The Increased Difficulty Of Concentration
By Vaclav Havel
Translated By Vera Blackwell

School of DRAMA
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, social scientist SCOTT HOLLAND
Vlsta, his wife ANNIE KAISER
Renata, his mistress MOLLY HALL
Blanka, his secretary LISA BONNEY
Dr. Anna Balcar, social scientist BETTINA T. SCHUNTER
Karel Krieb, technician CURT BOE' JR
Emil Machal, surveyor ANDY JENJEN
Mr. Beck, supervisor 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 drama...

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 BENCEHRKOV, CHENG-HSI CHEN
Daniel C. Johnson, ERCY MAYER
Kathleen Mitchell, Gary Roundtree
Stacey J. Warner
Set Construction Crew BOB BOEHLER, EDWARD CAGE
Mark Chenovich, Monica Jolley
Larry Lemmons, Mark Mirenich, Alan Salm
and Drama 101 and 210 classes
Costume Construction Crew RACHEL BOUTOHN, 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

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 

as the director, 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 Kolář, 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 accommodate individually while constructing ways of thinking in more general terms are not problems that have gone away, and like Kriebi 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 enact confusion for us; if it's any consolation, I can assure you that there is a 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 disdant writings, I'm not sure this satire ends by advocating anything like a solution. If Humi 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

Paul Trensky, Czech Drama Since WWII (Columbia Univ, 1976).