



**GARY JAFFE**

**DIRECTOR**

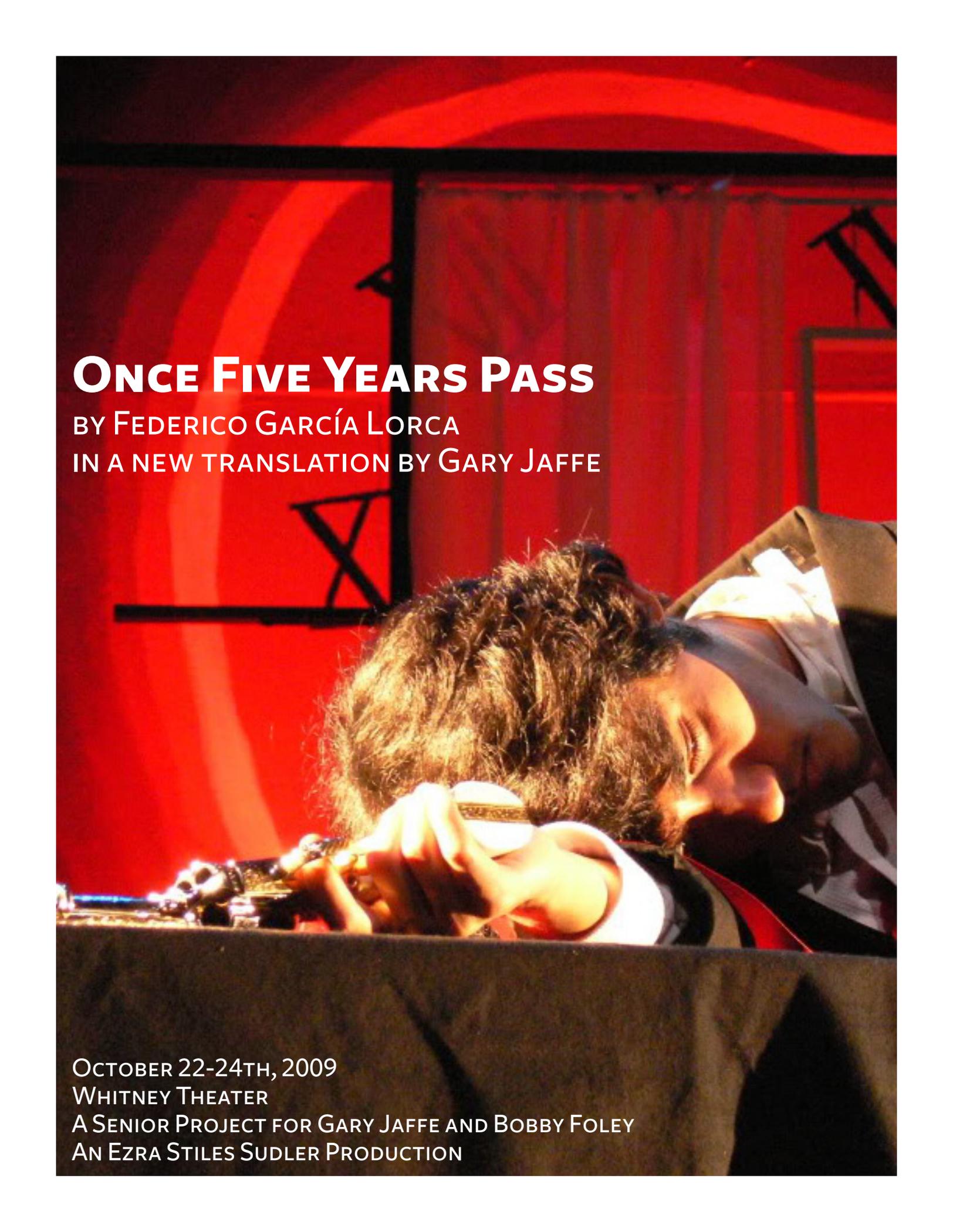




# DIRECTING

As a director, I hold three central beliefs:

1. Theater takes us where we can't go in "real life." It can show us the sides of ourselves which scare us, the vulnerable and the violent. It activates our imagination and digs perhaps uncomfortably deep into our hearts.
2. Let actors live fully on stage. Some directors treat actors like they're puppets; I'm known for treating puppets like they're actors. I create for my actors a theatrical context and vernacular, then give them the tools to live boldly and actively in the space. I want honest humanity on my stages, even from my puppets.
3. Finally, I revel in the difficult, the impossible. Let my theater be incredible, in its success or in its failure. Doing difficult work empowers the director to dream more creatively, to make stronger and more necessary choices. There is no such thing as theater which is too difficult for undergraduates. There is no such thing as impossible theater.



