

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This play is rich with themes: dreams and family, deadly, vicious innocents, relentless coincidence, the struggle to make sense. As for me, I have seen Guare's harsh 1978 world spread into my own Seattle neighborhood, where the fourteen-year olds have dark shadows in their eyes and carry hidden guns.

The Landscape of the Body: the monkey falls, a head cracks, the exhilaration is dizzying and the ramifications are spinning out of control. Donny, Bert, Margie, Joanne: trapped for an intoxicating moment between the violent flinging of an act into the world and the closing-in of its consequences.

Last Friday there was a shooting a block from my house. Kids. Though in flashes they suspect, they do not yet know just to what extent they have already been destroyed, nor to what extent they themselves have already destroyed. And then they have children. Lucidity comes too late, if at all. I ride the bus with these vicious innocents. They swim a bitter sea.

Where are the adults to help with all this?

Not just the parents, who may share the blame, but who cannot control all the influences to which their children are exposed, but adult members of society—to hold, to heal, to discipline, to guide? Where are the adults? Where are they in Hollywood, amongst the makers of myth and image? Where are they amongst the legislators? Amongst ourselves? Where are the adults?

UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS AT THE SCHOOL OF DRAMA

The Trojan Women: A Love Story

By Charles Mee, Jr.

The Penthouse Theatre, April 17–28

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

By Bertolt Brecht

The Playhouse Theatre, May 1–11

Courtship and 1918

By Horton Foote

The Studio Theatre, May 2–12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cobbler to the School of Drama

Swanson Shoe Repair—2305 North 45th St.

Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre Company,

A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle Opera, Display & Costume Supply,

Suzanne Maynard, Davida Kagen, Antonia Perez-Franco, J.W.,

Jason Webley, Denise Jarrett

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Thomas Zorich, *fiscal technician*

*Deceased

LANDSCAPE OF THE BODY



BY JOHN GUARE

UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON
SCHOOL OF
DRAMA

The Penthouse Theatre

56th Season

411th Production

February 28—March 10

ay

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Betty	<i>Lisa J. Moore*</i>
Captain Marvin Holahan	<i>John F. Hazlewood*</i>
Rosalie	<i>Naho Shioya*</i>
Raulito	<i>Giancarlo Gonzalez*</i>
Bert	<i>David G. Fraioli*</i>
Donny	<i>Doug Lockwood*</i>
Joanne	<i>Melissa Mascara*</i>
Margie	<i>Jolene Hjerleid*</i>
Cyclist	<i>Doug Lockwood*</i>
Durwood Peach/Piano Player	<i>Scott Capehart*</i>
Dope King of Providence	<i>Doug Lockwood*</i>
Bank Teller	<i>Jolene Hjerleid*</i>

**Member of the Professional Actor Training Program*

**The action takes place on a ferry to Nantucket
and in Greenwich Village.**

There will be one ten-minute intermission

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

John Guare's *Landscape of the Body* is a complex and challenging work, encompassing many themes, often developed with great subtlety over the course of the story. Two areas explored by Guare are dreams and families, and these often coexist and meld. The invocation of the Kennedys at the beginning of the play summons up a common dream that has died; Camelot is no more, the great family is struck down, and an innocence is lost. Characters search for and dream of having families, but success is not guaranteed or universal. The effect dreams have on our future life is likewise explored by Guare, "The dreams we have as kids, they're the dreams we never get over." This theme is spun out as various characters come to terms with their childhood dreams, realized or not.

Landscape also deals with the "big questions" of death and life. When Guare was living in New York City, he was hit by a speeding bicyclist, whose response was to scream, "You broke the chain on my bike!" Guare recalls his intellectual analysis of the event—which was one of the inspirations for *Landscape*—"The membrane between life and death seemed so tenuous that it's hard to tell the difference." Characters in the play can exist in various states of "aliveness." Simple respiration is not "being alive." "Landscape' to me is a very technical word," says Guare, "and I wanted it to be about people who are disassociated

Landscape of the Body

By John Guare

Songs by John Guare

with additional compositions by Scott Capehart

Directed by Robyn Hunt

Set Design	<i>Deb Trout</i>
Costume Design	<i>Janelle Saylor</i>
Lighting Design	<i>Jay Venzke</i>
Technical Director	<i>Tom Burke</i>
Stage Manager	<i>Heidi Eng</i>
Musical Director	<i>Scott Capehart</i>
Dramaturg	<i>Victor Holtcamp</i>
Assistant Director	<i>Scott Perret</i>
Prop Master	<i>Charles Harper</i>

from themselves, people who don't even feel like they're living. It's about the poverty of the spirit because they can't use themselves to connect. What I'm trying to do is affirm life."

