

## COMING ATTRACTIONS AT THE SCHOOL OF DRAMA

### THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

By William Shakespeare  
Penthouse Theatre  
December 4-15

### UNDER THE CROSS OF CALATRAVA

A Response To Lope de Vega's "Fuente Ovejuna"  
By Tom Wiseley and Company  
Glenn Hughes Playhouse  
January 29-February 9

### TWELFTH NIGHT

By William Shakespeare  
Meany Studio Theatre  
February 12-23

### SEEING DOUBLE

By The San Francisco Mime Troupe  
Glenn Hughes Playhouse  
February 26-March 9

### THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE

By Harley Granville-Barker  
Penthouse Theatre  
March 12-23

### WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN

By Thomas Middleton  
Meany Studio Theatre  
April 23-May 4

## SCHOOL OF DRAMA

### FACULTY

Executive Director--Barry Witham	Associate Director--Jack Wolcott
Theatre History--Sarah Blackstone	Technical Director--Jay O. Glerum
Theory--Sarah Bryant-Bertail	Acting--Robyn Hunt
Acting--Jack Clay	Theatre History--Richard Lorenzen
Playwriting--M. E. Comtois	Design--Richard Paulsen
Design--Robert A. Dahlstrom	Theory--Michael Quinn
Design--Dick Devin	Acting--Judith Shahn
Acting--Max Dixon	Acting--Robin Smith
Design--William Forrester	Child Drama--Aurora Valentineti
Design--Sarah Nash Gates	Directing--M. Burke Walker

### RETIRED AND EMERITUS FACULTY

James Crider	Paul Hostetler	Geraldine Siks
Vanick Galstaun	Robert Loper	Jack Sydow
Agnes Haaga	Warren (Tyke) Lounsbury	

### PART-TIME FACULTY

David Boushey	Shirley Jenkins	Diana Smith
Jeff Caldwell	Jan Johnston	Scott Waldin
Mark Jenkins	Catherine Madden	

### STAFF

Library Technician--Cindy Blanding	Program Assistant--Dorothy Kerst
Stage Technician--Malcolm Brown	Office Assistant--Jennifer Kohn
Stage Technician--Alex Danilchik	Secretary--Diana Smith
Librarian--Liz Fugate	Production Manager--Anne Stewart
Costumer--Josie Gardner	Costumer--Meri Wada
Program Manager--Arlene Hamilton	Costumer--Jim Wauford
Publicist--Denise Jarrett	Stage Technician--Alan Weldin

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an individuality bears no relationship to science whatsoever. I  
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is so far the only thing that can—at least to some extent—mutua  
s as love, friendship, compassion, sympathy and the unique and  
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UW

School of  
DRAMA

Meany Studio Theatre  
November 13 - 25, 1990  
15th Season  
32nd Production

THE INCREASED DIFFICULTY  
OF CONCENTRATION

By VÁCLAV HAVEL

Translated by VERA BLACKWELL

Directed by MICHAEL QUINN

Set Designer	NORMAN SCRIVNER
Costume Designer	MARY BETH GAGNER
Lighting Designer	MARK BARATTA
Sound Designer	WILLIAM CARSWELL
Technical Director	DEVIN L. THOMPSON
Dramaturg	JENNIFER MORISON
Stage Manager	TOM ROWAN

CAST

(In Order Of Appearance)

Dr. Eduard Huml, <i>social scientist</i>	SCOTT HOLLAND
Vlasta, <i>his wife</i>	ANNIE KAISER
Renata, <i>his mistress</i>	MOLLY HALL
Blanka, <i>his secretary</i>	LISA BONNEY
Dr. Anna Balcar, <i>social scientist</i>	BETTINA T. SCHUNTER
Karel Kriebl, <i>technician</i>	CURT BOHAR
Emil Machal, <i>surveyor</i>	ANDY JENSEN
Mr. Beck, <i>supervisor</i>	AUSTEN L. PARRISH

-- There will be one fifteen-minute intermission. --

*The Increased Difficulty Of Concentration* is produced  
by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

The taking of photographs during the performance is strictly prohibited. Please leave all beepers and paging devices and your name with the house manager. Also, in consideration of the performers and other audience members, we discourage the attendance of children under the age of four.

