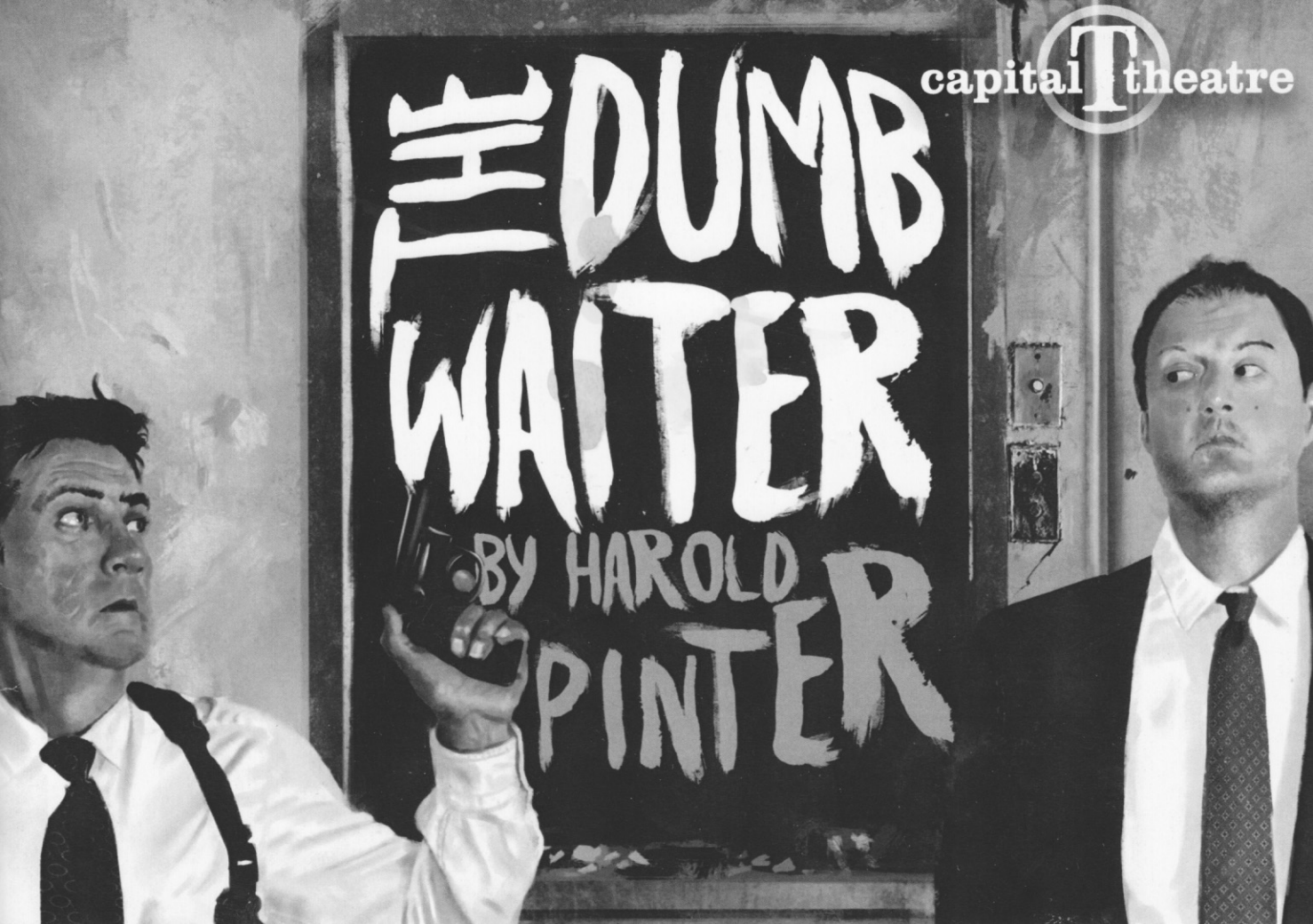


capital  theatre



THE DUMB WAITER

by **Harold Pinter**

Cast

Ben **Ken Webster**

Gus **Jason Phelps**

Setting

a basement

Director/Scenic Designer **Mark Pickell**

Costume Designer **Cheryl Painter**

Dialect Coach **Rebecca Percy**

Lighting Designer **Patrick Anthony**

Stage Manager **Taylor Hurley**

Asst. Stage Manager **Kyle Hurley**

Dramaturg **Rebecca Worley**

Technical Director **Jeff Smith**

THE DUMB WAITER will be presented without intermission

THE DUMB WAITER is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French inc

Pinter and the world of The Dumb Waiter

Harold Pinter is among a group of playwrights who wrote plays that, in 1961, Martin Esslin termed "The Theatre of the Absurd." The playwrights of the Theatre of the Absurd grew out of the avant-garde experiments of the 1920s and 1930s, but it was, perhaps, the horrors of World War II that had the most significant impact on their work. After all, a world in which humans had become the instruments of their own mass-destruction could not be a logical world. As Pinter stated in an interview with Hallam Tennyson in 1960, "In our present-day world, everything is uncertain and relative . . . we are surrounded by the unknown . . . There is a kind of horror about and I think that this horror and absurdity go together."

Pinter regarded life in its absurdity as basically funny – up to a point. Indeed, in 1958, London theater critic Irving Wardle referred to Pinter's *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY* as a "comedy of menace," a term that can also be applied to *THE DUMB WAITER*, which Pinter wrote in 1957. The two central characters, Gus and Ben, are often compared to classic comic duos like Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, or the definitively Absurd comic tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, from Samuel Beckett's *WAITING FOR GODOT*. Yet while Beckett's tramps exist in an empty universe, Gus and Ben are in a room. A room with a dumb waiter hatch.

