adapted by Justin O'Brien), which opened on February 3, 1966, was the American premiere of Sartre's 1959 play. Irving's production of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (in translation by Eric Bentley), which opened on March 24, 1966, was the first production of the play ever staged in New York.

Before the second season was half over, Blau resigned as co-director of the theatre. Irving remained, with other members of the Workshop ensemble. To this day, the reasons for Blau's abrupt departure remain debatable. In his letter of resignation to Robert L. Hoguet, Jr., president of the Repertory Theatre, Blau simply stated that the "climate is no longer right for me to do what I came to do in the form I had in mind."³⁴³ Blau went on to found KRAKEN, an experimental theatre troupe that maintained the collaborative "workshop" approach to development and production. It would seem, then, that the restrictions imposed upon Blau by the institutional nature of Lincoln Center (rather than negative reviews of his productions) were the catalyst that provoked his departure. Whatever the case, Irving was forced to strike a compromise in the theatre's repertoire, one that balanced the Workshop's mission with the expectation that Lincoln Center would emerge as the national center of American drama. Still, Irving persisted in his commitment to the second-wave European dramas. For example, in 1967

³⁴³ Milton Esterow, "Herbert Blau Quits Lincoln Repertory," *The New York Times*, January 14, 1967, 1.

the Lincoln Center produced *Galileo* in 1967, despite the loss of Blau, who had been assigned to direct the production. The 1970-1971 season included Brecht's *Good Woman of Setzuan* (using Ralph Manheim's translation), and three American premieres of second-wave European dramas: Pinter's *Landscape* and *Silence* (directed by Peter Gill, who had directed the world premiere of both plays at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1969), and Dürrenmatt's *Play Strindberg* (translated by James Kirkup). The highlight of the 1972-1973 season was a festival of four short Beckett plays, directed by Alan Schneider.

It should be clear, therefore, that between 1950 and 1970 modernist drama from Europe was quickly taken up by theatres and audiences throughout the United States. The arrival of the second wave of European modernist drama challenges the diametric opposition of New York and the regional resident theatre which organizes the standard narrative of American theatre history at midcentury. The second wave of European modernism arrived impressively across the United States in the 1950s, as regional theatres outside of New York mounted many of the first American productions of these plays, and later settled in New York, which, despite the impressive expansion of the regional theatre movement in the 1960s, remained the theatre capital of the nation. In contrast to the arrival of the first wave of European modernist drama, which occurred almost exclusively in New York City, the professional staging and acceptance of the second-European drama was a national development, one that counters the false narrative that still organizes the writing of American theatre history.

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Appendix A: Premiere productions and publications of second-wave dramas in Europe and the United States

This catalogue identifies premieres and early productions of second-wave European dramas in Europe and the United States. In the United States, these premieres include those professional productions mounted by key resident theatre companies, but will not include university productions.

Guide to Abbreviations:

dir. = director

trans. = translator

adapt. = adaptation

perfs. = performances

pub. = publisher

NYC = New York City

1947

April 19, 1947: *Les Bonnes (The Maids)* by Jean Genet; premiere at the Théâtre de l'Athénée (Paris); Louis Jouvet, dir.

May, 1947: *Les Bonnes (The Maids)* by Genet; published by Marc Barbezat's L'Arbalète (Décines).

July 31, 1947: *Life of Galileo* by Bertolt Brecht; Charles Laughton, trans. & adapt.; English-language premiere at Coronet Theatre, Los Angeles; Joseph Losey, dir.

December 7, 1947: *Life of Galileo* transfers to the Maxine Elliott Theatre on Broadway.

1948

University of Minnesota Press, pub.; *Parables for the Theatre* by Bertolt Brecht; Eric Bentley, trans.; volume includes *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

May 4, 1948: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Brecht; Eric Bentley, trans.; English-language premiere by the Nourse Little Theatre (Northfield, Minnesota).

June 5, 1948: *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti (Mr. Puntila and his Man)* by Brecht; premiere at the Schauspielhaus (Zürich); Kurt Hirschfeld & Brecht, dirs.

1949

Haute Surveillance (Deathwatch) by Genet; Gallimard (Paris), pub. Genet revises the text extensively during rehearsals for the play's premiere; Bernard Frechtman's subsequent translation is based on Genet's acting script rather than this edition.

January, 1949: Berliner Ensemble created by Brecht and Helene Weigel at the Deutsches Theater in East Berlin.

January 11, 1949: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder (Mother Courage and her Children)* by Brecht; premiere at Deutsches Theater (Berlin); Brecht & Engel, dirs.

February 26, 1949: *Haute Surveillance (Deathwatch)* by Genet; premiere at Théâtre des Maturins (Paris); Genet & Jean Marchat, dirs.

1950

May 11, 1950: *La Cantatrice Chauve (The Bald Soprano)* by Eugène Ionesco; premiere at Théâtre des Noctambules (Paris); Nicholas Bataille, dir.

1951

February 20, 1951: *La Leçon (The Lesson)* by Ionesco; premiere at Théâtre de Poche (Paris); Marcel Cuvelier, dir.

October, 1951: sale of Genet's books is legally prohibited in the United States.

1952

Benziger (Zürich), pub; ***Der Richter und sein Henker, Der Verdacht (The Judge and his Hangman, The Suspicion)*** by Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi (The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi) by Friedrich Dürrenmatt; Oprecht (Zürich), pub.

February 17, 1952: *En attendant Godot (Waiting for Godot)* by Samuel Beckett (abridged); premiere in the studio at Club d'Essay de la Radio (Paris); the performance is recorded and broadcast on the radio.

April 22, 1952: *Les Chaises (The Chairs)* by Ionesco; premiere at Théâtre Lancry (Paris); Sylvain Dhomme, dir.

October, 1952: *En attendant Godot (Waiting for Godot)* by Beckett; Les Éditions de Minuit (Paris), pub.

1953

Wir warten auf Godot (Waiting for Godot) by Beckett; Elmar Tophoven, trans.; Suhrkamp Verlag (Frankfurt), pub.

Watt by Beckett; Olympia Press (Paris), pub.

January 5, 1953: *En attendant Godot (Waiting for Godot)* by Beckett; premiere at Théâtre de Babylone (Paris); Roger Blin, dir.

September 8, 1953: *Warten auf Godot (Waiting for Godot)* by Beckett; German-language premiere at Schlosspark State Theater (West Berlin); Karl Heinz Stroux, dir.

November 29, 1953: *Man wartet auf Godot (Waiting for Godot)*; performed by inmates at Reimscheid Prison (Lüttringhausen).

1954

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *The Maids*, and, *Deathwatch* by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.

The Judge and his Hangman by Dürrenmatt; Jonathan Cape (London), pub.

The Judge and his Hangman by Dürrenmatt; Cyrus Brooks, trans.; Jenkins (London), pub.

Waiting for Godot by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

April 14, 1954: *Amédée, ou Comment s'en débarrasser (Amedee, or How to Get Rid of It)* by Ionesco; premiere at Théâtre de Babylone (Paris); Jean-Marie Serreau, dir.

October 7, 1954: *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis (The Caucasian Chalk Circle)* by Brecht; premiere at Theater am Schiffbauerdamm (Berlin); Brecht, dir.

1955

End of the Game (The Judge and his Hangman) by Dürrenmatt; Therese Pol, trans.; Warner Books (NYC), pub.