Václav Havel

Václav Havel's life has followed an extraordinary path: from working in a chemical laboratory, to becoming a noted dramaturg and acclaimed playwright, finally to his current position as president of Czechoslovakia. Born in 1936, he worked his way through night school and in 1956 began writing critical essays. He became dramaturg of the Balustrade Theatre in Prague in 1962. In 1963 he completed his first play, *The Garden Party*, followed two years later by *The Memorandum*, about the imposition by the bureaucracy of a highly-efficient interoffice language which is nearly impossible to learn or use. *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* was first staged in 1968 at the Balustrade in Prague. Later plays include *Largo Desolato* (1984) and *Temptation* (1986). After long dissident activity as a spokesman for Charter 77 (The Helsinki Human Rights Watch Committee) and VONS (The Committee for the Unjustly Prosecuted), including several trials and prison terms, Havel coordinated the organization of the Civic Forum, a collective of opposition parties. He was named President of Czechoslovakia on an interim basis, then won an election this summer.

Production Credits

Assistant Stage Manager	Stacey J. Warner
Lighting Design Assistant	Michael P. Yingling
Sound Design Assistant	Daniel C. Johnson
Propmaster	Alan Salm
Master Electrician	Michael P. Yingling
Running Crew	Raja Benchekroun, Cheng-Hsi Chen
	Daniel C. Johnson, Erica Meyer
	Kathleen Mitchell, Gary Roundtree
	Stacey J. Warner
Set Construction Crew	Bob Boehler, Edward Cage
	Mark Chenovick, Monica Jolley
	Larry Lemmons, Mark Minerich, Alan Salm
	and Drama 101 and 210 classes
Costume Construction Crew	Rachel Boughton, Regan Haines
	Karen Ledger, Chandra D. Robinson
	and Drama 101 and 211 Students
House Management	Vic Begay, Roland Frantz, William Hill
	Heather Jones, Aaron Levin
Photographer	Gary Smith
Flyers	Roland Frantz
Production Office Staff	Laura Downing, Robert Menna
	Stephen R. White

Acknowledgements

Radar Electric, United Products, U.W. Botany Gardens, KXXR Radio, Seattle Repertory Theatre, The Empty Space Theatre, The Seattle Opera, Seattle Children's Theatre, The Bathhouse Theatre.

Director's Notes

*The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* was the third of Havel's full-length, independently-written plays to be professionally produced. Originally titled *Eduard*, it was also his master's thesis at the State Drama Academy. Though our production is not specific to a place and time, some themes are clearly related to the Czech context in 1965, like the comic problems of sexual openness, and the anxiety about Mr. Beck, whose vague function indicates that he's probably a party observer.

As the director, I have not tried to emphasize my own reading of the play; rather, it seems to me that the audience is probably curious about the writer, and would like to see a fairly clear production of the text as written. Nevertheless we have made some adjustments in order to emphasize some themes. The designs and projections were inspired by the collage work of Havel's friend, Jiří Kolař, and by the concrete poems that Havel was writing at about the same time. Both support the theme that information overwhelms our efforts to think it through, to question its formation while we try to make sense of our professions, our every day lives, our private affairs. Emil is doing some extra measuring, too, to try and make that theme clear.

Out of respect for interest in Havel's text, we haven't tried to adjust the jargon of the professions from the 1960's into anything like its contemporary equivalents. Still, the struggles of the characters to accomodate individuality while constructing ways of thinking in more general terms are not problems that have gone away, and like Kriebl we sometimes watch and listen with amusement at our attempts to solve the problems of confusion by creating more of the same. The form of the play enacts confusion for us; if it's any consolation, I can assure you that there is no chronological sequence which we even reconstructed and rehearsed. But it might be a memory play, might be "expressionist," and is surely one that makes us reconsider how we try to explain things through time.

Finally, and unlike Havel's more famous dissident writings, I'm not sure this satire ends by advocating anything like a solution. If Huml wins a professional victory, he only does so by complicating his life even more. If the other characters suffer from his confusion, a play about one of their lives might also dramatize confusion, though in different terms.

Further reading on Havel

Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing The Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, Trans. Paul Wilson (Knopf, 1990).  
Paul Trensky, *Czech Drama Since WWII* (Columbia Univ, 1978).