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Eugene Ionesco

Romanian Eugen Ionescu (born Nov. 26, 1909, Slatina, Romania.-died March 28, 1994, Paris, France), Romanian-born French dramatist whose one-act "antiplay" *La Cantatrice chauve* (1949; *The Bald Soprano*) inspired a revolution in dramatic techniques and helped inaugurate the Theatre of the Absurd. Elected to the Académie Française in 1970, Ionesco remains among the most important dramatists of the 20th century. Ionesco's achievement lies in having popularized a wide variety of non-representational and surrealistic techniques and in having made them acceptable to audiences conditioned to a naturalistic convention in the theatre. His tragicomic farces dramatize the absurdity of bourgeois life, the meaninglessness of social conventions, and the futile and mechanical nature of modern civilization. His plays build on bizarrely illogical or fantastic situations using such devices as the humorous multiplication of objects on stage until they overwhelm the actors. The clichés and tedious maxims of polite conversation surface in improbable or inappropriate contexts to expose the deadening futility of most human communication. Ionesco's later works show less concern with witty intellectual paradox and more with dreams, visions, and exploration of the subconscious.

BLUE RAINCOAT

- Ensemble: John Carty, Ciaran McCauley, Kellie Hughes, Fiona McGeown, Sandra O Malley
- Artistic Director: Niall Henry
- Writer in Residence: Malcolm Hamilton
- Financial Controller: Teresa Needham
- Technical Manager: Joe Hunt
- Production Manager: Peter Davey
- Front of House: Gretta Currid
- Accountants: Sherlock Hamilton & Co
- Solicitors: McDermott, Creed and Martyn

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BLUE RAINCOAT



Eugene Ionesco

The Chairs



Foreword

The Chairs by Eugene Ionesco is one of five productions Blue Raincoat Theatre Company will stage over the course of 2011, our 20th birthday celebration year. It has been preceded by our tour of *At-Swim-Two-Birds* to Dublin, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Our production of *The Cat and the Moon* by WB Yeats will be also be staged in July, alongside performances of *The Chairs*. The summer programme coincides with the Yeats International Summer School. Blue Raincoat Theatre Company will also conduct the theatre seminar module of the 52nd Yeats International Summer School for the second year.

Our summer schedule will be followed by the world premiere of Jocelyn Clarke's new stage adaptation of Flann O'Brien's *The Poor Mouth* in October. 2011 is the centenary on the birth of Brain O'Nolan, (aka Flann O'Brien & Myles Na Gopaleen). *The Poor Mouth* completes the trilogy of original Blue Raincoat works based on the novels of Flann O'Brien, and follows on from *The Third Policeman* which premiered in 2007 and *At Swim-Two Birds* which premiered in 2009.

November will see the completion of the Blue Raincoat Theatre Resource Project 2007-2011. The aim of the project was to make a comprehensive contribution to the development of theatre as an art form throughout the Northwest region. Under the project we opened our Theatre Library at The Factory Performance Space in Sligo, launched our annual Mobile Theatre Programme, and established an annual Lecture Workshop series. Throughout 2010 and 2011 the Theatre Resource Project has also seen our company and facilities used to provide ongoing mentoring, administrative and infrastructure support for new theatre groups, arts project initiatives and individual artists seeking to develop their arts practice. In January 2012 we will announce details of our Blue Raincoat Theatre Resource Project 2012-2016. While continuing to develop the successful elements of the first Theatre Resource Project, the new resource project will concentrate extensively on offering structured rehearsal, performance and mentoring supports for performance artists and emerging Irish ensembles.

In close conjunction with The Hawk's Well Theatre our company is pleased to announce that a new three-day children's theatre festival will take place in November this year. We are also pleased to announce that working in partnership with a number of international theatre company's we are developing an annual month long international theatre festival for Sligo commencing in May 2012.

Blue Raincoat staged an award winning production of *The Chairs* in 2006 featuring Ruth Lehane and Mikel Murfi. The production took a festival first at the FESTCO International Theatre Festival in Ionesco's native Bucharest in 2007. However due to administrative reasons Blue Raincoat were unable to tour this production in Ireland beyond its original sell-out dates in Sligo and Galway until 2011. This revival will therefore pave the way for future performances around the country of *The Chairs* in 2012 and 2013.

We hope you will enjoy tonight's performance of *The Chairs* and that we will see you at some of our other performances and events throughout 2011.

July 19th 2011

Cast

John Carty The Old Man
Ciaran McCauley The Orator
Sandra O'Malley The Old Woman

Director: **Niall Henry**
Author: **Eugene Ionesco**
Designer: **Jamie Vartan**
Lighting Design: **Michael Cummins**
Sound Design: **Joe Hunt**
Production Manager: **Peter Davey**
Stage Management/Publicity Distribution: **Niamh Devaney**
Set Construction: **Gus Henry, Peter Davey, Michael Cummins.**
Barry McKinney & Independent Production Services Northwest.

