

Waiting for Godot

By Samuel Beckett

Fall 2023

Who?

Producer(s): Bri Anderson, bri.anderson@yale.edu

Directors(s): Sean Pergola, sean.pergola@yale.edu

Stage Manager(s): Cassandra Haakman, kassandra.haakman@yale.edu

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What?

A brief synopsis:

Two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, are trapped in a purgatorial state, awaiting the arrival of Godot, an enigmatic figure who appears in the play only by his name. To pass the time, they engage in conversations that are simultaneously profoundly philosophical and entirely absurd, all while grappling with the uncertainty and hopelessness of their situation.

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: Friday, Sept. 15

Current Tech Week Dates: Sunday, Nov. 5 - Wednesday, Nov. 8

Performance Dates: Thursday, Nov. 9 - Saturday, Nov. 11

Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): Sept. 15 - Nov. 11

Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours):

- Weeks 1-3: 3 - 4.5 hours
- Weeks 4-5: 6 - 8 hours
- Tech week: TBD

Content Warnings

- Discussion of suicide
- Some sexual themes throughout
- Depiction of slavery

Audition Expectations

There are two options for auditions: **in-person or self-taped.**

For **in-person auditions**, actors will perform **1 monologue and an excerpted dialogue** (attached below), which will be read along with the director. **Actors do not have to memorize their sides**, but they are encouraged to familiarize themselves with them so that they are able to act rather than read.

For **self-taped auditions**, actors will submit two videos of themselves performing **2 monologues** (attached below) to sean.pergola@yale.edu by **5:00 pm, September 4.** Further information on the self-tape process is included below!

All callbacks will be held in-person. Actors selected for callbacks will receive further instructions via email, and will prepare excerpted dialogues to be performed with other actors.

Audition Location(s)

First-round auditions and call-backs will both be held at **53 Wall St. Room B-04**, located behind Timothy Dwight College.

General Information

Thank you so much for your interest in this production, and congratulations on taking your first step on getting involved!

A bit about the show's history and significance: written in 1948 and first performed in 1952, *Waiting for Godot* is the most well-known work of Samuel Beckett, who was a pioneer of absurdist theater. Beckett was among the many outcast artists living in Paris in the mid-twentieth century, including other authors of absurdist fiction like Eugène Ionesco. Their works were heavily inspired by the spirit of the times; many felt lost and betrayed after the almost unimaginable carnage of World War II, and works like *Waiting for Godot* reflect those feelings. The play is known as a tragicomedy – it's humorous on the surface (and entertaining to watch!), but it simultaneously questions the nature of the universe and our significance (or lack thereof) in it.

Waiting for Godot has become a staple for high school and college literature classes (perhaps you've already read it in one of them!). It's not meant to be confined to a classroom, though – it's impossible to appreciate how poignantly tragic and hysterically funny the show is without seeing it performed live. By joining this cast, you'll be a part of bringing this humor and sorrow to life!

If you have any further questions about any part of this audition packet, feel free to email sean.pergola@yale.edu.

Timeline

Auditions will be held **Sunday, September 3rd** and **Monday, September 4th** (Labor Day), from **1:30-3:30**. **Callbacks** will be held **Tuesday, September 5th** and (if necessary) **Wednesday, September 6th**. Actors cast in the production will be notified of their roles on **September 10th**.

Rehearsals will begin with a readthrough tentatively scheduled for **Friday, September 15th** (pending availability of the actors). There will be **3 rehearsals per week** until tech week (with a break during October Recess). Not all cast members will be called to all rehearsals, especially in the first two weeks. There are a total of **5 full weeks of rehearsals prior to tech week**.

During **tech week (November 5th-8th)**, **there will be rehearsals every day**. One of these days may be removed, depending on the state of the show.

The show will run on the following dates at times:

- **Thursday, November 9th - 6:30 pm**
- **Friday, November 10th - 8:00 pm**
- **Saturday, November 11th**
 - **2:00 pm**
 - **8:00 pm**

Character Breakdowns

All roles are open to all races, ethnicities, and gender identities.

Vladimir - A tramp. The “straight man” – more philosophical, nostalgic, and idealistic than his friend Estragon. The only character who notices when things begin repeating themselves.

Estragon - Another tramp. The “fall guy” – more earthy, id-centric, and less concerned with existential implications than Estragon.

Pozzo - A gentleman and the master of Lucky. In the Act I, an authoritarian figure prone to vague and condescending platitudes. In the Act II, blind and helpless, dependent on Lucky’s guidance and the help of those around him.

Lucky - Pozzo’s elderly slave. Unpredictable and occasionally violent. Silently puts up with Pozzo’s abuse during most of his time on stage, except for his outburst of nonsensical “thinking.”

Boy - The messenger of Godot. Meek and easily intimidated.

Audition Information

The first round of auditions can either be performed in-person or self-taped and sent in.

