

Colorado State University

UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

www.UniversityCenterfortheArts.com

Eh Joe

A piece for television by Samuel Beckett



The Colorado Premier Screening of Samuel Beckett's First Television Play

Directed by Price Johnston and Eric Prince

Featuring Wendy Ishii as "Voice" and Eric Prince as Joe

Created by The Center for Studies in Beckett and Performance
and the CSU Theatre Program in Collaboration with Bas Bleu Theatre.

**The Center for Studies in Beckett and Performance and the CSU Theatre Program
in Collaboration with Bas Bleu Theatre presents:**

Eh Joe
A Piece for Television by Samuel Beckett

The Colorado Premier Screening of a New CSU Production of Beckett's First Television Play

Joe – Eric Prince
Voice – Wendy Ishii

Directed by Eric Prince and Price Johnston
Camera & Film Design – Price Johnston

Samuel Beckett, an Irishman born in Dublin in 1906 who later made Paris his adopted home came unexpectedly to be regarded as the most influential and unconventional playwright of the twentieth century, following the success of his Waiting For Godot. In 1969 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Eh Joe was written purely for television by Samuel Beckett in 1965 and first broadcast in 1966 by BBC Television in Britain and by SDR in Germany. This unique project is a re-creation of that original broadcast for the audience of the twenty first century. The original film is rarely seen or experienced yet exists as one of Beckett's typically distinctive dramas, mysterious, poetic and challenging.

The Center for Studies in Beckett and Performance encourages interdisciplinary partnerships, artistic collaborations and performance opportunities and actively works to sustain visibility and recognition of Beckett's works both as significant art and as living contemporary performance. To date since its inception in 2002 there have been more than twenty special performance projects, productions or research outcomes.

For details on the Center please go to <http://www.theatre.colostate.edu/beckett/chronology>
For details on Price Johnston, Eric Prince, Wendy Ishii, go to <http://www.theatre.colostate.edu/people>

All your dead dead – Re-Visioning *Eh Joe*

(An abstract published in the proceedings of the International Federation for Theatre Research. FIRT/IFTR Annual Conference, Barcelona July 2013)

Eh Joe (A piece for television) written by Samuel Beckett in 1965 with Jack MacGowran, Beckett's most favored actor in mind, was broadcast in 1966 by BBC Television in Britain and by SDR in Germany to mixed critical response - a 'lugubrious experience', 'almost excessively small', 'a rare lapse of taste on Beckett's part'. My own memory of the original BBC broadcast (in the innocence of pre- VCR - pre-digital days) was of an enigmatic, artistic work unlike anything ever seen in the medium. I plan to revisit and to reexamine *Eh Joe* not only as a reader but also as a performer and director to reflect more variously on the play's intentions and its distinctive emotional landscape. Along with this paper there will be the screening of moments from a new filmed performance of *Eh Joe*, with acclaimed Beckett actor Wendy Ishii as the Woman's Voice, and myself as the protagonist Joe. Michael Blakewell, the BBC Head of Plays in 1965, recalled a discussion with Beckett about the scripted directions for *Eh Joe* being presented to him, 'not as absolutes but as the only way in which the play could work.' My goal is to follow Beckett's instruction yet still re-vision the play in a way that accommodates the prevailing digitized formats and flat screens of the twenty-first century, in the form and spirit that the artist intended.

With thanks to Walt Jones, CSU Theatre Program Director and all who have supported and helped in the making of this project.