International Federation for Theatre Research in Europe (IFTR) founded

Molloy by Beckett; Patrick Bowles and Beckett, trans.; Grove Press (New York), pub.

The Judge and his Hangman by Dürrenmatt; Therese Pol, trans.; Harper (New York), pub.

March 9, 1955: *The Lesson* by Ionesco; English-language premiere at Arts Theatre Club (London); Peter Hall, dir.

May 6, 1955: *The Maids* by Genet; American premiere at Tempo Playhouse (NYC); Strowan Robertson, dir.

August 3, 1955: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; English-language premiere at Arts Theatre (London); later transferred to Criterion Theatre.

October, 1955: *Jacques ou la soumission (Jack, or The Submission)* by Ionesco; premiere at Théâtre de la Huchette (Paris).

October 31, 1955: *Amedee* by Ionesco; Derek Prouse and Dominique Clauyel, trans. & adapt.; American premiere at Tempo Playhouse (NYC); Earl Sennett, dir.

1956

Der Besuch der alten Dame : eine tragische Komödie, mit einem Nachwort (The Visit of the Old Lady: A Tragic Comedy, with an Epilogue) by Dürrenmatt; Arche (Zürich), pub.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Eugène Ionesco: Four Plays* by Ionesco; Donald Allen, trans.; volume includes *The Bald Soprano*, *The Lesson*, *The Chairs*, and *Jack, or The Submission*.

La visite de la vieille dame (The Visit of the Old Woman) by Dürrenmatt; Jean-Pierre Porret, trans.; Flammarion (Paris), pub.

The Visit: A Tragi-comedy by Dürrenmatt; Patrick Bowles, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

Waiting for Godot by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; Faber and Faber (London), pub. This edition is notorious for errata and unauthorized changes, some the result of censorship exercised by the Lord Chamberlain's Office.

January 3, 1956: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; American at Coconut Grove Playhouse (Miami); Alan Schneider, dir.

January 29, 1956: *Der Besuche der Alten Dame (The Visit)* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt; premiere at Schauspielhaus (Zürich); Oskar Wälterlin, dir.

April 19, 1956: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; John Golden Theatre (NYC); Herbert Berghof, dir.

June 5, 1956: *The Maids* by Genet; English-language premiere at New Lindsey Theatre Club (London); Peter Zadek, dir.

June, 1956: L'Arbalète press publishes Jean Genet's *Le Balcon (The Balcony)* in Décines, Isère, France.

November 6, 1956: *The Bald Soprano* by Ionesco; English-language premiere at Arts Theatre Club (London); Peter Wood, dir.

1957

Conversation at Night with a Despised Character: A Curriculum for our Times by Dürrenmatt; Robert David Macdonald, trans.; The Dramatic Publishing Company (Woodstock, IL), pub.

Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi (The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi) by Dürrenmatt; Arche (Zürich), pub.

Fin de Partie suivi Acte sans paroles (Endgame and Act Without Words) by Beckett; Les Éditions de Minuit (Paris), pub.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Parables for the Theatre* by Brecht; Bentley, trans.; volume contains *Good Woman of Setzuan* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Paperback reprint of 1948 edition.

January 13, 1957: *All That Fall* by Beckett; premiere on BBC Radio, Third Programme.

April 3, 1957: *Fin de Partie (Endgame)* and *Acte Sans Paroles (Act Without Words)* by Beckett; premiere (in French) at Royal Court Theatre (London); Roger Blin, dir., *Fin de Partie*; Deryk Mendel dir., *Acte sans Paroles*.

April 22, 1957: *The Balcony* by Genet; premiere at Arts Theatre Club (London); Peter Zadek, dir.

May 14, 1957: *The Chairs* by Ionesco, English-language premiere by the English Stage Company at Royal Court Theatre (London); Tony Richardson, dir.

May 15, 1957: *The Room* by Harold Pinter; premiere at Bristol University Drama Department.

October 1, 1957: *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne; American premiere (British tour) at Lyceum Theatre (NYC); Tony Richardson, dir.

November 19, 1957: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; Actor's Workshop at San Quentin State Prison; Herbert Blau, dir.; this touchstone performance is discussed by Martin Esslin in the introduction to *Theatre of the Absurd* (1961)

1958

Faber and Faber (London), pub.; *The Maids* and *Deathwatch* by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.

Endgame by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.; cloth and paperback formats, limited edition of 100 numbered copies.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Eugène Ionesco: Four Plays* by Ionesco; Donald Allen, trans.; volume includes *The Bald Soprano*, *The Lesson*, *The Chairs*, and *Jack, or The Submission*.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Problems of the Theatre, an essay, and The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi, a play* by Dürrenmatt; Gerhard Nellhaus, trans.

John Calder Press (London), pub.; *Eugène Ionesco: Plays I* by Ionesco; Donald Watson, trans.; volume includes *The Bald Soprano*, *The Lesson*, *The Chairs*, and *Jack, or The Submission*

Les Nègres (The Blacks) by Genet; L'Arbalète (Décines), pub.

The Visit: A Play in Three Acts by Dürrenmatt; Maurice Valency, trans. and adapt.; Random House (NYC), pub.

The Visit: A Play in Three Acts by Dürrenmatt; Maurice Valency, trans. and adapt.; Samuel French (NYC), pub.

January 9, 1958: *The Lesson* and *The Chairs* by Ionesco; American premiere (British tour) at Phoenix Theatre (NYC); Tony Richardson, dir.

January 27, 1958: *Endgame* by Beckett; American premiere at Cherry Lane Theatre (NYC); Alan Schneider, dir. The Grove Press later released a high-fidelity recording of the production.

February 12, 1958: *The Entertainer* by Osborne; American premiere (British tour) at the Royale Theatre (NYC); Tony Richardson, dir.

April 2, 1958: *Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* by Dürrenmatt; Maximilian Slater, adapt. & dir.; American premiere (entitled *Fools are Passing Through*) at Jan Hus Auditorium (NYC).

April 28, 1958: *The Birthday Party* by Pinter; English premiere at Arts Theatre (Cambridge).
May 5, 1958 – first English-language production of Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* (in an adaptation by Maurice Valency), an Anglo-American collaboration, opens at the Lunt-Fontane Theatre in New York. Peter Brook directs.

May 19, 1958: *The Birthday Party* by Pinter; Arts Theatre (Cambridge) production transfers to Lyric Theatre (Hammersmith).

June 3, 1958: *The Bald Soprano* and *Jack, or The Submission* by Ionesco; American premiere at Sullivan Street Playhouse (NYC); David Brooks, dir.

September, 1958: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; San Francisco Actor's Workshop represents the American regional professional theatre at the World's Fair (Brussels).

October 28, 1958: *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape* by Beckett; English premiere at Royal Court Theatre (London).

November 4, 1958: *Epitaph for George Dillon* by Osborne and Anthony Creighton; American premiere (British tour) at John Golden Theatre (NYC), William Gaskill, dir.

1959

Faber and Faber (London), pub.; *Krapp's Last Tape and Embers* by Beckett.

March 4, 1959: *La Dernière bande (Krapp's Last Tape)* by Beckett; Beckett and Pierre Leyris, trans.; published in *Les lettres nouvelles*.

July 18, 1959: *The Dumb Waiter* by Pinter; German premiere at Frankfurt Municipal Theater.

September 23, 1959: *Les Séquestrés d'Altona (The Condemned of Altona)* by Jean-Paul Sartre; premiere at Théâtre de la Renaissance (Paris); Vera Korene, dir.