Pinter's plays often begin with a room, two characters, and a door. Pinter's rooms are recognizable and seemingly secure. It is an uneasy security, one that can be invaded at any minute, and the audience has to wonder: what happens when the dumb waiter hatch is opened? Outside the door and beyond the dumb waiter is the unknown and, for the characters, an undefined menace.

The comic patter of Pinter's dialogue exemplifies an over-arching theme in the Theater of the Absurd: humanity's inability to communicate. The danger of Pinter's almost comedic dialogue, however, is not in the inability to communicate; it is in what Pinter declares as the "deliberate evasion of communication... a continual talking about other things, rather than what is at the root of their relationship." In the spaces between the cross-talk is Pinter's second recurring motif: the pause. Pinter writes his silences as part of his dialogue, and the Pinter-pause is, as director Peter Hall states, "a thing of dangerous eloquence. The unsaid becomes almost more terrifying than the said." The pause, the silence, the space, holds within it all the violence of what Pinter's characters will not say. And so begins *THE DUMB WAITER*. In a room. With a pause.

-Rebecca Worley, Dramaturg



Harold Pinter Playwright

One of England's most important playwrights, Harold Pinter was born in Hackney, near the East End of London, on October 10, 1930. The son of tailor Hyman "Jack" Pinter and Frances Mann Pinter, he grew up in a working class environment. While attending Hackney Downs Grammar School, he became interested in acting and participated in school productions, and he also began writing essays and poetry. In 1948 Pinter was admitted to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, but he left after two terms. From then until 1958 he worked as an actor, using the name David Baron from 1954 to 1958. He acted in BBC radio programs, attended the Central School of Speech and Drama (1951), toured Ireland with Anew McMaster's Shakespearean repertory company for 18 months, and then worked in various other repertory companies.