This production is a revival of Blue Raincoat Theatre Company's International Award Winning 2006 production which featured **Mikel Murfi, Ruth Lehane and Ciaran McCauley.**

Biographies

John Carty (Old Man)

John trained at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College, Dublin, graduating in 1988. He worked with Co-Motion Theatre Company and Graffiti Theatre Company before returning to Sligo to become a founder member of Blue Raincoat Theatre Company. He has since trained at The Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique, London, at the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, New York with Anne Bogart and at the Roy Hart Theatre in Malerargues, France. John has appeared in most of the company's productions to date.

Ciarán McCauley (The Orator)

Ciarán is from Sligo and has been a core member of Blue Raincoat Theatre since October 1991. He has trained at the Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique, London with Corrine Soum and Steve Wasson, at the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, New York with Anne Bogart and at the Roy Hart Theatre in Malerargues, France. He has performed in the *Playboy of the Western World* at the Peacock Theatre, Dublin directed by Niall Henry and has worked with Crossroads Repertory Theatre, Indiana. Ciarán has directed productions of *At the Hawkswell*, *Purgatory* and *The Cat and The Moon* and has been a guest tutor at Queens University, Belfast, and NUI Galway.

Sandra O Malley (Old Woman)

Sandra is a graduate of the Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique. She studied under Corinne Soum and Steven Wasson, Etienne Decroux's last assistants. Having performed with their company, she returned to Ireland and has been working with Blue Raincoat Theatre Company since 1997. Sandra has provided workshops both nationally and internationally for University College Galway, the Drama League of Wales and Potsdan International Dance festival, Germany. She has also directed productions for the Sligo Youth Theatre.

Niall Henry (Company Artistic Director / Production Director)

Niall is from Sligo and is Artistic Director of Blue Raincoat. He studied in Paris with Corrine Soum and Maximillion Decroux and returned to Sligo in 1991 to co-found Blue Raincoat with Malcolm Hamilton. He has directed six of Malcolm's plays, most recently *The Strange Voyage of Donald Crowhurst* and *A Brief Taste of Lighting*. Other shows directed for Blue Raincoat include *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, Jocelyn Clarke's adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* (co-production Peacock theatre) and Brendan Ellis' *Hollow in the Sand*. He has directed on two occasions for the National Theatre; *Playboy of the Western World* in 2002 and Colm Toibin's *Beauty in a Broken Place* for abbey one hundred. Niall has directed Jocelyn Clarke's two stage adaptations from the works of Flann O'Brien, *The Third Policeman* and *At-Swim-Two-Birds*.

Jamie Vartan (Set Design)

Productions at the National Theatre of Ireland include *The Playboy Of The Western World* and Colm Toibin's *Beauty In A Broken Place*, directed by Niall Henry. For Blue Raincoat he has designed *The Chairs*, *The Third Policeman*, *The Last Mile*, *At Swim Two Birds* and *Rhinoceros*. Current work in theatre includes *Misterman* (Galway Festival 2011) with director Enda Walsh. Designer and artist-in residence with the David Glass Ensemble on *The Last Child Trilogy*, with residencies involving workshops, research and newly devised productions in Vietnam, Indonesia, China, the Philippines and Colombia later presented at the Young Vic. Designs for opera include *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Salzburg festspielhaus), *The Queen Of Spades* (La Scala, Milan), *Albert Herring* and *Death In Venice* (Salzburg Landestheater), *Don Giovanni & Romeo et Juliette* (Varna), *Manon Lescaut* (Teatro Regio, Parma), *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, *Aida* and *Carmen* (Teatro Lirico di Cagliari; Premio Abbiati) *La Statira* (Teatro San Carlo, Naples), *The Dwarf* (Teatro Comunale, Florence), *La traviata* (Malmö Opera), *Il Pirata* and *The Saint of Bleecker Street* (Opera Marseille), and *L'Isola disabitata* (Royal Opera House, London).

Michael Cummins (Lighting Design / Operation)

Michael is from Dublin and studied painting at N.C.A.D. He has designed sets and lighting, and acted as production designer for many of Blue Raincoat productions including *Hamlet*, *Once Time*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *Macbeth* and *The Strange Voyage of Donald Crowhurst*.

Joe Hunt (Sound Design / Operation)

Joe is Technical Manager and Sound Designer with Blue Raincoat Theatre Company since 2001. Prior to this, Joe also worked with the Hawk's Well theatre on lighting and sound operation as well as stage construction. Joe is also the multi-media designer for Blue Raincoat Theatre Company.

Peter Davey (Production Manager)

Peter is from Tubbercurry in Sligo and has a lifetime involvement in amateur drama having worked extensively with Beeneeze Theatre Company and The Phoenix Players. He has been the recipient of national amateur drama awards for both acting and lighting design. He is currently Production Manager at The Factory Performance Space.