October 28, 1959: *Les Nègres (The Blacks)* by Genet; premiere at Théâtre de Lutèce (Paris); Roger Blin, dir.

1960

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces* by Beckett.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *The Birthday Party and The Room; Two Plays* by Harold Pinter.

Krapp's Last Tape by Beckett; published in *Evergreen Review* 2.5 (summer, 1960).

La Dernière bande suivi de Cendres (Krapp's Last Tape with Embers) by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; Les Éditions de Minuit (Paris), pub.

Les Sequestrés d'Altona by Jean-Paul Sartre; Gallimard (Paris), pub.

Methuen (London), pub.; *The Birthday Party and Other Plays* by Pinter.

Rhinoceros by Ionesco; Derek Prouse, trans.; Grove Weidenfeld (NYC), pub.

Rhinoceros by Ionesco; Donald Watson, trans.; John Calder Publishers (London), pub.

The Balcony by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.; Faber and Faber (London), pub.

The Balcony by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

The Blacks by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.; Faber and Faber (London), pub.

The Blacks by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

The Caretaker by Pinter; Methuen (London), pub.

January 14, 1960: *Krapp's Last Tape* by Beckett; American premiere at Provincetown Playhouse (NYC); Alan Schneider, dir.

January 21, 1960: *The Dumb Waiter* by Pinter; English premiere (with *The Room*) at Hampstead Theatre Club (London); production later transfers to Royal Court Theatre (London).

January 25, 1960: *Rhinoceros* by Ionesco; premiere at Odéon (Paris); Jean-Louis Baurralt, dir.

March 4, 1960: *The Balcony* by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.; American premiere at Circle-in-the-Square Theatre (NYC); Jose Quintero, dir.; 672 performances.

March 22, 1960: *La Dernière bande (Krapp's Last Tape)* by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; French-language premiere at Théâtre Récamier (Paris); Roger Blin, dir.

March 22, 1960: *The Killer* by Ionesco; American premiere at Seven Arts Theatre (NYC); Richard Barr, dir.

April 27, 1960: *The Caretaker* by Pinter; premiere at Arts Theatre Club (London).

April 28, 1960: *Rhinoceros* by Ionesco; English premiere at Royal Court Theatre (London); Orson Welles, dir.

May 18, 1960: *Le Balcon (The Balcony)* by Genet; French-language premiere at Théâtre du Gymnase (Paris); Peter Brook, dir.

July 1, 1960: *Saint's Day* by John Whiting; American premiere by Actor's Workshop; David Sarvis, dir.

July 15, 1960: *The Birthday Party* by Pinter; American premiere by Actor's Workshop; Glynne Wickham, dir.

1961

A Night Out by Pinter; Samuel French (NYC and London), pub.

Happy Days by Beckett; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *The Caretaker and The Dumb Waiter; Two Plays* by Pinter.

Methuen (London), pub.; *A Slight Ache and Other Plays* by Pinter.

January 9, 1961: *Rhinoceros* by Ionesco; American premiere at Longacre Theatre (NYC); Joseph Anthony, dir.

January 18, 1961: *A Slight Ache* by Pinter; English premiere at Arts Theatre Club (London).

February, 1961: L'Arbalète publishes Jean Genet's *Les Paravents (The Screens)* in Décines, Isère, France.

April 3-6, 1961: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; made-for-television production is WNTA's Play of the Week; Alan Schneider, dir. The full 102-minute version of the film is subsequently distributed by the Grove Press Film Division; a 45-minute film of Act 2 is distributed by Films for the Humanities (Princeton, New Jersey).

May 4, 1961: *The Blacks* by Genet; American premiere at St. Mark's Playhouse (NYC); Gene Frankel, dir.

May 19, 1961: *The Screens* by Genet; premiere at Schlosspark State Theater (West Berlin); Hans Lietzau, dir.

June 26, 1961: *Waiting for Godot* by Beckett; BBC television production; Donald McWhinnie, dir.

September 17, 1961: *Happy Days* by Beckett; premiere at Cherry Lane Theatre (NYC); Alan Schneider, dir.

October 4, 1961: *The Caretaker* by Pinter; American premiere (British tour) at Lyceum Theatre (NYC); Donald McWhinnie, dir.

October 13, 1961: *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden; American premiere by the Actor's Workshop; Herbert Blau, dir.

November 1, 1961: *Happy Days* by Beckett; English premiere at Royal Court Theatre (London); George Devine & Tony Richardson, dirs.

1962

Die Physiker (The Physicists) by Dürrenmatt; Arche (Zürich), pub.

Happy Days by Beckett; Faber and Faber (London), pub.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Three Plays: A Slight Ache, The Collection, The Dwarfs* by Pinter.

February 21, 1962: *Die Physiker (The Physicists)* by Dürrenmatt; premiere at Schauspielhaus (Zürich).

November 15, 1962: *The Screens* by Genet; Frechtman, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

November 26, 1962: *The Collection* and *The Dumb Waiter* by Pinter; American premieres at Cherry Lane Theatre (NYC); Alan Schneider, dir.

1963

Methuen (London), pub.; *The Collection and The Lover* by Pinter.

Oh, les beaux jours (Happy Days) by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; Les Éditions de Minuit (Paris), pub.

The Physicists by Dürrenmatt; James Kirkup, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

The Physicists by Dürrenmatt; James Kirkup, trans.; Samuel French (NYC and London), pub.

The Screens by Genet; Bernard Frechtman, trans.; Faber and Faber (London), pub.

June 14, 1963: *Spiel (Play)* by Beckett; German-language premiere at Ulmer-Theater (Ulm-Donau); Deryk Mendel, dir.

July 4, 1963: *Spiel (Play)* by Beckett; Elmar and Erika Tophoven, trans.; published in *Theater Heute*.

September 28, 1963: *Oh les beaux jours (Happy Days)* by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; preview twenty-second Venice Biennale at the Teatro del Ridotto.

September, 1963: *Our Lady of the Flowers* by Genet; Frechtman, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

September, 1963: *Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr* by Sartre; Frechtman, trans.; George Braziller, Inc. (New York), pub.

November 15, 1963: *Oh les beaux jours (Happy Days)* by Beckett; premiere at Odéon Théâtre (Paris); Roger Blin, dir.

September 18, 1963: *The Lover* and *The Dwarfs* by Pinter; English premiere at Arts Theatre Club (London); Pinter, dir.

1964

Comédie (Play) by Beckett; Beckett, trans.; published in *Les Lettres nouvelles*.

Faber and Faber (London), pub.; *Play and Two Short Pieces for Radio* by Beckett.

Film by Beckett; produced by Grove Press Film Division (NYC).

Správce (The Caretaker) by Pinter; Milan Lukeš, trans.; Dilia (Prague), pub.

The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi by Dürrenmatt; Michael Bullock, trans.; Jonathan Cape (London), pub.

The Physicists by Dürrenmatt; James Kirkup, trans.; Jonathan Cape (London), pub.

January 4, 1964: *Play* by Beckett and *The Lover* by Pinter; American premieres at Cherry Lane Theatre (NYC); Alan Schneider, dir.

April 7, 1964: *Play* by Beckett; English premiere at Old Vic (London); George Devine, dir.

April 29, 1964: *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats, dargestellt durch die Schauspielgruppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade* (*The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*) by Peter Weiss; German premiere at Schiller-Theater (Berlin); Konrad Swinarski, dir.