# ONCE FIVE YEARS PASS

BY FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

IN A NEW TRANSLATION BY GARY JAFFE

OCTOBER 22-24TH, 2009

WHITNEY THEATER

A SENIOR PROJECT FOR GARY JAFFE AND BOBBY FOLEY

AN EZRA STILES SUDLER PRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE PLAY:

In *Once Five Years Pass*, a young man contemplating suicide imagines the ways his life might play out. As the director of this bewildering piece, I used strategic staging to clarify the central storyline. Essentially, the Young Man never leaves his house. With only a few shifts—removing a window, hanging fabric trees, shifting furniture—his house became a different space—a balcony, a forest—entirely while remaining fundamentally the same. I cast the play similarly, having actors double in both recognizable

and bizarre roles. This doubling created a theatrical experience at once outlandish and heartbreakingly real. In *Once Five Years Pass*, a young man contemplating suicide imagines the possible ways his life might play out, encountering the wonderfully strange and the heartbreakingly familiar.



Above: The young man considers the contrasting life views of his two friends. Facing Page: The Young Man's life spills out of his heart, staged as a red ribbon of blood.



Above: With the hand of Death approaching, a Dead Boy and a Dead Cat comfort each other. Facing Page: A bridal Mannequin awakens to guide the Young Man at a moment of crisis.

## TESTIMONIAL:

*Once Five Years Pass (Así que pasen cinco años)* is a very difficult play both to understand and to produce. I teach this play regularly in my undergraduate course on Lorca's theater and poetry, and am always amazed and confounded every time I read it. Having written on Lorca and with a book in preparation on Lorca as a cultural icon, I am most appreciative of the challenges to presenting a play that for a long time was erroneously considered incomplete and, then, simply impossible to put on. Indeed, it was part of what Lorca called his "impossible theater." Tragically, Lorca himself never saw his work on stage. I'd like to think he would have been entranced with Gary Jaffe's production of the play. He would not have been able to appreciate the grace and wit of Gary's translation, as Federico's grasp of the English language was tenuous at best, but I think he would have loved the imaginative flair and the fluidity with which Gary directed his players and all the scenes. I certainly

was entranced. From the opening scene in which we see the Young Man and the Old Man together, mirror images of one another speaking at cross purposes and yet connecting on other levels, to the final one, in which the Young Man has run out of time, Gary has understood the heart of the play, which is the inexpressible poignancy of not knowing how to live. The melting of dream into reality, reality into dream, theatrically express the Young Man's existential paralysis. Gary shows how his young actors are stuck in an ever repeating temporal loop, suggesting how elusive both the passage of time and life are, how youth does not know it is young. This was a wonderful production.

Noël Valis  
Professor of Spanish  
noel.valis@yale.edu

## TRANSLATION:

Unsatisfied with the existing English translations, I developed my own translation over the summer which captured the youthful immediacy of the Spanish and was enthusiastically approved by the Lorca estate.

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### ORIGINAL

El sueño va sobre el Tiempo  
flotando como un velero.  
Nadie puede abrir semillas  
en el corazón del Sueño.

¡Ay cómo canta el alba!, ¡cómo canta!  
¡Qué témpanos de hielo azul levanta!

El Tiempo va sobre el Sueño  
hundido hasta los cabellos.  
Ayer y mañana comen  
oscuras flores del duelo.

¡Ay cómo canta la noche!, ¡cómo canta!  
¡Qué espesura de anémonas levanta!

—*Federico García Lorca,*  
*Así que pasen cinco años*

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### ENGLISH

Dream crosses over Time,  
Floating like a ship at sea.  
No one can disturb the seeds  
Kept safe in the heart of Dream.

Oh, the dawn sings, how it sings!  
What wonders of blue ice it brings!

Time crosses over Dream,  
Sunk to his hair in the sea.  
Both yesterday and tomorrow eat  
the darkest flowers of Time's grief.

Oh, the night sings, how it sings!  
What a bloom of flowers it brings!

—*Federico García Lorca,*  
*Once Five Years Pass*

*Translation by Gary Jaffe*



6 hours vs. five years —  
what's the difference?

In REALISM, all these things  
couldn't feasibly happen in  
6 hours time. Clean, simple  
fact. 5 years don't fit into  
6 hours.

Reality = 5+ years  
perception = one night

so old yet so young

I sit here and feel myself disintegrated,  
splintering,

I sit here and I perceive another part  
of myself sitting next to me

Above: A meditation  
on the Young Man's  
reality. Right: In a life-  
or-death card game,  
the Young Man must  
decide whether to  
play his ace of hearts.