In-Person Auditions

Auditions will take place from **1:30-3:30, Sunday, Sept. 3 and Monday, Sept. 4, at 53 Wall St Room B-04.**

Actors are asked to prepare **one monologue and the attached dialogue**. For the dialogue, the actor may choose to read for either Vladimir or Estragon. The character they do not choose will be read by Sean, the director.

During the audition, there will be time to introduce yourself to the team and ask any questions you may have. You’ll then perform the excerpted dialogue, and then move on to your selected monologue. After this, Sean may then provide some notes to you regarding the delivery of your monologue, and you’ll have the opportunity to incorporate these notes and perform the monologue again.

Please note that **you do not have to have the dialogue or your selected monologue memorized**, but you should feel comfortable enough with it that you are able to act rather than just read from the page (especially for the dialogue, which moves rather quickly!).

Self-Taped Auditions

If the scheduled audition times do not fit in within your schedule, there is also the option to send in self-taped auditions. Self-taped auditions are due **Monday, Sept. 4 at 5:00 pm**. **Please note that this is NOT 11:59 pm** – the tight turnaround time for callbacks means that these videos really must be in no later than 5:00!

For self-taped auditions, actors are asked to perform **2 monologues** of their choice. Please position yourself facing the camera, and make sure that your entire face and upper torso is clearly visible. Also, remember that you can still use your hands on camera!

Self-taped audition videos should be sent to sean.pergola@yale.edu, with a subject line as follows: [your last name, your first name] Self-Tape Godot Audition. MP4 file types are preferred, but as long as it can be played on a Mac, it works for me!

Although it would be ideal to have you in-person, a self-taped **audition will not disadvantage you in any way whatsoever**.

Callbacks

Callbacks will be held for selected actors **September 5-6 at 53 Wall St Room B-04**. All callbacks will be held in-person.

Selected actors will receive exact instructions for the callback procedure via an email. They will be asked to perform excerpts of the script not included in this audition packet, working with other actors.

Audition sides

Monologue

Option 1: Vladimir

Was I sleeping, while the others suffered? Am I sleeping now? Tomorrow, when I wake, or think I do, what shall I say of today? That with Estragon my friend, at this place, until the fall of night, I waited for Godot? That Pozzo passed, with his carrier, and that he spoke to us? Probably. But in all that what truth will there be? (*Estragon, having struggled with his boots in vain, is dozing off again. Vladimir looks at him.*) He'll know nothing. He'll tell me about the blows he received and I'll give him a carrot. (*Pause*) Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the grave-digger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of our cries. (*He listens.*) But habit is a great deadener. (*He looks again at Estragon.*) At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is saying, he is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on. (*Pause.*) I can't go on! (*Pause.*) What have I said?

Option 2: Pozzo

The night. (*He raises his head.*)... Look!... Good, that's enough... What is there so extraordinary about it? Qua sky. It is pale and luminous like any sky at this hour of the day. (*Pause.*) In these latitudes. (*Pause.*) When the weather is fine. (*Lyrical.*) An hour ago (*he looks at his watch, prosaic*) roughly (*lyrical*) after having poured forth even since (*he hesitates, prosaic*) say ten o'clock in the morning (*lyrical*) tirelessly torrents of red and white light it begins to lose its effulgence, to grow pale (*gesture of the two hands lapsing by stages*) pale, ever a little paler, a little paler until (*dramatic pause, ample gesture of the two hands flung wide apart*) pppfff! finished! it comes to rest. But– (*hand raised in admonition*)– but behind this veil of gentleness and peace, night is charging (*vibrantly*) and will burst upon us (*snaps his fingers*) pop! like that! (*his inspiration leaves him*) just when we least expect it. (*Silence. Gloomily.*) That's how it is on this bitch of an earth.

Option 3: Lucky

Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labors left unfinished crowned by the Acacacademy of Anthropopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard it is established beyond all doubt all other doubt // that man in short that man in brief in spite of the strides of alimentation and defecation wastes and pines wastes and pines and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding gliding conating camogie skating tennis of all kinds dying flying sports of all sorts autumn summer winter winter tennis of all kinds hockey of all sorts // . . tennis . . . the stones . . . so calm . . . Cunard . . . unfinished . . .

Dialogue

ESTRAGON: Let's go.

VLADIMIR: We can't.

ESTRAGON: Why not?

VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.

ESTRAGON: (*despairingly*). Ah! (*Pause.*) You're sure it was here?

VLADIMIR: What?

ESTRAGON: That we were to wait.

VLADIMIR: He said by the tree.

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ESTRAGON: Looks to me more like a bush.

VLADIMIR: A shrub.

VLADIMIR: A—. What are you insinuating? That we've come to the wrong place?

ESTRAGON: He should be here.

VLADIMIR: He didn't say for sure he'd come.

ESTRAGON: And if he doesn't come?

VLADIMIR: We'll come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON: And then the day after tomorrow.

VLADIMIR: Possibly.

ESTRAGON: And so on.

VLADIMIR: The point is—

ESTRAGON: Until he comes.

VLADIMIR: You're merciless.