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UNIVERSITY THEATRE NEWSLETTER

FALL, 1988

NUMBER 4

from
morn till
midnight

GEORG KAISER (1878-1945) has been called the finest German dramatist prior to Bertolt Brecht. As leader of the so-called expressionist school of drama, Kaiser is considered one of the most important German dramatists of modern times. He was the first German playwright to win acceptance abroad after World War I.

Anti-German sentiments, being what they were following the War, explain in large measure why expressionism remained essentially a German movement.

Georg Kaiser was undoubtedly the most rigorous thinker among the expressionists. He once declared, "Writing a drama means: thinking a thought through to its conclusion," and the dialectical approach suggested by this statement is always evident in his plays. Kaiser rejected the naturalists' belief in heredity and environment as the determinants of man's actions, just as he did the symbolists' belief in the role of a mysterious Fate. Rather, he declared that man has freedom to choose and that he is able to regenerate himself if he can free himself from the weight of politics and materialism. Not surprising, then, most of Kaiser's mature works are dialectical demonstrations showing the awakening of the human will to act or attempts to overcome mechanizing and dehumanizing forces.

Kaiser wrote over sixty plays of various types and styles. His earliest works, *THE JEWISH WIDOW* and *KING CUCKOLD*, are satiric travesties of legendary subjects, the former of Judith and Holofernes, the latter of Tristan and Isolde. But it is upon his expressionistic works that Kaiser's fame rests. He first won wide critical acclaim with *THE BURGHERS OF CALAIS* in 1912, a play based on a fourteenth-century story about six burghers who seek to save Calais from destruction by offering themselves as sacrifices to the English besiegers.

Today Kaiser is remembered primarily for *FROM MORN TILL MIDNIGHT* and the trilogy composed of *THE CORAL*, *GAS I* and *GAS II*. *FROM MORN TILL MIDNIGHT* is a modern morality play, for, as the title suggests, it uses a day to symbolize the period of man's life, during which the Teller (Everyman) moves through the principal types of human experience. Because he is concerned with essences, Kaiser reduces characters to generic types and archetypal situations. The action takes place in a dream-like atmosphere where through distortion and condensation everything is charged with strangeness.

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY THEATRE'S production of FROM MORN TILL MIDNIGHT features a cast of sixteen who portray more than forty characters. Two newcomers, Linda Vaananen and James Sheehan join veteran student players Dan Torbica, Marko Urukalo, Allen Davis, Andrew Martin, Jeffery Willgale, James Hayes, Mary Beth Burns, Linda Schmidt, Donnette Tocwish, Lara Novey, Louise Cottini and Helene Simon. Alumni Rich Havansek and Patrick Collins complete the cast.

JOHN DeWITTE will be guest director for FROM MORN TILL MIDNIGHT. He has directed and/or performed in a number of small theatre/performance works in Chicago over the past eight years. These include STAGE BLOOD by Charles Ludlam, I WAS SITTING ON MY PATIO THIS GUY APPEARED I THOUGHT I HALLUCINATING by Robert Wilson, M.O.R. by Jim Neu, THE QUESTION by John Hawkes, OUR LUNCH by Kenn L. D. Frandsen and CAFE AMERIQUE by Richard Foreman. This winter he will perform THE HYPOTHESIS by Robert Pinget.

ROBERT G. SMITH has designed the elaborate sets and lights. DARICE DaMATA-GEIGER is costumer. LINDA STERLING is assistant director and DAVID SCHULTE is stage manager.

november 17·18·19·30
december 1·2·3 7:30

special alumni matinee sunday, november 20 3:00

admission: \$5.00

\$3.50 to seniors, students, alumni

\$2.50 to alumni for sunday, november 20

FREE to all UNI faculty/staff/students

THE STAGE CENTER

THE WINTER PRODUCTION for the University Theatre will be Eugene Ionesco's KILLING GAME to be directed by Dan Torbica. In this evocative play, Ionesco expounds one of his favorite themes, that we are all involved in the killing game. In a town where the folks speak only in cliches, a black monk disrupts a purfunctory way of life. No one escapes Ionesco...he points his finger at us all.

Performance dates: March 31, April 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1989, in the UNI Stage Center

JACKS OR BETTER

The students speak:

The first thing that hit me as I entered the theatre was the set. The apartment looked so familiar it seemed as if I had been there before. I felt like I was living next door looking out the window watching all this happening in front of me.

--Victor Pashuka, junior

The dialogue was extremely well written. The playwright used a lot of sarcasm that set the tone for the play--it made you feel as if you were in a room full of your own friends.

--Joe Assento, sophomore

Matthew Bruehler's JACKS OR BETTER was an enlightening experience. This newcomer to the theatre proved himself to be very talented. Bruehler took a common situation, which everyone could relate to, and expanded it.

--Brenda Gates, sophomore

I think this play is a good way for a lot of us to relive a little of our past--the time in life where we grew up and took control of our lives. It was an enjoyable evening for me.

--Ed Patock, junior

I found myself after a while watching the play and hearing the dialogue, but instead of viewing Jack, I saw myself dealing with the same type of problem. It is this quality that makes JACKS OR BETTER not only a delight to watch, but also enables one to leave the theatre with a sense of inner strength and realization.

--Raquel Nadrowski, sophomore

JACKS OR BETTER is both a funny and a serious play as it shows how people really are, but in a light manner. You laugh while you're thinking.

--Lisa Johnston, sophomore

Since the play was about young people, I could identify with it and really found myself taking an interest in the characters.

--Mindy Saperstein, junior

The best and strongest part of this play was the conversation between Jack and his Alter Ego. There was chemistry, sparks and tension--like humans experience within themselves. The scene left me with goosebumps.

--Christina Aguilera, seni