## REVIEW:

*Jaffe's production is situated somewhere between a nightmare and a dream. Leaving the theater is an experience not unlike waking up in the morning: You might not be sure what exactly happened in the reverie of your subconscious, but the feeling lingers, as you know you have just experienced something great.*

—Katie Odland,  
midnightatya.com



# BEAUTIFUL LITTLE FOOLS

BY TESSA LEIGH WILLIAMS

A WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTION



APRIL 1-3RD, 2010

WHITNEY THEATER

A SENIOR PROJECT FOR TESSA LEIGH WILLIAMS

A MORSE SUDLER PRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE PLAY:

Tessa Leigh Williams's original play *Beautiful Little Fools* follows the marriage of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald as it veers from moments of tenderness to vicious extremes. As the director of its world premiere production, I envisioned a stage world that reflected the beautiful messiness of the relationship, piling scene upon scene and slamming them together. I am particularly proud of placing the final flashback of the couple's first kiss over a brutal moment in Zelda's bed at the insane asylum where she lived out the rest of her life. Directing Tessa, I encouraged her to be objective about her text and helped her discover the physical gestures which allowed her to hit emotional heights, most notably her heart-rending repetition of the "double" at the end of the first act.



Top: Scott comforts Zelda after a vomiting episode due to an overdose on pills. Bottom: Scott Fitzgerald meets Ernest Hemingway at the Dingo Bar, while Zelda lingers behind in the apartment. Prior Page: The pair revisit their first kiss as Scott loosens the straps of Zelda's asylum bed.

# DIRECTORIAL ANATOMY OF A SCENE: END OF ACT I

## TEXT:

In this scene, true danger emerges for the first time in the play. To spite Zelda for an affair she may not have had, Scott has given himself wholeheartedly to a book named *Gatsby* and begun ignoring her almost entirely. Zelda's loneliness reaches a crisis point when he goes down to the hotel bar one night and forces her to stay in the room. Alone, she attempts to console herself by drinking heavily, dancing furiously, and finally by taking a heavy dosage of sleeping pills. Scott finds her just in time, but the damage to the relationship has been done.

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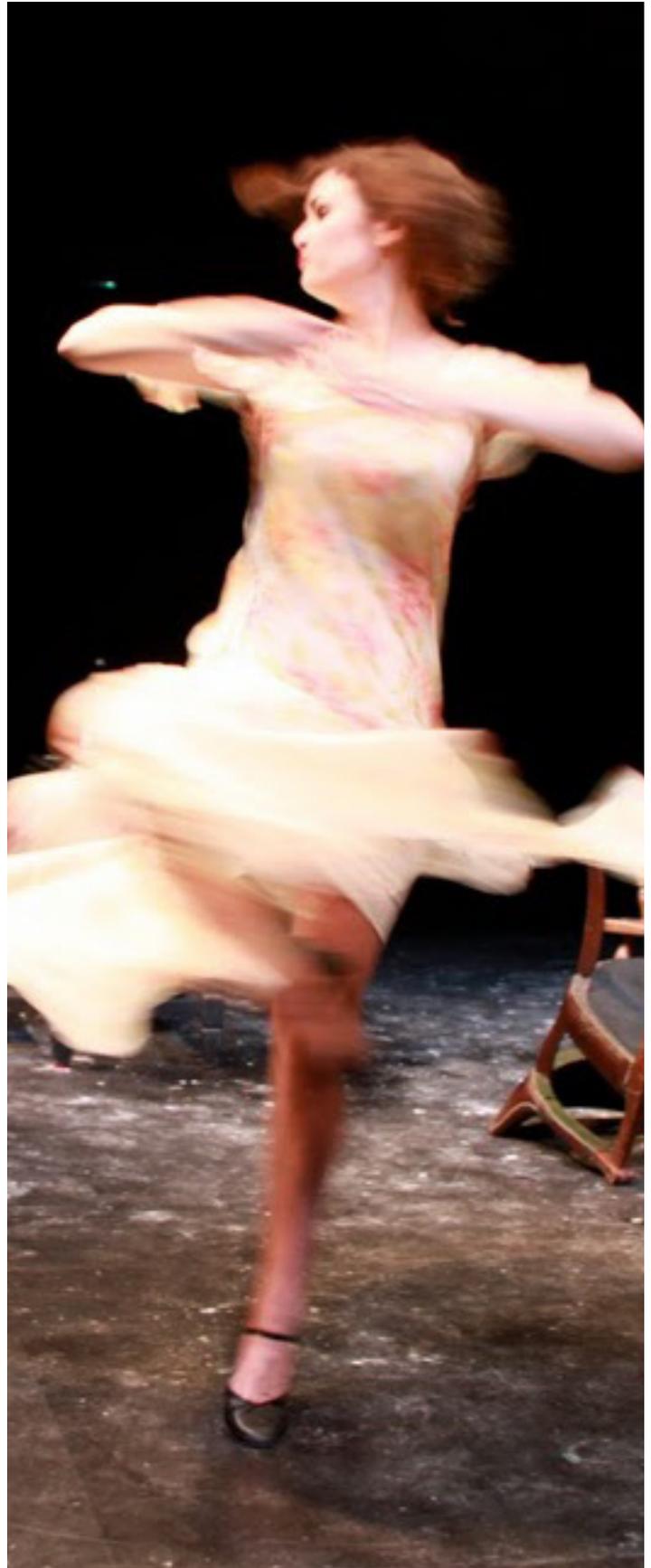
## SCENIC:

My set designer and I envisioned a landscape which would shift from being open and clean, full of possibilities, to being absolutely cluttered by the Fitzgeralds' mess. Furniture would never be removed from the stage, simply used again and again. This scene marks a midway point--the stage is for the most part still bare, but one chair overturned in the previous scene remains overturned, an ominous warning of the mess that is to come. Additionally, sugar glass stemware has been shattered on stage and left there, covering the bare stage, creating unsettling crunching noises and the illusion that the actors are in danger.

