

I am Buckta



Portraits of the Artist

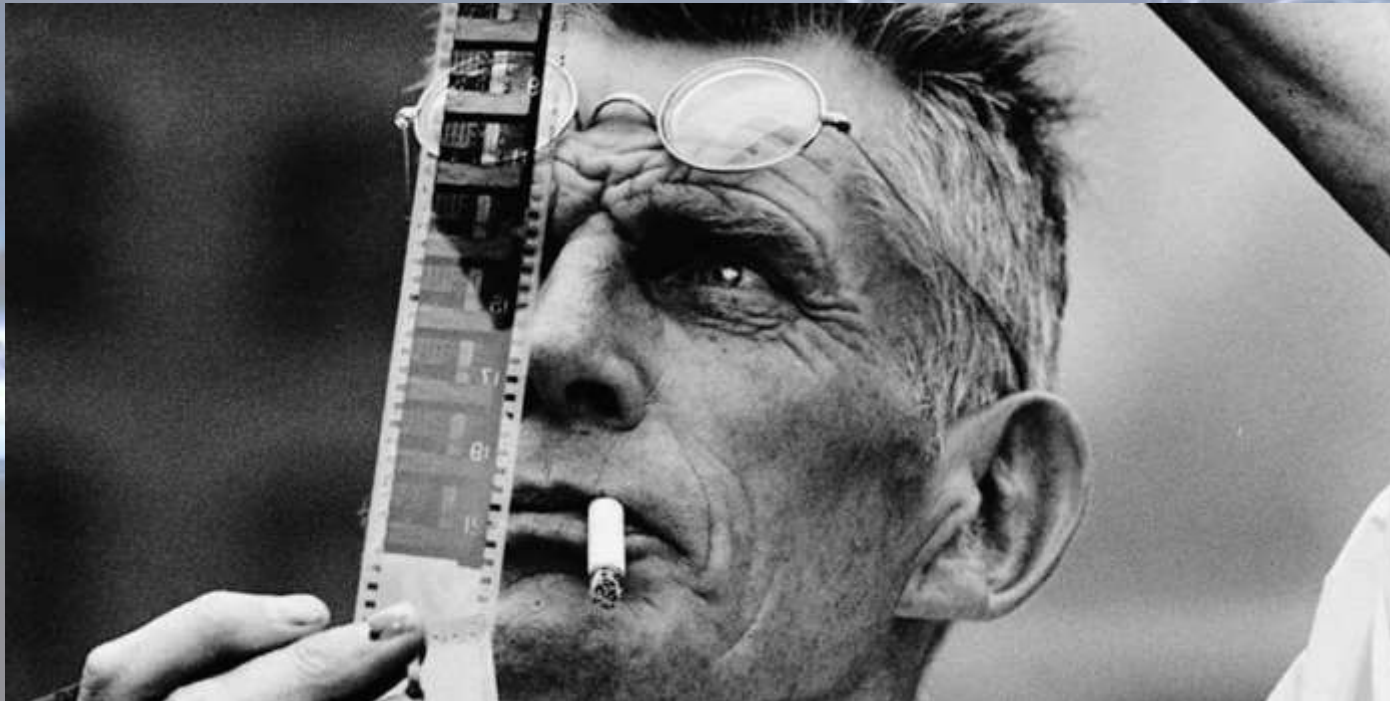
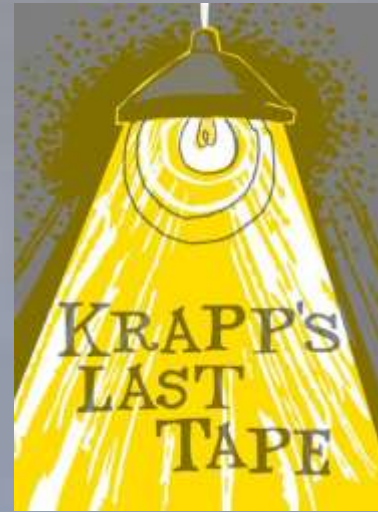
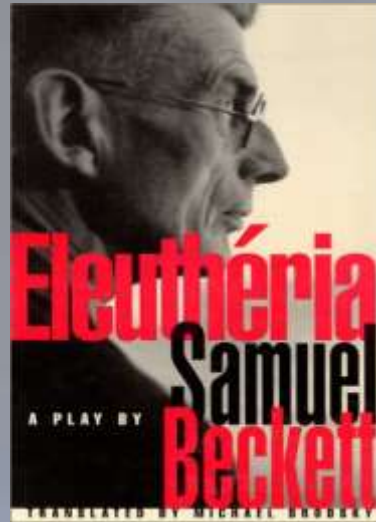
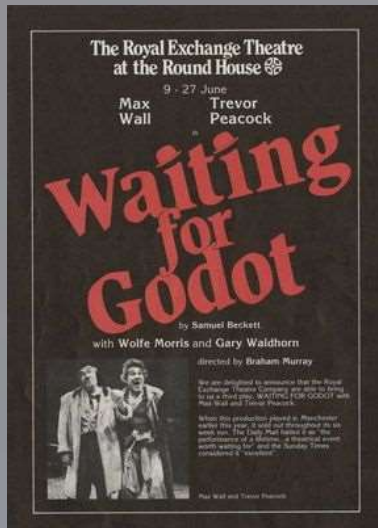
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Beckett's Life