August 20, 1964: *Marat/Sade* by Peter Weiss; Geoffrey Skelton, trans.; English-language premiere by Royal Shakespeare Company at Aldwych Theatre (London); Peter Brook, dir.

October 13, 1964: *The Physicists* by Dürrenmatt; James Kirkup, trans.; American premiere at Martin Beck Theatre (NYC); Peter Brook, dir.

December, 1964: the *Evergreen Review* 34 publishes Beckett's *Play*; this is the most accurate print version of the play, the only one to contain Beckett's final revisions of the script

1965

Dramatists' Play Service (NYC), pub.; *The Dwarfs and Eight Revue Sketches* by Pinter.

The Homecoming by Pinter; Methuen (London), pub.

June 3, 1965: *The Homecoming* by Pinter; English premiere by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Aldwych Theatre (London).

June 7, 1965: *Live Like Pigs* by John Arden; American premiere by Theatre Company of Boston at Actors' Playhouse; David Wheeler, dir.

December 27, 1965: *Marat/Sade* by Weiss; Geoffrey Skelton, trans.; American premiere (British tour) by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Martin Beck Theatre (NYC); Peter Brook, dir.

1966

The Homecoming by Pinter; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

Les Éditions de Minuit (Paris), pub.; *Comédie et actes divers* (*Play and Other Plays*) by Beckett; Beckett, trans.

February 3, 1966: *The Condemned of Altona* by Sartre; Herbert Blau, adapt. & dir.; American premiere at Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center (NYC).

April 21, 1966: *Les Paravents (The Screens)* by Genet; French premiere at Théâtre de France (Paris); Roger Blin, dir.

December 1, 1966: *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* by Arden; American premiere by Theatre Company of Boston; David Wheeler, dir.

1967

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *A Night Out, Night School, Revue Sketches, Early Plays* by Pinter.

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *The Lover, Tea Party and The Basement: Two Plays and a Film Script* by Pinter.

Methuen (London), pub.; *Tea Party, and Other Plays* by Pinter.

January 5, 1967: *The Homecoming* by Pinter; American premiere (British tour) at Music Box Theatre (NYC); Peter Hall, dir.

July 11, 1967: *Strip Tease* by Mrozek; American premiere by A Contemporary Theatre (Seattle); Greg Falls, dir.

November 30, 1967: *The Dwarfs* by Pinter; American premiere (with Heathcote Williams' *The Local Stigmatic*) by Theatre Company of Boston; David Wheeler, dir.

1968

Grove Press (NYC), pub.; *Cascando and Other Short Dramatic Pieces* by Beckett.

Landscape by Pinter; Emanuel Wax for Pendragon Press (London), pub.

Tango by Sławomir Mrozek; Ralph Manheim and Teresa Dzieduszycka, trans.; Grove Press (NYC), pub.

1969

Methuen (London), pub.; *Landscape and Silence* by Pinter.

Rowohlt (Hamburg), pub.; *Die Geburtstagsfeier, Der stumme Diener, Das Zimmer, Die Zwerge* (*The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter, The Room, The Dwarfs*) by Pinter; Willy H. Them, trans.

Samuel French (NYC), pub.; *Landscape and Silence* by Pinter.

July 2, 1969: *Landscape and Silence* by Pinter; English premieres by Royal Shakespeare Company at Aldwych Theatre (London); Peter Gill, dir.

October 23, 1969: Samuel Beckett awarded Nobel Prize for Literature.

1970

June 3, 1970: *Play Strindberg* (later renamed *Comedy of Marriage*) by Dürrenmatt; James Kirkup, trans.; American premiere at Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre (NYC); Daniel Sullivan,

Appendix B: A Representative Sample of Journal Articles Published on the topic of Second-Wave Dramatists and Plays, 1950-1970

This appendix provides a selective cross-section of the range of critical writing on the topic of the second-wave dramas that was occurring during the 1950s and the 1960s, though I have identified a few publications that predate my period. This is not an annotated listing, but where articles are reprinted from other sources, I have noted the original source. I have also provided notes if the subject matter of the article (or its relation to the topic of second-wave European modernism) is not clear from the article's title. In order to prevent redundancy, these articles are not listed in the bibliography unless I have cited them in my dissertation.

Educational Theatre Journal (1949)

Vol/Number	Author	Title
4.2 (May, 1952)	Henry Goodman	Brecht as "Traditional" Dramatist.
5.1 (March, 1953)	Paul Hahn	A note on Sartre and <i>The Poetics</i> . * Proposes existentialist philosophy as model for tragedy * <i>ETJ</i> 5.3 (Oct, 1953) publishes two letters, both rebuttals
5.3 (Oct, 1953)	Richard B. Vowles	Existentialism and Dramatic Form * Takes Hahn (above) to task, and Bentley (for <i>Playwright as Thinker</i>) * Argument: Sartre has done precious little to actually change dramatic form
9.1 (March, 1957)	Herbert Blau	<i>Mother Courage: The Rite of War and the Rhythm of the Epic</i>
12.4 (Dec 1960)	Samuel A. Weiss	Osborne's Angry Young Play
13.3 (Oct, 1961) Special issue devoted to Modern Drama	James H. Clancy	Beyond Despair: A New Drama of Ideas
	Bernard F. Dukore	The Theatre of Ionesco: A Union of Form and Substance
	Andree Kail	The Transformation of Camus' Heroes from the Novel to the Stage.
14.3 (Oct, 1962)	Thomas B. Markus	Jean Genet: The Theatre of the Perverse
	Guenther C. Rimbach	Recent Books on Bertolt Brecht and the Epic Theatre * (review)
14.4 (Dec, 1962)	Andrew E. Doe	Brecht's <i>Lehrstucke</i> : Propaganda Failures
15.2 (May, 1963)	Bernard F. Dukore	The Temptation of Goodness

		* On Brecht
15.3 (Oct, 1963)	William I. Oliver	Between Absurdity and the Playwright * Critical of Esslin's focus on stylistic qualities rather than shared content of the playwrights in <i>The Theatre of the Absurd</i>
15.4 (Dec, 1963)	Wallace Gray	The Uses of Incongruity * Asserts that the technique of the Theatre of the Absurd (incongruity) is not new
17.1 (March, 1965)	Bernard F. Dukore	Beckett's Play, <i>Play</i> * Dukore's article is based on the production by the English National Theatre and Faber & Faber's 1964 edition of the text
17.3 (Oct, 1965)	William I. Oliver	After Absurdity
	Frederick Thom	The Quick and the Dead (review) * Review of Brustein's <i>Theatre of Revolt</i> , Grossvogel's <i>Four Playwrights and a Postscript</i> , Leonard Cabell Pronko's <i>Avant-Garde</i> , John Russell Taylor's <i>The Angry Theatre</i> and George E. Wellwarth's <i>The Theatre of Protest and Paradox</i>
18.2 (May, 1966)		Special Section: Sixteen Productions in Educational Theatre * <i>ETJ</i> begins to feature interpretive criticism of productions in educational theatre
	Harry M. Ritchie	<i>The Physicists</i> (Tufts University)
	Robert Schneideman	<i>The Room</i> and <i>A Night Out</i> (Northwestern University)
	Herbert Blau	<i>Danton's Death</i> (Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center)
18.4 (Dec, 1966)	Gay McAuley	Samuel Beckett's <i>Come and Go</i>
19.4 (Dec, 1967)	Anselm Atkins	Lucky's Speech in Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i> : A Punctuated Sense-Line Arrangement
	Manuel L. Grossman	Alfred Jarry and the Theatre of the Absurd
	Ruby Cohn	<i>Marat/Sade</i> : An Education in Theatre
	William I. Oliver	<i>Marat/Sade</i> in Santiago
20.3 (Oct, 1968)	Leo Kerz	Brecht and Piscator
21.2 (May, 1969)	Arthur Ganz	A Clue to the Pinter Puzzle: The Triple Self in <i>The Homecoming</i>
21.4 (Dec, 1969)	Norman James	The Fusion of Pirandello and Brecht in <i>Marat/Sade</i> and <i>The Plebians Rehearse the Uprising</i>