During that time, Pinter continued to write poetry and short prose pieces; his poetry was first published in *Poetry London* in 1950 under the pseudonym Harold Pinta. In 1957 Pinter was asked to write a play for the drama department at Bristol University, and in four days he wrote *THE*

ROOM, which was very well received and was entered in the *Sunday Times* student drama festival. A favorable review of that play led Michael Codron to produce Pinter's next play, *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY*, which was not successful and closed after a week's time. However, his second full-length play, *THE CARETAKER* (1960), received critical acclaim. From then on, his reputation grew until he became known as one of the most influential and important dramatists of post-war England, responsible for the creation of two new dramatic terms, "Pinteresque" (defining his unique style) and "Pinter pause" (referring to his use of meaningful silences). *THE HOME-COMING* (1965) is widely considered Pinter's best and most important play, but his other full-length plays, such as *OLD TIMES* (1971) and *BETRAYAL* (1978), have also been significant. Pinter did not abandon his interest in poetry; besides publishing several volumes of poetry, he has also edited anthologies of poetry, including *Ninety-Nine Poems in Translation* (1994). Pinter was also an accomplished director and had directed productions of his own plays and others; he served as Associate Director at the National Theatre from 1973 until 1983. After a prolific career in theatre he died from liver cancer on Christmas Eve 2008.

Ken Webster Ben

Ken Webster is an award-winning actor, director, and producer and has been the Artistic Director of Hyde Park Theatre since 2001. He has been acting in Austin since 1979 and has appeared in over 100 productions. Webster has been nominated for 47 B. Iden Payne Awards and 23 Critics' Table Awards for acting, directing, and producing. He received a B. Iden Payne Award for his performance in Eric Bogosian's *SEX, DRUGS, ROCK & ROLL* and Critics' Table Awards for his one-man performances in *ST. NICHOLAS* by Conor McPherson and *THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING)* by Will Eno. In 1999 Webster received the Critics' Table John Bustin Award for "Conspicuous Achievement." His stage acting credits include Capital T Theatre productions of *THE STRANGERER*, *THERE IS A HAPPINESS THAT MORNING IS*, *BUG*, and the Capital T/Hyde Park Theatre co-production of *BLACKBIRD*. Other acting credits include *THE CHRISTIANS*, *PORT AUTHORITY*, *THE DRAWER BOY*, *ONE FOR THE ROAD*, *A BEHANDING IN SPOKANE*, *MIDDLETOWN*, *SLOWGIRL*, *CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION*, *HOUSE*, *THE GOOD THIEF*, *THE COLLECTION*, *EDMOND*, *GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS*, *THE HOMECOMING*, *THE WATER PRINCIPLE*, *VIGIL*, *AMERICAN BUFFALO*, *TRUE WEST*, and *THE PILLOWMAN*. Webster's film and television credits include *Temple Grandin*, *Waking Life*, *A Scanner Darkly*, and *Friday Night Lights*. He was inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame in 2006.

Jason Phelps Gus

Jason Phelps is a multi-disciplinary artist who has been making theatre for over 25 years. In the 90's he co-founded Frontera@Hyde Park Theatre and performed in too many plays to list. He most recently was seen in Cap T's production of *THE STRANGERER* and *DETROIT*. He also won the B. Iden Payne award for Outstanding Lead Actor for his performance of Bernard in *THERE IS A HAPPINESS THAT MORNING IS* for Capital T. He has also performed with the Rude Mechs (*LIPSTICK TRACES US* tour), *Salvage Vanguard (TILT ANGEL)*, *MS Nerve Dance Co*, and *Zach Scott (ANGELS IN AMERICA & SPRING AWAKENING)*. His solo dance theatre work has been seen in Chicago, Boston, Seattle, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and in Austin at *FUSEBOX*. He recently completed a 2-year gig touring with the *INTERGALACTIC NEMESIS*. He has also received 5 Best Actor Awards from the Austin Critics Table.

Taylor Hurley Stage Manager

This is Taylor's ninth collaboration with Capital T Theatre. She was most recently seen as Cathy in Cap T's DNA and has previously stage managed Cap T's THE STRANGERER, YEAR OF THE ROOSTER, FOOL FOR LOVE, DETROIT (B. Iden Payne Nomination Outstanding Stage Management), PUNKPLAY (B. Iden Payne Nomination Outstanding Stage Management), THE MOTHER-FUCKER WITH THE HAT, and THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE.