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## PERFORMANCE:

In our first rehearsals of this scene, Tessa would complete her double, then run to the doorway yelling for Scott to come see it, which would ultimately (and unsatisfactorily) lead to her breaking down alone in a massive monologue. I knew we needed an engine which would propel her through the monologue, so I told her to keep doing her spectacular double until either Scott walked in and saw it (which he wouldn't) or she fell and couldn't do it anymore. Not only did the continued spinning energize the text, but when she did fall, the physical exhaustion of spinning allowed her to access the incredible visceral emotions she poured out in performance. As the director, I give my actors the tools they need to perform at their best--and this scene is one of my proudest actor-director collaborations.



Above: Left alone in her room by her husband, Zelda attempts to deal with her desperation by dancing, which becomes maniacal and violent.

## REVIEW:

*“The whole sweep of brilliance finds an able guide in Gary Jaffe ’10, a director who has both an intellectual and intuitive understanding of the text. The actors’ movements are orchestrated as if the whole thing were a morbid ballet. ... Their descent is rendered with savage simplicity: a broken glass, a half-empty bottle of whisky, a pile of crushed sleeping pills. Before the performance is over, the floor is literally strewn with the remnants of a life destined for disaster. But the truly soul-wrenching power of Beautiful Little Fools derives from the fact that the artistic team never loses sight of the beautifully brutal tempest of a love story at the center of the play.”*

—Austin Bernhardt, Yale Daily News



Above: The cast with their director.

**PASSION**  
MUSIC BY STEPHEN  
SONDHEIM  
LYRICS BY JAMES  
LAPINE



JANUARY 21-23RD, 2010  
WHITNEY THEATER  
A SENIOR PROJECT FOR  
EMILY JENDA  
A SAYBROOK SUDLER  
PRODUCTION



## ABOUT THE PLAY:

In *Passion*, an officer finds himself torn between his married lover Clara and the obsessive love of the sickly Fosca. *Passion* is a “problem play,” known for its rhapsodic music but not for being a traditional crowd-pleaser. However, I saw in *w* a directness of emotional expression which I felt, if captured honestly on stage, could shake a Yale audience to its core. To accomplish this, I emphasized in rehearsals the life-or-death consequences of the events in the characters’ lives and kept the stage intimate, spare and raw: a three-quarter thrust with only the most necessary furniture, a revealed orchestra, and an evocative floor pattern which could accommodate the play’s various settings while intensifying the relentless, high-stakes needs of the characters. Our “sold-out” run generated both standing ovations and hours of debate afterward.



Much of *Passion* is told through letter exchanges. To keep the tension hot despite the distance, I allowed actors writing to each other to exist in the same space, provided they followed certain rules. The person in the act of writing could not look at his or her scene partner, while the recipient could watch them write, as if visualizing them.

Top: Fosca reads Giorgio’s letter rejecting her as he finds his way home to Clara Middle: Giorgio, terrified but sure of his feelings, expresses his love for Fosca at the end of the play. Bottom: Clara reads a letter from Giorgio, who can’t bear being far away from her. Previous Page: Guided through a flashback, Giorgio learns of Fosca’s past.

TORASSO: Lieutenant Torasso.  
 BARRI: Lieutenant Barri.  
 COOK: Sergeant Lombardi.  
 COLONEL: Please join us.

*(Giorgio sits; to his right remains an unoccupied chair and place setting)*

COOK: You'll have to excuse our limited menu, Captain. It's difficult to cultivate fresh vegetables in this mountain soil.

DOCTOR: We are not only isolated from life and ideas here, Captain, but anything green and edible as well.

RIZZOLLI: I just add vinegar to everything.

TORASSO: Captain Bachetti, the Colonel has told us of your triumphs pinning down the Russian infantry.

GIORGIO: I'm not sure my actions deserve your attention.

TORASSO: Didn't you rescue a wounded man in the midst of fire and then carry him on your horse to camp?

GIORGIO: Only to our battalion.

BARRI: Say you brought him back to camp! Why settle for being half a hero when full-fledged is just a white lie away?

*(The lights suddenly bump up; music under, agitated. Clara enters to the side of the stage, singing from a letter she holds)*

CLARA:  
 Clara...

GIORGIO:  
 Clara...  
 I cried.

CLARA:  
 I cried.

*new guy on Oscar  
 alliances, in between  
 having  
 OR  
 just another  
 distance  
 just another  
 why?  
 which  
 this guy could make a distance  
 ????*

BOTH:  
 Imagine that,  
 A soldier who cries.