The Tulane Drama Review (1957 – 1967); TDR (1967 – 1968); TDR The Drama Review (1968 -)

1.3 (June, 1957)	Martin Jarrett-Kerr	The Dramatic Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre
2.1 (Nov., 1957)	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (1939)	On Unrhymed Lyrics in Irregular Rhythms
2.2 (Feb., 1958)	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Eric Bentley	Two Poems * <i>The Legend of the Dead Soldier and Of the Poor B.B.</i>
3.1 (Oct., 1958)	Friedrich Dürrenmatt Trans. Gerhard Nellhaus	Problems of the Theatre * first published by Verlag der Arche, Zurich, 1955
	Gordon Rogoff	Mr. Dürrenmatt Buys New Shoes
	Eugène Ionesco	The World of Ionesco * Reprinted from <i>International Theatre Annual 2</i> , ed. Harold Hobson (London, 1957), with permission from John Calder Publishers, Ltd.
	Donald Watson	The Plays of Ionesco
4.1 (Sept., 1959)	Eugène Ionesco Trans. Leonard Pronko	Discovering the Theatre
	Mordecai Gorelik	An Epic Theatre Catechism
	Albert Bermel	Off-Broadway Review: Adamov in New York . . . and Out Again * review of <i>Ping Pong</i>
4.2 (Dec., 1959)	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Eric Bentley	Prologue to <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> * first printing in English
	Hans-Joachim Bunge Trans. Bayard Quincy Morgan	The Dispute over the Valley: An Essay on Bertolt Brecht's Play, <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
4.3 (Mar., 1960)	Eugène Ionesco Trans. Jack Undank	The Tragedy of Language: How an English Primer Became My First Play
4.4 (May, 1960)	Martin Esslin	The Theatre of the Absurd
	Adolf D. Klarmann	Friedrich Dürrenmatt and the Tragic Sense of Comedy
	Eric Bentley	Two Books on Brecht * review of John Willett's <i>The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht</i> and Martin Esslin's <i>Brecht: His Life and Work</i>
	Lee Baxandall	Bertolt Brecht's <i>J.B.</i> * an introduction to Brecht's <i>Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis</i>

	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Lee Baxandall	The Baden <i>Lehrstück</i> * <i>Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis</i>
5.1 (Sept., 1960)	Wallace Fowlie	New Plays of Ionesco and Genet * <i>Rhinoceros</i> and <i>The Blacks</i>
	Herbert Blau	Meanwhile, Follow the Bright Angels
5.2 (Dec., 1960)	Eugène Ionesco	The Avant-Garde Theatre
5.3 (Mar., 1961)	Jean-Paul Sartre Trans. Rima Drell Reck	Beyond Bourgeois Theatre * excerpts of a lecture given by M. Sartre at the Sorbonne in the spring of 1960
	Oreste Pucciani	<i>Les Sequestrés d'Altona</i> of Jean-Paul Sartre
	Michael Wreszin	Jean-Paul Sartre: Philosopher as Dramatist
	Herbert Blau	The Popular, The Absurd, and the "Entente Cordiale"
5.4 (June, 1961)	Melvin W. Askew	Dürrenmatt's <i>The Visit of the Old Lady</i>
	Albert Sonnenfeld	Albert Camus as Dramatist: The Source of his Failure
6.1 (Sept., 1962)	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Carl R. Mueller	On the Experimental Theatre
	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Edith Anderson	Theatre for Learning
	Kurt Weill Trans. Erich Albrecht	"Gestus" in Music
	Max Frisch Trans. Carl R. Mueller	Recollections of Brecht
	Eric Bentley	A Prologue * for Brecht's <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
	Werner Hecht	The Development of Brecht's Theory of the Epic Theatre, 1918 – 1933
	James Schevill	Bertolt Brecht in New York
	Bertolt Brecht Trans. James Schevill	To Those Born Afterward * poem
	Hugo Von Hofmannsthal Trans. Alfred Schwartz	A Prologue to Brecht's <i>Baal</i> * first published 1926 in Vienna, reprinted in 1947, first produced in 1962
	Bertolt Brecht Trans. W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman	<i>The Seven Deadly Sins of the Lower Middle Class</i> * a "Ballet Cantata", first English-language publication; first performed by Balanchine's company in Paris in 1933; American premiere 1959

	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Eric Bentley	On Chinese Acting
6.3 (Mar., 1962)	George E Wellwarth	Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch: Two Views of the Drama
	Bernard Dukore	The Theatre of Harold Pinter
	Ruby Cohn	The World of Harold Pinter
6.4 (June, 1962)	R. J. Kaufmann	On the Newness of the New Drama
	Gerald Weales	The Language of <i>Endgame</i>
7.1 (Aut., 1962)	Bertolt Brecht Trans. James L. Rosenberg	Brecht on Theatre: 1920 *brief introduction from Eric Bentley
7.2 (Win., 1962)	Charles Marowitz	The Acension of John Osborne
	Reid Douglas	The Failure of English Realism
	Ossia Trilling	The New English Realism
7.3 (Spr., 1963)	Martin Esslin	Walter Kerr and the Absurd
	Jean-Paul Sartre Trans. Bernard Frechtman	Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr
	Jean Genet Trans. Bernard Frechtman	A Note on Theatre * written in 1954 at the request of Paris publisher Jean-Jacques Pauvert, to serve as a forward for <i>The Maids</i>
	Oreste F. Pucciani	Tragedy, Genet and <i>The Maids</i>
	Benjamin Nelson	<i>The Balcony</i> and Parisian Existentialism
	Jean Genet Trans. Bernard Frechtman	To a Would-Be Producer * translated copy 1961 letter from Genet to Polish poet Jerzy Lisowski explaining Genet's refusal to grant permissions to a Warsaw theatre to produce a translation of <i>The Blacks</i> ; the copy of the letter was made by Lisowski
	Susan Taubes	The White Mask Falls
	Marc Pierret Trans. Rima Drell Reck	Genet's New Play: <i>The Screens</i>
	J. M. Svendsen	Corydon Revisited: A Reminder on Genet
	Bettina Knapp and Roger Blin	An Interview with Roger Blin
	Eugène Ionesco Trans. Leonard Pronko	Notes on my Theatre * 1961; printed by permission of <i>Editions Gallimard</i>
	Richard Schechner and Eugène Ionesco Trans. Leonard Pronko	An Interview with Ionesco
	Martin Esslin	Ionesco and the Creative Dilemma