Cheryl Painter Costume Designer

This is Cheryl's nineteenth collaboration with Capital T. She is one of the longest serving core company members of Cap T. She has designed costumes for YEAR OF THE ROOSTER, THE STRANGERER, FOOL FOR LOVE, DETROIT, PUNKPLAY, GIDION'S KNOT, THE MOTHER-FUCKER WITH THE HAT, THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE, EXIT PURSUED BY A BEAR, BOOM, A LIE OF THE MIND, HUNTER GATHERERS, BUG, SICK, I ♥ WALMART, KILLER JOE, I GOOGLE MYSELF, HAPPY DAYS, and MR. MARMALADE. Cheryl earned her BFA in Theatre from Southwest Texas State University.

Mark Pickell Director/Scenic Designer

Mark is the founder and artistic director of Capital T Theatre Company. His directing credits include A BRIEF HISTORY OF HELEN OF TROY, LA DISPUTE (Austin Critics' Table Nomination Best Comedy), MR. MARMALADE, BLACKBIRD, HAPPY DAYS (B. Iden Payne Nomination Best Director Best Comedy), KILLER JOE (Best Comedy, Best Director Austin Critics' Table Awards; Outstanding Director B. Iden Payne Award), I ♥ WALMART, SICK, BUG (Austin Critics' Table Award Best Director, B. Iden Payne Nominations Outstanding Comedy, Director), HUNTER GATHERERS (Austin Critics' Table Award Best Director), A LIE OF THE MIND (B. Iden Payne Nomination Outstanding Drama, Director), BOOM (Austin Critics' Table Nomination Best Comedy), EXIT PURSUED BY A BEAR (B. Iden Payne Award Outstanding Comedy), THE PAIN AND THE ITCH and THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE (B. Iden Payne Nomination Outstanding Comedy, Director), THERE IS A HAPPINESS THAT MORNING IS (Austin Critics' Table Nomination Best Comedy), DETROIT (B. Iden Payne Nomination Outstanding Comedy, Director), FOOL FOR LOVE, and THE STRANGERER. As a designer, he has been nominated for both his scenic and lighting designs. In 2011, he received the Austin Critics' Table Award for his scenic design of BUG. He is a graduate of Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, where he earned a BFA with honors in Theatre.

Patrick Anthony Light Design

Patrick Anthony is a freelance lighting designer and master electrician based in Austin, Texas. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Loyola University, New Orleans, and is an MFA candidate at Trinity College Dublin. Patrick has worked with Capital T Theatre for several years, most recently on **YEAR OF THE ROOSTER**, **THE STRANGER**, **DNA** (Austin Critics' Table Nomination), **FOOL FOR LOVE** (B. Iden Payne Nomination Outstanding Lighting Design), **THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE**, and **THE MOTHERFUCKER WITH THE HAT**. He is a member of the Vortex Repertory Company and Shrewd Productions, and he is the recipient of the 2012 B. Iden Payne Award for Lighting Design. In addition to his freelance career, Patrick teaches Stagecraft at Southwestern University.

Rebecca Percy Dialect Coach

Rebecca graduated from the Rose Bruford Drama School in England, where she achieved a BA in American Theatre. It was here her adventure with dialects began as she trained in voice and accents, focusing on the American accent. She has also studied many British, French, Irish, and Australian dialects. She coached Legacy Theatre's **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** and has worked as a voice-over artist on various projects, including the video games **WIZARD 101**, **PIRATE 101**, and various radio commercials. She was born and raised in Essex, England, but altered her native accent to a more appealing version. Also an accomplished actress, she has appeared in Cap T's **PUNKPLAY**, as well as **DÉTROIT**. She is featured in Austin Theatre Project's **ROCKY HORROR SHOW** currently running right now at the Ground Floor Theatre.

Special Thanks

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