

THE PEARL

THEATRE COMPANY

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THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

THE BALD SOPRANO

BY EUGÈNE IONESCO

TRANSLATED BY DONALD M. ALLEN

AT NEW YORK CITY CENTER STAGE II

DIRECTED BY HAL BROOKS

PREVIEW PERFORMANCES BEGIN: September 13, 2011 at 7:30 PM

OPENING NIGHT: September 25, 2011 at 7:30 PM

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT ENDS: October 23, 2011

Press Previews

Thursday, September 22, 2011 at 7:30pm

Friday, September 23, 2011 at 7:30pm

Saturday, September 24, 2011 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

NEW YORK, NY, August 26, 2011– **THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY (J.R. Sullivan, Artistic Director)** proudly presents a new production of Eugène Ionesco's **THE BALD SOPRANO**. The absurdist tour de force, directed by Hal Brooks, **begins performances on September 13 at New York City Center Stage II**. Tickets are currently on sale through CityTix® and at NYCityCenter.org.

Hailed as “bizarre and brilliant,” Ionesco’s **THE BALD SOPRANO** begins The Pearl’s 28th season. Praised as a modern classic and one of the first major works of the Theatre of the Absurd, the play is renowned for its comic caricatures and absurd hilarity. When Ionesco attempted a self-taught English language program in the 1940s, he was startled by how banal, uncommunicative, and absurd the phrases he was learning were. And what he called a “tragedy of language” became the basis for his first play. Set in a bourgeois English household, the comedy displays the bizarre and comic disintegration of language and communication. The title is thought to have originated from a verbal slip-up by an actor during the original rehearsal period. *The Bald Soprano* has been in continuous performance in Paris since 1957 making it one of the longest continuously running theatre productions in the world.

“Eugène Ionesco did not label his theatre absurd,” said Pearl Artistic Director J. R. Sullivan. “Others did that for him. His achievement was to tell the world a truth about itself in brilliant theatrical form: psychological reality was

shifting and evidence of that was everywhere to be found in human hopes and fears. His theatre, a mirror held up to the times, depicted a world that was absurd.”

Eugène Ionesco, born in Slatina, Romania in 1909, spent most of his childhood in France. He was a noted essayist and critic for many years before his first foray into dramatic literature, *The Bald Soprano*, written in 1948. The play heralded a new direction in theatre, paving the way for writers from Samuel Beckett to Edward Albee. *The Bald Soprano* was only the first of many dramatic works by Ionesco, most notably *The Lesson* in 1951, *Rhinoceros* in 1959, and *Exit the King* in 1962. Eugène Ionesco died at age 84 in 1994.

Director **Hal Brooks** has worked extensively off Broadway and in the regions. Recent New York credits include the Obie award-winning *No Child...* and *Urge For Going* at The Public Theater, Colin Quinn’s *Long Story Short* (creative consultant), directed by Jerry Seinfeld, and the off-Broadway production of Will Eno’s Pulitzer Prize finalist *Thom Pain* (director). Regional credits include work at McCarter Theatre, Berkeley Rep, American Conservatory Theater, Humana Festival, and Dallas Theater Center. He is the Associate Artistic Director of the Ojai Playwrights Conference and was the Artistic Director of the Rude Mechanicals Theater Company along with being a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, a 2003 Drama League Fellow, and a recipient of the 2007-2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Program. This will be Mr. Brooks’ debut directing for The Pearl.

The Cast

THE BALD SOPRANO cast features five members of The Pearl’s Resident Acting Company. **Jolly Abraham** (Mrs. Martin) has been with the company since 2008 and was last seen at The Pearl in the 2010 production of *Hard Times*. She’s been seen on Broadway in *Coram Boy* and *Bombay Dreams*. **Rachel Botchan** (Mrs. Smith) a member of the company since 2000, was last seen at The Pearl in *The Sneeze* and recently at Two River Theater in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. **Robin Leslie Brown** (Mary) is a founding member of the ensemble, last seen at The Pearl in the company’s 2011 production of *Rosmersholm*. **Bradford Cover** (Mr. Smith), a Pearl company member since 1996, has performed regionally and on Broadway in the 2001 revival of *A Thousand Clowns*. He was featured last season at The Pearl as Johannes Rosmer in *Rosmersholm*. **Dan Daily** (The Fire Chief), a company member since 1998, was last seen with The Pearl as Ulrik Brendel in *Rosmersholm* and John Cleary in *The Subject was Roses*. Daily has also appeared off Broadway with The New Group, and Classic Stage Company. The Pearl’s resident company members are joined by guest actor **Brad Heberlee**, who has appeared off Broadway at the Atlantic Theater Company, Vineyard Theatre, and Soho Rep. Regionally, he’s worked with Denver Center Theatre Company, Yale Rep, the Humana Festival, and Huntington Theatre.