	Jean Vannier Trans. Leonard Pronko	A Theatre of Language * printed by permission of <i>L'Arche</i> , Paris
	Richard Schechner	The Inner and the Outer Reality * Ionesco as abstract expressionist
	Eugène Ionesco Trans. Bernard Frechtman	<i>Bedlam Galore, for Two or More</i> * TDR Play Series
7.4 (Sum., 1963)	Martin Esslin	Brecht, the Absurd, and the Future
9.1 (Aut., 1964)	Eric Bentley	Are Stanislavski and Brecht Commensurable?
9.3 (Spr., 1965)	Donald M. Kaplan	Homosexuality and American Theatre: A Psychoanalytic Comment * Genet, Camus, etc.
	Richard Schechner and Alan Schneider	Reality is Not Enough * interview with Schneider about his directing career
	Bernard F. Dukore	West Coast Theatre: The Pleasure of Companies * Actor's Workshop, Seattle Rep, and Los Angeles
	Simon Trussler	Cruel, Cruel London * review of <i>Marat/Sade</i> at Royal Shakespeare Co.
9.4 (Sum., 1965)	Richard Schechner	Blau and Irving at Lincoln Center
10.3 (Spr., 1966)	Robert Brustein	The English Stage * reflections on the "new realist" playwrights
	Jan Kott Trans. Boleslaw Taborski	A Note on Beckett's Realism
	Juris Svendsen	The Queen is Dead: Brecht's <i>Eduard II</i>
	Gordon Rogoff	Notes toward a Definition of Impossible Theatre * critique of Blau's book, and of the production of <i>Danton's Death</i> in which Blau failed to realize his ideas
10.4 (Sum., 1966)	Eric Bentley	An Un-American Chalk Circle?
	Geraldine Lust with Peter Brook et. al.	<i>Marat/Sade</i> Forum * Lust moderates a panel on the significance of <i>Marat</i> ; panelists are Peter Brook, Leslie Fiedler, Norman Podhoretz, Ian Richardson and Gordon Rogoff
11.1 (Aut., 1966)	Richard Schechner	Blau and Irving at Lincoln Center II
11.2 (Win., 1966)	John Arden, Walter Wager, Kelly Morris and Simon Trussler	Who's for a Revolution?: Two Interviews with John Arden

	Richard Gilman	Arden's Unsteady Ground
	Martin Esslin	Brecht and the English Theatre
	Simon Trussler	The Plays of John Whiting
	Richard Schechner	Puzzling Pinter
	Kelly Morris	The Homecoming
11.3 (Spr., 1967)	Henry Popkin	Theatre in Eastern Europe
	Sławomir Mrożek Trans. Edward Rothert	<i>Strip-Tease</i> * published by permission of Grove Press
	Jan Grossman	A Preface to Havel
	Vaclav Havel Trans. Vera Blackwell	<i>The Memorandum</i>
11.4 (Sum., 1967)	Darko Suvin	Beckett's Purgatory of the Individual or the 3 Laws of Thermodynamics: Notes for an Incamination towards a Presubliminary Exagmination
	Bettina Knapp, Roger Blin, Paul Gray and J. Later Strahs	Two Interviews with Roger Blin
		--JOURNAL RENAMED TDR--
12.1 (Aut., 1967)	Erika Munk	The Relevance of Brecht
	Reinhold Grimm	Brecht's Beginnings
	Martin Esslin	Brecht at Seventy
	Roland Barthes Trans. Hella Freud Bernays	Seven Photo Models of <i>Mother Courage</i>
	Darko Suvin	The Mirror and the Dynamo: On Brecht's Aesthetic Point of View
	Lee Baxandall	Brecht in America, 1935
	Dr. Hans Bunge Trans Hugo Schmidt and Jerome Clegg	<i>On The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> *originally appeared in Brecht, <i>Schriften zum Theater</i> (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967) VI: 358-375. * printed by permission of Suhrkam Verlag * <i>TDR</i> mistakenly attributes authorship to Brecht; the errata is noted and corrected in the letters section of <i>TDR</i> 12.3
	Carl Weber Ed. Erika Munk	Brecht as Director * edited from a lecture given at Tulane University, February, 1967
	Bertolt Brecht	BB's Rehearsal Scenes – Estranging Shakespeare. <i>Romeo and Juliet: The Servants</i>
	Harry G. Carlson et.	Dialogue: Berliner Ensemble

	al.	* from an April 7, 1967 conversation between Harry G. Carlson, Helene Weigel, Manfred Wekwerth, Joachim Tenschert, Ekkehard Schall, and Barbara Berg. Berg served as an interpreter
	Manfred Wekwerth Trans. Martin Nicolaus Ed. Erika Munk	From Brecht Today * From <i>Theatre der Zeit</i> , 1964
	Lyon Phelps	Brecht's <i>Antigone</i> at the Living Theatre
	R. G. Davis and Peter Berg	Sartre Through Brecht
	Henry Glade	The Death of Mother Courage
	Alf Sjöberg Trans. Leif Sjöberg and Kaaren Grimstad	Sensuality in Brecht
	Arturo Lazzari Tras. Lina Vincent	Brecht in Italy
	Henry Popkin	Brechtian Europe
	Sandra Schmidt	Competents and Dropouts * reviews, including Genet at Center Stage
12.2 (Win., 1968)	Lucien Goldmann Trans. Pat Dreyfus Ed. Richard Schechner	The Theatre of Genet: A Sociological Study
	Bertolt Brecht Trans. Michael Hamburger	<i>The Beggar, or The Dead Dog</i>
	Ernst Schumacher Trans. Joachim Neugroschel	The Dialectics of <i>Galileo</i>
	Siegfried Melchinger Trans. Martin Nicolaus Ed. Erika Munk	Neher and Brecht
	Erika Munk and Joseph Chaikin	The Actor's Involvement: Notes on Brecht. An Interview with Joseph Chaikin
	Paul Dessau Trans. Hella Freud Bernays	Composing for BB: Some Comments
	Darko Suvin, Max Spalter, and Richard Schotter	A Selected Brecht Bibliography
		--JOURNAL RENAMED <i>The Drama Review</i>:

		<i>TDR--</i>
13.1 (Aut., 1968)	Fernando Arrabal Trans. Bettina L. Knapp Ed. Kelly Morris	Arrabal: Auto-Interview
	Fernando Arrabal Trans. Bettina L. Knapp	<i>Solemn Communion</i> : Panic Ceremony * <i>Solemn Communion</i> was created July 8, 1966 at Théâtre de Poche-Montparnasse (Paris); directed by Jorge Lavelli
	Fernando Arrabal Trans. Bettina L. Knapp.	<i>Strip-Tease of Jealousy</i> : Ballet in 1 Act
	Fernando Arrabal Trans. Bettina L. Knapp	<i>Impossible Loves</i>
	Fernando Arrabal Trans. Bettina L. Knapp and Kelly Morris	L'affaire Arrabal Español
13.2 (Win., 1968)	Lee Baxandall	The Revolutionary Moment * refining a definition of naturalism to include Brecht and Beckett
	Simon Trussler	British Neo-Naturalism *frames the British “new wave” playwrights (Arden, Osborne) as “neo-naturalists”
	John Lahr	Pinter and Chekhov: The Bond of Naturalism
14.1 (Aut., 1969)	Jan Kott Trans. E. J. Czerwinski	The Icon and the Absurd * originally intended for a special issue of <i>Comparative Drama</i> on “The Theatre of the Absurd: Slavic and Western”
	Allan Francovich	Genet’s Theatre of Possession
15.1 (Aut., 1970)	Lucien Goldmann Trans. Sandy MacDonald	The Theatre of Sartre