CLARA:  
 I had to hide my eyes  
 So the others on the train  
 That carried me away from you  
 Would think I was asleep.

*(We hear elegant Chopinesque piano music from upstairs as Clara exits; Giorgio looks up as lights restore)*

GIORGIO: Music?

DOCTOR: That's Signora Fosca playing.

COLONEL: My cousin. I have no family and neither does she. She is in such poor health, it's a continual worry.

DOCTOR: That's her place setting, but she stays in her room most days. Perhaps soon she'll be well enough to join us for a meal.

RIZZOLLI: She eats like a sparrow.

*(Torasso lets out an involuntary laugh, which is immediately stopped by a cold stare from the Colonel)*

TORASSO (Sober): My apologies, sir. The comparison struck me as funny. A sparrow seems to eat more than Signora Fosca. A pity it is...

COLONEL (To Giorgio): My cousin loves to read—it's her only passion, really. I can't find enough books for her.

GIORGIO: I also love to read. I've brought a few of my favorite books. I'd be most happy to lend them to Signora Fosca, though I can't promise they will appeal to her.

COLONEL: She's been given to reading military handbooks. I've no doubt she will welcome anything in print!

*hardly integrated  
 it's the  
 my full  
 space?  
 Does the  
 Chopinesque  
 music  
 drive  
 her off?  
 or does  
 she go  
 to write  
 the letter?  
 outline of colonel  
 culture vs.  
 just says*



Top: Notes from an initial reading of the script. Middle and Bottom: with a piercing cry from the wind section, Clara's orgasm begins the show.

**TESTIMONIAL:** After attending a performance of Sondheim's *Passion* at the Whitney Humanities Center in January, I wrote an email to members of the cast and production team, saying in part: "I spoke with many of you yesterday afternoon after the matinee but want to reinforce my appreciation for your hard work on-stage, off-stage and in the pit. The piece held together beautifully -- which is no mean feat with a work as occasionally "out there" as *Passion*. The afternoon was one of those moments theatergoers wait for -- a performance when you learn about the piece, about the performers, and about yourself."

Director Gary Jaffe's achievement was to frame Fosca's solitary and lonely quest for love and meaning within a world of spare, angled light, false shadows and mistaken impressions. Every element of the production contributed to our understanding of Fosca's isolation and desperation. As a result, this story of extreme passion resonated both realistically and in the heightened realm of metaphor.

Daniel Egan  
 Shen Curriculum for Musical Theater  
 dan.egan@yale.edu

# THE REAL THING

BY TOM STOPPARD



APRIL 9-11TH, 2009  
WHITNEY THEATER  
A SENIOR PROJECT FOR LEE SEYMOUR  
A CALHOUN SUDLER PRODUCTION



## ABOUT THE PLAY:

*The Real Thing* follows a group of intelligent but insecure theater makers as they spin around each other—in and out of love, through pretension and false fronts, searching for some shred of emotional honesty in each other and in themselves. By staging the play in the round on an abstract circular design, I evoked and intensified this central action of spinning. In rehearsals, I created a safe environment which gave space for self-questioning and vulnerability, allowing the actors to confront the intellectual and emotional challenges of the play.



Top: Henry compares good writing to a good cricket bat. Bottom: Henry's punky but charming daughter Debbie gives him a lesson on love. Facing page: after a fight with his wife, a pop song on the record player renders Henry speechless.



Above: Max clings to his wife Annie after learning she's leaving him

## **REVIEW:**

*The show is intimate and intense... the cast's raw energy and emotion and the production's surround seating and sound make the audience feel right up close to something naked and terrifying and true.*

—Hilary Faxon,  
Yale Daily News

**TESTIMONIAL:**

Working with Gary on "The Real Thing" was a joyous struggle with a brilliant but difficult piece, which ultimately ended in the most satisfying theatrical experience of my life to date. From the outset, Gary had a great read on the core themes he wanted to explore: the cyclical, revolving nature of love, examining the same aches from different perspectives, trying to catch a glint of what one might call "the real thing." For my part, I saw eye-to-eye with Gary on almost everything, and where we didn't agree, we had a strong enough working relationship to find new paths that often lead to better things than either of us would have found on our own. The experience was deeply personal for me, with my own life mirroring events in the play to an uncanny degree, and Gary had a great instinct in determining when to use that pain, when to push

through it, and when to leave it alone. Ultimately, creating a piece of theater is akin to arguing a case for the characters therein, a case for their humanity. Javier Bardem is fond of saying that "actors are lawyers for their characters" - we may not like them, but we have to defend their actions to the death. Our job, cast and crew, was to win this case, to embrace and then bypass Stoppard's witty language and bring to life the aches that drive it. And if the laughter and tears in both our eyes and those of our audience members at the end of the show were any indication, we won that case.