- **Samuel Barclay Beckett** (13 April 1906 – 22 December 1989) was an Irish novelist, playwright, short story writer, theatre director, poet, and literary translator. A resident of Paris for most of his adult life, he wrote in both French and English.
- Beckett's work offers a bleak, tragi-comic outlook on human existence, often coupled with black comedy and gallows humour, and became increasingly minimalist in his later career. He is considered one of the last modernist writers, and one of the key figures in what Martin Esslin called the "Theatre of the Absurd". His most well known work is his 1953 play *Waiting for Godot*.
- Beckett was awarded the 1969 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his writing, which—in new forms for the novel and drama—in the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation." He was elected Saoi of Aosdána in 1984.

Popular Plays



Waiting for Godot

Waiting for Godot is a play by Samuel Beckett in which two characters, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), engage in a variety of discussions and encounters while awaiting the titular Godot, who never arrives. *Waiting for Godot* is Beckett's translation of his own original French-language play, ***En attendant Godot***, and is subtitled (in English only) "**a tragicomedy in two acts**". The original French text was composed between 9 October 1948 and 29 January 1949. The premiere, directed by Roger Blin, was on 5 January 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone, Paris. The English-language version premiered in London in 1955. In a poll conducted by the British Royal National Theatre in 1998/99, it was voted the "most significant English-language play of the 20th century".

- On 17 February 1952 an abridged version of the play was performed in the studio of the Club d'Essai de la Radio and was broadcast on French radio. Although he sent a polite note that Roger Blin read out, Beckett himself did not turn up. Part of his introduction reads:
- “I don't know who Godot is. I don't even know (above all don't know) if he exists. And I don't know if they believe in him or not – those two who are waiting for him. The other two who pass by towards the end of each of the two acts, that must be to break up the monotony. All I knew I showed. It's not much, but it's enough for me, by a wide margin. I'll even say that I would have been satisfied with less. As for wanting to find in all that a broader, loftier meaning to carry away from the performance, along with the program and the Eskimo pie, I cannot see the point of it. But it must be possible ... Estragon, Vladimir, Pozzo, Lucky, their time and their space, I was able to know them a little, but far from the need to understand. Maybe they owe you explanations. Let them supply it. Without me. They and I are through with each other.”
- The play was first published in September 1952 by Les Éditions de Minuit and released on 17 October 1952 in advance of the first full theatrical performance.

***En attendant Godot* premiered at Paris's tiny Théâtre de Babylone on 5 January 1953. Directed by Roger Blin, who also played Pozzo, the production starred Lucien Raimbourg as Vladimir, Pierre Latour as Estragon and Jean Martin as Lucky.**



Production History

- UK - The English-language premiere was on 3 August 1955 at the Arts Theatre, London, directed by the 24-year-old Peter Hall. During an early rehearsal Hall told the cast "I haven't really the foggiest idea what some of it means ... But if we stop and discuss every line we'll never open."
- US - Planning for an American tour for *Waiting for Godot* started in 1955. The first American tour was directed by Alan Schneider and produced by Michael Myerberg. Bert Lahr and Tom Ewell acted in the production.
- AUSTRALIA - In the Australian premiere at the Arrow Theatre in Melbourne in 1957, Barry Humphries played Estragon opposite Peter O'Shaughnessy's Vladimir.

1970s to 2000

- In 1978, a production was staged by Walter Asmus at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City with Sam Waterston as Vladimir, Austin Pendleton as Estragon, Milo O'Shea as Lucky and Michael Egan as Pozzo.
- A young Geoffrey Rush played Vladimir opposite his then flatmate Mel Gibson as Estragon in 1979 at the Jane Street Theatre in Sydney.
- In 1980, Braham Murray directed a production at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester with Max Wall as Vladimir, Trevor Peacock as Estragon and Wolfe Morris as Pozzo.
- The Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater at Lincoln Center was the site of a 1988 revival directed by Mike Nichols, featuring Robin Williams (Estragon), Steve Martin (Vladimir), Bill Irwin (Lucky), F. Murray Abraham (Pozzo), and Lukas Haas (boy). With a limited run of seven weeks and an all-star cast, it was financially successful.
- The play was revived in London's West End at the Queen's Theatre in a production directed by Les Blair, which opened on 30 September 1991. This was the first West End revival since the play's British première. Rik Mayall played Vladimir and Adrian Edmondson played Estragon, with Philip Jackson as Pozzo and Christopher Ryan as Lucky; the boy was played by Dean Gaffney and Duncan Thornley. Derek Jarman provided the scenic design, in collaboration with Madeleine Morris.
- In June 1999 the Royal Exchange, Manchester staged a production directed by Matthew Lloyd with Richard Wilson as Vladimir, Brian Pettifer as Estragon and Nicky Henson.