Production Team

The production team includes: **Harry Feiner**, scenic design; **Barbara A. Bell**, costume design; **Stephen Petrilli**, lighting design; **M.L. Dogg**, sound design. The stage manager is **Erin Albrecht** and the dramaturg is **Kate Farrington**.

About The Pearl Theatre Company

The Pearl Theatre Company is dedicated to playing a vital role in the cultural life of New York City and its surrounding region by creating productions that examine, explore, and illuminate the human condition. The Pearl is an artistic home for a diverse company of theatre professionals, especially a core company of resident actors. The Pearl provides engagement opportunities that both educate and enrich the experiences of artists, students, and audiences. Last season, The Pearl received a 2011 Lortel Award nomination for best revival (for *The Misanthrope*), and a special 2011 Drama Desk award for "notable productions of classic plays and nurturing a stalwart resident company of actors."

The 2010-2011 Resident Acting Company consists of veterans of the New York and regional stages including: Jolly Abraham, Rachel Botchan, Robin Leslie Brown, Bradford Cover, Dominic Cuskern, Dan Daily, Robert Hock, Sean McNall, Chris Mixon, Carol Schultz, Edward Seamon, and Lee Stark.

Following the run of *The Bald Soprano*, Pearl will produce Shakespeare's **RICHARD II** in November, **THE PHILANDERER** by Bernard Shaw in January, and conclude with **A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN** by Eugene O'Neill in March.

2011-2012 Ticketing and Performance Information

The Pearl Theatre Company provides a variety of ticketing options for the performance space at New York City Center, including season subscription packages.

For **subscription tickets** and information, contact The Pearl's Subscriber Services at 212-598-9802 or visit www.pearltheatre.org.

Single tickets can be purchased through New York City Center by calling **CityTix®** at **212-581-1212**, going online to www.NYCityCenter.org. Tickets will be available for purchase at the City Center Box Office (131 West 55th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues) beginning September 6.

Production Schedule:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30PM; Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2:30PM.

Previews begin September 13, 2011 at 7:30PM. **Opening night is Sunday, September 25, 2011** at 7:30PM.

Regular Ticket Prices:

All tickets begin at \$39.

Senior Discount: \$30 tickets can be purchased in advance of each performance by people 65 and older. Tickets can be purchased over the phone through CityTix® or at the box office. 2 tickets per valid ID (with date of birth), which must be presented at time of pick-up.

Student Rush: \$15 tickets can be purchased on the day of the performance only, 2 hours prior to curtain time at the box office, subject to availability, by students with a valid student ID. 2 tickets per I.D.

Thursday Rush: \$20 tickets are available to anyone for Thursday evening performances on the day of performance only, 2 hours prior to curtain time at the box office, subject to availability. 1 ticket per person.

Groups of ten or more receive 20% off single tickets. Contact The Pearl's Audience Services Manager at 212.598.9802 for details.

Tuesday Talk Post-Performance Discussion:

These in-depth discussions give audiences the opportunity to participate in intimate talk-backs led by published scholars and experts within their fields. Tuesday Talks during ***The Bald Soprano*** will take place following the performances on September 27, 2011 and October 4, 2011.

Directions:

The company performs its 2011-2012 Season at New York City Center Stage II, located at 131 West 55th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues) in midtown Manhattan.

New York City Center can be reached by taking the N/Q/R to 57th St/7th Ave, the F to 57th St/6th Ave, the D/E to 7th Ave/53rd St, the A/B/C/D/1 to 59th St at Columbus Circle, the C to 50th St/8th Ave, or the 1 to 50th St/7th Ave.

By Bus m1, m2, m3, m4, m5, m6, m7, m10, m20, m31, m57, m104

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