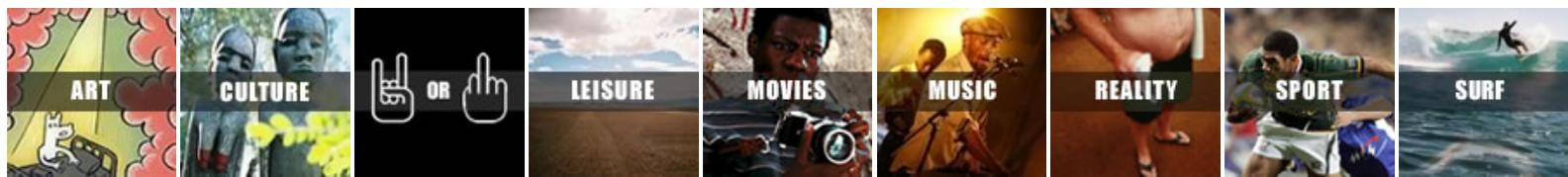




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Still Waiting

Tuesday, August 10th, 2010 by Daniel Scheffler



So *Waiting for Godot* is in town. For two weeks only. Part of a whirlwind world tour. It's Saturday night at the spanking new Fugard Theatre. Tickets are prized. It's a palpable hit. Gandalf being in it probably has a lot to do with it. A big star. On our little peninsula. It can't be the play can it? Is the play the thing? *Godot* is about the suspension of normalcy and the reign of dread. Perfect for a recession. It's the highest achievement of existentialist entertainment. We're all waiting for something. Love, money, real estate appreciation. Our own personal *Godots*.

Garden variety existentialists hold that there are fundamental questions we must all come to terms with if we're to take ourselves seriously – if we're to establish any sense of intrinsic value in our lives. We have to face up to death, try to overcome the arbitrary nature of our being here now, and solve the riddle of the presence or absence of God. God's eternal silence. In other words, get over the fact that there really are no final certainties. No absolute judging intelligence we can appeal to for clarity. We have to make it all up as we go along. Hardly a fun night out for the whole family. Yet the Fugard is heaving with patrons.

Maybe they're getting how life-affirming existentialism really is. An individual must create value by living – not just by jacking off about it. Enact life. Be in it. Live it. Even waiting is a verb. Beckett's work is lazily thought to be bleakly suggesting we are completely doomed to drifting purposelessness in a barren void of cosmic indifference. Not so. The play begins.



Let's listen to Sir Ian McKellen. Oh wait. What's he saying? Project your voice Gandalf! We can't hear shit in the cheap seats. Is he saving his pipes for yet another *Xmen* blockbuster? This Knight of the Realm is undeniably a Great Actor. What timing, what poise, what conviction. Precise in his craft. But Ian doesn't dazzle on the night. It happens. He was flat, over-rehearsed and predictable. It was empty nothingness. He wasn't convincing. He seemed elsewhere. He failed to do his part to make the play compelling. He kept us waiting for his waiting to come to life.

Is it me? Am I beyond the great stakes of existentialism? Aren't these gravely deep questions just a bit adolescent? A bit studenty. At some point, around tax season, it makes more sense to just quit questioning why we're here. Your friends are always relieved when you do. No more doom and gloom. You make money and get through the day. You party on weekends. You die. That's it.

Who's really worth waiting for anyway? Godot better have cheekbones and cheesecake. And even then he's got like twenty minutes, and I'm leaving. Lateness is just rude. We're in the twenty-first century. We made it this far into the future. We have iPads. We can make life in laboratories. We long for self-awareness and harmony between work and life and love. What we don't need is a reason for being.

Why we're here and whether it means anything is so last century.

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7 Responses to "Still Waiting"

1. *Warren* says:

[August 10, 2010 at 2:42 pm](#)

I saw the play in London when it was McKellen and Patrick Stewart and I was blown away. I too had cheap seats and yet everything came through clearly. Just McKellen's walk as he came on to stage was enough to create the character, yet he added a gravely voiced gruffness coupled with a Vaudevillian charm. I am sorry he wasn't on form that night, as at his best there is probably no actor in the world that can touch him.



KIF (0)



KAK (0)

2. *Anonymous* says:

[August 10, 2010 at 5:30 pm](#)

I think the acoustics of the theatre weren't very good. The actor's words were drowned. It was obvious that they were trying their best to project their voices clearly.