Lee Seymour '09  
Leeseymour51@gmail.com

she's been putting down a lot

35

(ANNIE re-enters with the dip.)  
Some people have daughters who love ponies.  
(Passing HENRY, ANNIE casually puts her finger in his mouth, without pausing.)

ANNIE: What do you think?

CHARLOTTE: Some people have daughters who go punk. We've got one who goes riding on Barnes Common looking like the Last of the Mohicans.

HENRY: Crackers.  
(ANNIE delivers the dip to CHARLOTTE.)

CHARLOTTE: (To ANNIE.) Is yours a case of sperm count or twisted tubes? Or is it that you just can't stand the little buggers?

MAX: Charlotte!

HENRY: What business is that of yours?

CHARLOTTE: He's in love with his, you know

ANNIE: Isn't that supposed to be normal?

CHARLOTTE: No, dear, normal is the other way round.

HENRY: I say, Annie, what's this Brodie Committee all about? Charlotte was asking.

MAX: You know, Private Brodie.

ANNIE: It's all right.

MAX: Annie knows him.

ANNIE: I don't know him.

MAX: Tell them about meeting him on the train.

D THAT BUGS HER  
Annie doesn't

Left: An attempt to parse out the subtext in a very loaded parlor room conversation.

# GHOSTS

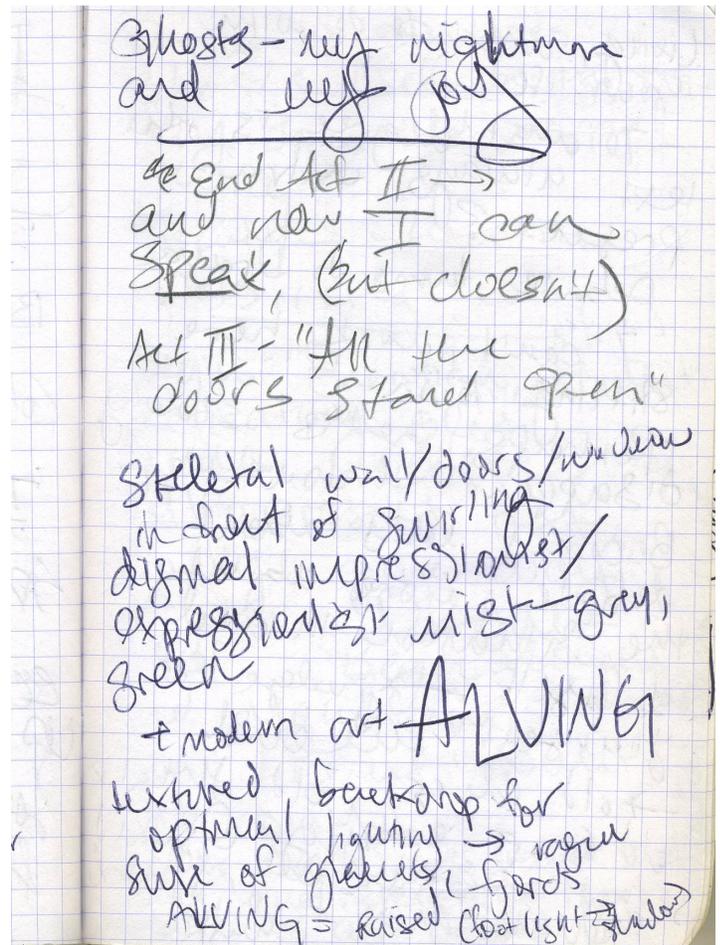
BY HENRIK IBSEN



FEBRUARY 19-21ST, 2009  
NEW THEATER (ISEMAN)  
DRAMAT SPRING EX

## ABOUT THE PLAY:

In Ibsen's *Ghosts*, a sudden eruption of dark secrets and deadly legacies tears Helene Alving and her son apart, despite years of effort on Helene's part to put the past to rest. To realize this confrontation of past and present, I directed my design team to layer a "real" present over the abstract depiction a nightmarish past. The Alving's tranquil garden room teetered on a turbulent landscape; the light and sound transformed from a subtle "realism" into a brutal expressionism of jagged angles and dissonance. I saw the potential in an older play to have a gut-wrenching effect on a Yale audience, and used the design tools of the modern theater to make it reality.