Landscape contains many of the same influences that motivated the anti-war plays of Guare's earlier work: *Muzeeka* and *Cop-Out*, but from a later perspective. The spectre of Vietnam had become a ghost which would not be expunged from the national consciousness. A debacle which began with the Kennedys and ended with a President who, for many, confirmed their worst fears about corruption of the government. Nothing seemed to be getting better, and the whole world seemed tired. There is a bleakness about the characters, and a cynicism about the world they inhabit. What makes the play life-affirming in the end is the ability to rise above this. As Guare says, "not in some kind of Mother Courage 'I will survive' way...but where it is about survival and protection and some kind of dignity. That's why it's called *Landscape of the Body*. The body and what's inside and outside us is all we have to use to connect to other people."

ABOUT JOHN GUARE

John Guare (pronounced *Gwer*) was born in 1938 in New York City to Irish-American parents. When his father suffered an angina attack in 1950, they moved upstate to Ellenville, so his father could have quiet and rest. In his words, "It was the McCarthy time. Since the grammar school in Ellenville neither pledged allegiance to the flag nor said the Our Father, the nuns of

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Assistant Stage Manager	<i>Brennan O'Reilly</i>
Master Electrician	<i>Jason Meininger</i>
Set Construction	<i>Drama 210 and Drama 413 Classes</i>
Running Crew	<i>Justin Alley, Steve Beach, Tom Choi, J. Drill, Michelle Ford, Jenny Hansen-Otlang, Ethan Kozaki, Holly Risan, Jeff Schell</i>
Production Office Staff	<i>Rachel Katz, Kerry Skalsky</i>
House Management	<i>Maria Cason, Kelli Summers</i>
Tickets	<i>UW Arts Tickets</i>

Jackson Heights in New York City agreed with my parents that it would be better for me not to go to school at *all* rather than enroll in an obvious commie den." His parents kept him enrolled on the books in the city, but he stayed in Ellenville. "All I did was read. And read. And I wrote...I'm the only person I know who benefited from the McCarthy period." Guare was twelve, and had decided a year earlier to be a writer.

He studied at Georgetown University, then at the Yale Drama School, graduating with an M.F.A. in 1963. During a six-month stint in the Air Force Reserve, Guare made his final break with Catholicism. When tempted to go into the movie writing business (a relation was an executive at MGM) his aunt convinced him to continue writing for the stage. "She had planned to leave me ten thousand dollars. Now, she would give the sum to me if I left California, went back to New York, wrote plays, went to Europe, sent her postcards. If I didn't do this, she would leave the money to a dog charity."

So Guare travelled and wrote plays for the stage and postcards to his aunt. He wrote the first act of *House of Blue Leaves*, one of his most successful stage pieces, while in Cairo, after reading a letter from his parents. They felt that, while he might be seeing the world, he had really missed out by not seeing the Pope in New York. Guare was one of the original members of the O'Neill Theatre Center, along with Lanford Wilson, Sam Shepherd and Leonard Malfi. He wrote a well received musical version of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which opened in 1971, and then moved to Nantucket to start a theatre, where *Marco Polo Sings a Solo* was performed. While in Nantucket, Guare says, he got in touch with his "roots." It sparked an interest in the New England area which would show up explicitly in the *Lydie Breeze* plays he would write in the early 1980's, but also in works such as *Bosoms and Neglect* and *Landscape of the Body*, first performed in 1977.

Guare eventually did write for the movies: *Taking Off* in 1971 and *Atlantic Street* in 1980. *Six Degrees of Separation*, made into a movie, opened in 1990.

Guare currently lives in New York City and continues to write. *Four Baboons Adoring the Sun*, his latest piece, opened in 1992.