Comparative Drama

1.2 (Sum., 1967)	Erich Kahler	Doctor Faustus from Adam to Sartre
1.4 (Win., 1967)	Charles R. Lyons	Some Analogies Between the Epic Brecht and the Absurdist Beckett
2.1 (Spr., 1968)	Edward J. Czerwinski	<i>Dialog</i> and the Socialist World: The Spectrum of Influence

		* Polish journal <i>Dialog</i> and Epic/Absurdism trends in Slavic theatre (playwrights such as Havel and Kohout)
3.3 (Aut., 1969)	Simon Karlinsky	The Alogical and Absurdist Aspects of Russian Realist Drama
	Ruby Cohn	Absurdity in English: Joyce and O'Neill
	Adam Tarn	Witkiewicz, Artaud, and the Theatre of Cruelty
	Zbigniew Folejewski	The Theater of Ruthless Metaphor: Polish Theater between Marxism and Existentialism
	Andrzej Wirth	Brecht and Witkiewicz: Two Concepts of Revolution in the Drama of the Twenties
	E. J. Czerwinski	Dramatists in Search of Self: A Backward Glance
	Martin Esslin, Aleksandar Popvic, Adam Tarn, Martin Porubjak, Andrzej Wirth, Jovan Hristic, Ivan Englich, Milan Lasica, E. J. Czerwinski, and Leonard Pronko	Commentary: How does the Idiom of the Absurd Differ from Traditional Drama?
3.4 (Win., 1969)	Farris Anderson	Sastre on Brecht: The Dialectics of Revolutionary Theatre
4.1 (Spr., 1970)	Clas Zilliacus	Three Times <i>Godot</i> : Beckett, Brecht, Bulatovic
4.3 (Aut., 1970)	Anthony Graham-White	Jean Genet and the Psychology of Colonialism

The Kenyon Review

14.4 (Aut., 1952)	Kermit Lansner	Albert Camus
16.3 (Sum., 1954)	Herbert Spiegelberg	French Existentialism: Its Social Philosophies
20.2 (Spr., 1958)	Gerald Weales	Theatre Letter I * <i>Look Back in Anger, The Entertainer, Endgame</i>
	Henry Popkin	Theatre Letter II * brief description of Osborne's <i>Look Back in Anger</i>
20.3 (Sum., 1958)	Louis R. Rossi	Albert Camus: The Plague of Absurdity
22.3 (Sum., 1960)	Ward Hooker	Irony and Absurdity in the Avant-Garde Theatre
	Ernest Borneman	Two Brechtians

		* review of John Willett's <i>The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht</i> and Martin Esslin's <i>Brecht: His Life and Work</i>
22.4 (Aut., 1960)	Martin Esslin	The Absurdity of the Absurd
23.1 (Win., 1961)	Eric Bentley	The Political Theatre Reconsidered * Brecht
23.2 (Spr., 1961)	Vivian Mercier	Samuel Beckett and the Sheela-na-gig
23.3 (Sum., 1961)	Herbert Blau	From the Swamp to Azdak's Garden
25.2 (Spr., 1963)	Roger Shattuck	Making Time: A Study of Stravinsky, Proust and Sartre
	James K. Feibleman	Camus and the Passion of Humanism
26.1 (Win., 1964)	Eric Bentley	Bertolt Brecht's First Play
27.2 (Spr., 1965)	Leslie Paul	The Angry Young Men Revisited
	Robert Merritt	Rebellion and Rhetoric * Review of Bentley's <i>The Life of the Drama</i> , Blau's <i>The Impossible Theatre</i> , Brustein's <i>The Theatre of Revolt</i> , and Gerald Rabkin's <i>Drama and Commitment</i>
29.2 (Mar., 1967)	William R. Mueller and Josephine Jacobsen	The Absurd Quest
31.1 (1969)	Ellen Conroy Kennedy	Camus at His Sources

Modern Drama

1.2 (Sept., 1958)	Jean Duvignaud Trans. R. G. Mahieu	Theater in Paris * Reviews of Brecht and Adamov
1.3 (Dec., 1958)	Edith Kern	Brecht's Popular Theater and Its American Popularity
2.1 (May, 1959)	Leonard C. Pronko	The Anti-Spiritual Victory in the Theater of Ionesco
	Richard M. Eastman	The Strategy of Samuel Beckett's <i>Endgame</i>
3.1 (May, 1960)	Jacques Scherer	Letter from Paris * Brief introduction to Ionesco and Arrabal
3.2 (Fall, 1960)	Ruby Cohn	Waiting is All *Analyzes the structure of <i>Waiting for Godot</i>

	Ossia Trilling	The Young British Drama
4.1 (May, 1961)	Richard M. Eastman	Experiment and Vision in Ionesco's Plays
	Allan Brick	A Note on Perception and Communication in Beckett's <i>Endgame</i>
	Rima Drell Reck	The Theater of Albert Camus
	Leonard C. Pronko	The Prelate and the Pachyderm: Rear Guard and Vanguard Drama in the French Theater * Contrasts Anouilh's <i>Becket</i> with Ionesco's <i>Rhinoceros</i>
4.2 (Sept., 1961)	Anthony Caputi	The Shallows of Modern Serious Drama * Caputi's critique of recent serious drama considers works of both the first wave (by authors like Miller and Williams) and the second wave (by authors like Beckett and Ionesco)
	Françoise Kourilsky Trans. William Bell	Theater in Paris * Review of <i>la Dernière bande</i> , Beckett's French-language translation of Krapp's <i>Last Tape</i>
	William A. Armstrong	Tradition and Innovation in the London Theatre, 1960-61 * Reviews of Whiting, Arden, and Pinter
4.4 (Feb., 1962)	John C. Wentz	<i>An American Tragedy</i> as Epic Theater: The Piscator Dramatization
	Jacqueline Hoefler	Pinter and Whiting: Two Attitudes Towards the Alienated Artist * Hoefler discusses <i>Birthday Party</i> and <i>Saint's Day</i> , both "recently produced by the San Francisco Actor's Workshop."
5.1 (May, 1962)	Dorothy Knowles	Ionesco and the Mechanisms of Language
	H. R. Hays	Transcending Naturalism * Discusses the new British playwrights: Delaney, Osborne
	Peter J. Reed	Judges in the Plays of Albert Camus
5.2 (Sept., 1962)	Ulrich Weisstein	Cocteau, Stravinsky, Brecht and the Birth of Epic Opera
5.4 (Feb., 1963)	Claude K. Abraham	<i>Caligula</i> : Drama of Revolt or Drama of Deception?
6.1 (May, 1963)	Roy Huss	John Osborne's Backward Half-Way Look
6.2 (Sept., 1963)	James T. Boulton	Harold Pinter: <i>The Caretaker</i> and Other Plays
6.4 (Feb., 1964)	Edward B. Savage	Masks and Mummeries in <i>Enrico IV</i> and <i>Caligula</i>
	Richard M. Eastman	Samuel Beckett and <i>Happy Days</i>
	Robert S. Cohen	Parallels and the Possibility of Influence Between Simone Weil's <i>Waiting for God</i> and Samuel Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i>
7.2 (Sept., 1964)	Charles R. Lyons	Beckett's <i>Endgame</i> : An Anti-Myth Creation