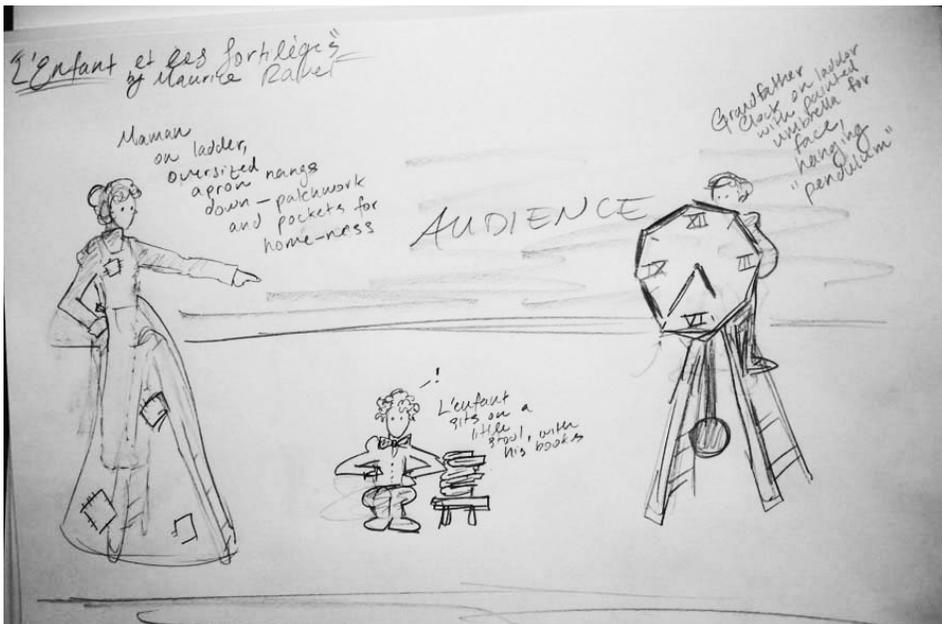
Top: A brainstorm on the physical landscape from my notebook.  
Bottom: A moment from the present echos a ghost from the past, seen in shadow upstage.  
Facing Page Top: Helene comforts her son Oswald as morning approaches.  
Facing Page Bottom: a fire erupts offstage.



# L'ENFANT ET LES SORCILLÈRES

MUSIC BY MAURICE RAVEL  
LIBRETTO BY COLETTE

DECEMBER 4-5TH, 2008  
JONATHAN EDWARDS DINING HALL  
OPERA THEATER OF YALE COLLEGE WINTER MAINSTAGE



## ABOUT THE PLAY:

In *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, a child's powerful imagination transforms his house and garden into an astonishing and terrifying realm, with singing furniture, bellowing trees and, of course, a fairy princess. As children need very little to create a magical world around them, I staged the opera with an emphasis on joyful simplicity—in the Jonathan Edwards dining hall, no technology, and the use of very simple objects to suggest wonderful things. Because we, the cast, believed wholeheartedly that our umbrella was a giant clock and that by flapping fans in our hands we became insects, the audience believed as well.

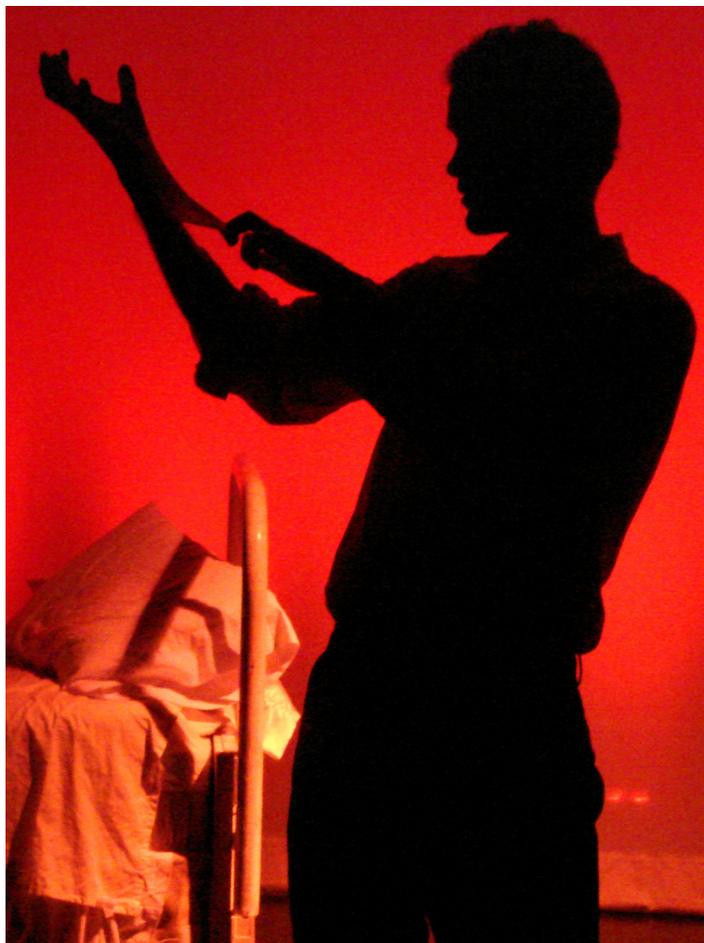


Top: an initial concept sketch for the opera. Bottom: A swarm of frogs, squirrels, moths and a dragonfly in the garden. Facing page: A squirrel in a cage, two armchairs and a grandfather clock prior to “waking up.”