	Ralph Behrens	Existential “Character Ideas” in Camus’ <i>The Misunderstanding</i>
	Stanley G. Eskin	Theatricality in Avant-Garde Drama: A Reconsideration of a Theme in the Light of <i>The Balcony</i> and <i>The Connection</i>
7.4 (Feb., 1965)	James M. Ritchie	German Theater Between the Wars and the Genteel Tradition * Refutes the idea that France has been the primary influence on postwar English and American theatre, describing the context from which Brecht’s epic theatre emerged
	Richard E. Sherrell	Arthur Adamov and <i>Invaded Man</i>
	Reinhard Kuhn	The Debasing of the Intellectual in Contemporary Continental Drama * Considers works by Ionesco and Adamov
8.1 (May, 1965)	Marilyn Gaddis Rose	Sartre and the Ambiguous Thesis Play
8.2 (Sept., 1965)	Ruby Cohn	Berenger, Protagonist of an Anti-Playwright
	John D. Hurrell	John Whiting and the Theme of Self-Destruction
	Leland R. Phelps	Dürrenmatt’s <i>Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi</i> : The Revision of a Play
	F. J. Bernhard	Beyond Realism: The Plays of Harold Pinter
8.3 (Dec., 1965)	Robert Holzapfel	The Divine Plan Behind the Plays of Friedrich Dürrenmatt
	R. A. Zimbardo	Genet’s <i>Black Mass</i>
	Richard Lee Francis	Beckett’s Metaphysical Tragicomedy
	Charles R. Lyons	The Structure of Images in <i>Baal</i>
8.4 (Feb., 1966)	John Fletcher	Roger Blin at Work
9.1 (May, 1966)	Keith M. Sagar	Brecht in Neverneverland: <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
	Alberta E. Feynman	The Fetal Quality of “Character” in Plays of the Absurd
9.2 (Sept., 1966)	Morgan Y. Himmelstein	The Pioneers of Bertolt Brecht in America
	Allen J. Koppenhaver	<i>The Fall</i> and After: Albert Camus and Arthur Miller
9.3 (De., 1966) Special Beckett Issue	Ruby Cohn	Acting for Beckett
	Jean Jacques Mayoux Trans. Ruby Cohn	Beckett and Expressionism * excerpted from <i>Beckett and the Paths of Expressionism</i> (“written in French but published only in German”)
	John Fletcher	Action and Play in Beckett’s Theater

	Wolfgang Iser Trans. Ruby Cohn	Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Language *slightly abridged version of an article which originally appeared in German in <i>Germanish-Romanish Monatschrift</i>
	Edith Kern	Beckett and the Spirit of the Commedia dell'Arte
	Richard Schechner	There's Lots of Time in <i>Godot</i>
	Gabor Mihayli	Beckett's <i>Godot</i> and the Myth of Alienation *from <i>The New Hungarian Quarterly</i> 24 (Winter, 1966)
	Jacques Dubois Trans. Ruby Cohn	Beckett and Ionesco: The Tragic Awareness of Pascal and the Ironic Awareness of Flaubert
	Curtis M. Brooks	The Mythic Pattern in <i>Waiting for Godot</i>
	Melvin J. Friedman	Critic!
	Anselm Atkins	A Note on the Structure of Lucky's Speech
	John J. Sheedy	The Comic Apocalypse of King Hamm
	Ruby Cohn	The Beginning of <i>Endgame</i>
	David J. Alpaugh	The Symbolic Structure of Samuel Beckett's <i>All That Fall</i>
	Arthur K. Oberg	<i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> and the Proustian Vision
	Renée Riese Hubert	Beckett's <i>Play</i> Between Poetry and Performance
10.1 (May, 1967)	Augusta Walker	Messages from Pinter
	Robert B. Heilman	Dürrenmatt's Tragic Comedy
10.2 (Sept., 1967)	Gabriel Gersh	The Theater of John Osborne
	Victor E. Amend	Harold Pinter – Some Credits and Debits
	Robert E. Todd	Proust and Redemption in <i>Waiting for Godot</i>
	Ronald Gaskell	The Form of <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
10.4 (Feb., 1968)	Sol Gittleman	Frank Wedekind and Bertolt Brecht: Notes on a Relationship
	Strother B. Purdy	A Reading of Ionesco's <i>The Killer</i>
	Antony Easthope	Hamm, Clov, and Dramatic Method in <i>Endgame</i>
11.1 (May, 1968)	Marion Trousedale	Dramatic Form: The Example of <i>Godot</i>
	Konrad Schoell	The Chain and the Circle: A Structural Comparison of <i>Waiting for Godot</i> and <i>Endgame</i>
11.2 (Sept., 1968)	Keith A. Dickson	Brecht: An Aristotelian <i>Malgré Lui</i>
	Maria P. Alter	Bertolt Brecht and the <i>NOH</i> Drama
	Renate Usmiani	Friedrich Dürrenmatt as Wolfgang Schwitter
	David K. Jeffrey	Genet and Gelber: Studies in Addiction
	Arnold P. Hinchcliffe	Mr. Pinter's Belinda
11.3 (Dec.,	Louise O. Cleveland	Trials in the Soundscape: The Radio Plays of

1968)		Samuel Beckett
	Charles R. Lyons	The Futile Encounter in the Plays of John Whiting
	Charles C. Hampton, Jr.	Samuel Beckett's <i>Film</i>
	Joan Tindale Blindheim	John Arden's Use of the Stage
	Katherine H. Burkman	Pinter's <i>A Slight Ache</i> as Ritual
11.4 (Feb., 1969)	Otto M. Sorensen	Brecht's <i>Galileo</i> : Its Development from ideational into Ideological Theater * Read before the 64 th Annual Meeting of the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast on November 26, 1966 in Berkeley, California.
	Andrew K. Kennedy	Old and New in London Now * Stoppard and Osborne
12.1 (May, 1969)	Robert Tembeck	Dialectic and Time in <i>The Condemned of Altona</i>
	Eli Pfefferkorn	Dürrenmatt's Mass Play
12.2 (Sept., 1969)	Harry E. Stewart	Jean Genet's Mirror Images in <i>Le Balcon</i>
	John C. Hammer	Friedrich Dürrenmatt and the Tragedy of Bertolt Brecht: An Interpretation of <i>Die Wiedertäufer</i>
12.3 (Dec., 1969)	Edith Whitehurst Williams	God's Share: A Mythic Interpretation of <i>The Chairs</i>
13.1 (May, 1970)	Kurt Fickert	The Curtain Speech in Dürrenmatt's <i>The Physicists</i>
	Robert Jordan	Serjeant Musgrave's Problem
	M. D. Faber	The Character of Jimmy Porter: An Approach to <i>Look Back in Anger</i>
	David H. Karrfalt	The Social Theme in Osborne's Plays
13.2 (Sept., 1970)	Gerald Mast	The Logic of Illogic: Ionesco's <i>Victims of Duty</i>
	Allen Thiher	Francisco Arrabal and the New Theater of Obsession
	Clas Zilliacus	Samuel Beckett's <i>Embers</i> : "A Matter of Fundamental Sounds"
13.3 (Dec., 1970)	Helmut Winter	A Note on History and Politics in Recent German Drama * Discusses Weiss' dramaturgy
	Brian Murdoch	Dürrenmatt's <i>Physicists</i> and the Tragic Tradition
	Sister Corona Sharp	Dürrenmatt's <i>Play Strindberg</i>
	Ulrich Weisstein	The Lonely Baal, Brecht's First Play as a Parody of Hans Johst's <i>Der Einsame</i>
	Charles N. Genno	Peter Weiss' <i>Marat/Sade</i>

VITA

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