# THE LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME

BY PAULA VOGEL

OCTOBER 21-23RD, 2008  
OFF-BROADWAY THEATER  
A JONATHAN EDWARDS  
SUDLER PRODUCTION



# THE BALTIMORE WALTZ

BY PAULA VOGEL

OCTOBER 11-13TH, 2007  
OFF-BROADWAY THEATER  
AN EZRA STILES SUDLER PRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE PLAYS:

These were my first two plays at Yale, and helped me discover what I value in theater: the ability to blur fantasy and reality, deeply personal storytelling, and tender, beautiful things emerging from even the darkest emotional places. These two plays are valentines from the playwright to her brother, whom she lost to HIV/AIDS. *The Baltimore Waltz* deals with her immediate denial of his death, as she envisions the tour through Europe which they never took together. *The Long Christmas Ride Home* deals with his death from a distance, revisiting a troubled Christmas Eve from childhood when, as their parents' relationship was falling apart, the siblings kept each other safe.

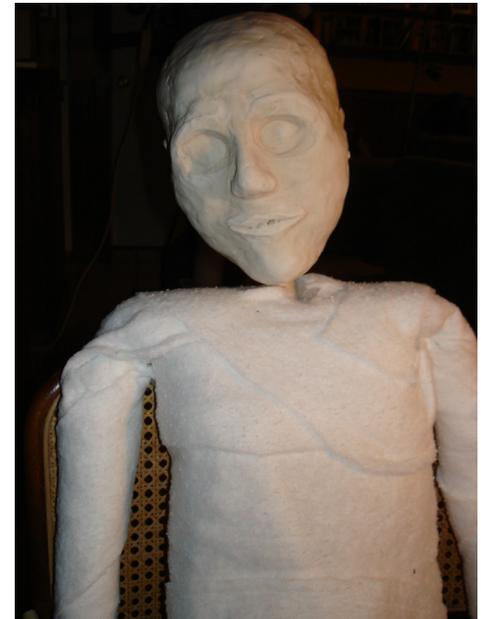
In *Long Christmas*, a fusion of Japanese and American storytelling, reliving a memory is translated into puppeteering one's childhood self. In one of the key moments of the play, the ghost of the brother returns to his childhood body by picking up the inactive puppet of his childhood self, cradling it, and then breathing life into it by making him move. This moment taught me that there is no miraculous act that cannot be performed on a live stage with just an actor's body, maybe a puppet, and a deep-seated belief in possibility.



Top: The fluorescent hospital room where Anna's brother died. Middle: Anna waltzes with the memory of her brother. Bottom: the adult and puppet siblings cling to each other as the car goes off the road. Facing page top: The Ghost of Stephen cradles his childhood self, preparing his return to the living. Facing page bottom: the mysterious Third Man--who plays the doctor and everyone in Europe--ominously gloves up.



**PUPPET-MAKING:** Knowing that I wanted to direct *Long Christmas*, I went home for summer with a quest: build life-size child puppets in the style of Japanese bunraku on a limited budget. I researched joints and skeletons, designed the puppets, and surprisingly, my family and I were able to build them together successfully, despite our complete lack of experience with puppetry. Once my actors and I figured out how to use them, the puppets achieved an incredible expressivity in performance. Puppetry continues to be one of my major theatrical interests.



## PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE AT YALE

Director – World Premiere of *Beautiful Little Fools* (2010), Rehearsed Reading of *Beautiful Little Fools* (2010), *Passion* (2010), *Once Five Years Pass* (2009), *The Real Thing* (2009), *Ghosts* (2009), *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (2008), *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (2008), *The Baltimore Waltz* (2007), Opera Scenes from *Lakmé*, *West Side Story*, *Les contes d'hoffman*, *Summer and Smoke* (2007-2009), World Premiere of *Tremors* (2007)

Actor – Ensemble in *Faust, Pt. 1* (2008), Lead in *[sic]* (2007), Lead in *Peter Pan* (2007), Lead in *The Dry River* (2006)

Dramaturg – *Carousel* (2009), *Angel in America: Millennium Approaches* (2008), *L'orfeo, favola in musica* (2008), *A Little Night Music* (2007)

Graphic Designer – *Beautiful Little Fools* (2010), *[title of show]* (2010), *Passion* (2010), *Once Five Years Pass* (2009), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (2009), *Summer and Smoke* (2009), *The Real Thing* (2009), *The Full Monty* (2008), *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (2007), *The Baltimore Waltz* (2007) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2007)

Props Master – *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (2009)

Playwright – *Getting Off* (24-hr theater fest 2008)

Administration – Yale Dramatic Association Executive Board: Secretary (2008-09), Yale Drama Coalition Executive Board: Administrative Liaison (2008), Yale Dramatic Association Archivist/Development Assistant (2007)

Lighting Designer – *john & jen* (2008)

Assistant Positions – Director: *Quills* (2006), *The Dining Room* (2007), *A Little Night Music* (2008), *L'orfeo*; Producer: *Bat Boy: the musical* (2008), *Into the Woods*; Set Designer: *Project O* (2008): *Don't Look Back!*; Lighting Designer: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2008)

