



Center Stage, NY

"Startling and often brilliant. The lack of spiritual content in our civilization has been the major outcry of European drama since Ibsen. Ionesco has carried this idea to the climactic point of savage caricature." — Harold Clurman



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New York Innovative Theatre Awards, celebrating Off-Off-Broadway

The Lesson



The Collective presents

the LESSON

an absurdist comedy by
Eugène Ionesco

featuring

Robert Z. Grant* Rachele Wintzen
Elizabeth Steinhart*

lighting design
Randy Harmon

scenic design
Zachary Michael Lawson

sound & technical direction
Samuel Doerr

directed by
Jessica Forsythe

An Equity Approved Showcase

Some people never learn.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

The MaidElizabeth Steinhart*

The Young PupilRachelle Wintzen

The ProfessorRobert Z. Grant*

THE PLAY IS PERFORMED IN ONE ACT
WITHOUT INTERMISSION



Robert Z. Grant*



Rachelle Wintzen



Elizabeth Steinhart*

*These Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association



Actors' Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence.
www.actorsequity.org

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Robert Z. Grant* (*The Professor*) is a New York based actor and improviser who has appeared at The York Theatre, American Globe Theatre, Caroline's on Broadway, The NY IMPROV, and on NBC and VH1, among others. He recently returned from two months performing and teaching in South Africa with The Glass Contraption. The show he helped develop and perform, *Ridiculousity*, was named one of the "Ten Best of the Festival" at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival. Robert performs regularly with ComedySportz NY and is the artistic director of Codependent Theater Co., hailed as "one of the Top 3 Best Improv Groups in New York." Credits also include the hit improvised musical comedy *The Next Big Broadway Musical!* (2007 MAC Award). Robert studied acting with Bill Esper at William Esper Studio (2007 graduate), dance at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, clown with Christopher Bayes at Juilliard, and improvisation with Ralph Buckley. Robert is a member of Actors' Equity, and a founding member of The Collective. Robert is probably best known for his anonymity. www.robertzgrant.com

Rachelle Wintzen (*The Young Pupil*) is proud to be making her acting debut in NYC with *The Lesson*. Her professional career began at age 15 as a dancer where she trained intensely in Canada and later NYC with top professionals in all forms of dance. She has had the opportunity to work with major recording artists such as Sean Paul, Wyclef Jean, DMX, and Next, to name a few. Rachelle has appeared on BET, MuchMusic, VH1, MTV, CTV and Canada's Urban Music Fest. She has also worked as a principal dancer with noted dance companies in Montreal and Toronto, Canada, and

in NYC with the Fate Dance Company. Rachelle is a recent graduate from the two-year Meisner program at the William Esper Studio where she studied with Bill Esper. She is also a founding member of The Collective.

Elizabeth Steinhart* (*The Maid*) was last seen in the Encores! production of *The New Moon* at City Center. Past regional favorite roles include Adriana in *The Boys from Syracuse*, Carlotta in *Phantom*, and Sarah Brown in *Guys and Dolls*. She has also appeared as Die Königin der Nacht in *Die Zauberflöte*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, and Mrs. Fiorentino in *Street Scene*, amongst others. She made her NYC concert debut with The Mendelssohn Glee Club, and has opened regularly for acts such as The Glen Miller Orchestra, The Benny Goodman Orchestra, and Maynard Ferguson. Film credits include *The Secret Lives of Dentists*, Alan Rudolph, director. Ms. Steinhart is a recent graduate of the William Esper Studio, where she studied with Bill Esper. Other training includes CAP21 at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Manhattan School of Music, and an apprenticeship with the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble. She is a founding member of The Collective, and appears courtesy of AEA.

Eugène Ionesco (*Author*) was a Romanian and French playwright and dramatist, one of the foremost playwrights of the *Theatre of the Absurd*. Beyond ridiculing the most banal situations, Ionesco's plays depict in a tangible way the solitude of humans and the insignificance of one's existence. Ionesco's earliest works, and his most innovative, were one-act nonsense plays: *La Cantatrice chauve* (1950), *La Leçon* translated as *The Lesson* (1951), *Les Chaises* trans-

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

lated as *The Chairs* (1952), and *Jacques ou la Soumission* translated as *Jack, or: The Submission* (1955). These absurdist sketches, to which he gave such descriptions as "anti-play" (*anti-pièce* in French) express modern feelings of alienation and the impossibility and futility of communication with surreal comic force, parodying the conformism of the bourgeoisie and conventional theatrical forms. In them Ionesco rejects a conventional story-line as their basis, instead taking their dramatic structure from accelerating rhythms and/or cyclical repetitions. He disregards psychology and coherent dialogue, thereby depicting a dehumanized world with mechanical, puppet-like characters who speak in non-sequiturs. Language becomes rarefied, with words and material objects gaining a life of their own, increasingly overwhelming the characters and creating a sense of menace.

Jessica Forsythe (*Director*) has been working in theatre and film since the impressionable age of 12. Her theatre credits include NY : *Ballerinas* Regional : *Will Rogers Follies*, *Chicago*, *Hello Out There*, and *The Sound of Music*. Her film credits include portraying the schizophrenic "Kat" in *Fatty*, *Domestic Disturbance*, and *Dawson's Creek*. Jessica is the associate director for Green Sea Theatre and most recently collaborated on *The Bald Soprano* and *The Maids*. She started Creative Haven with Nunzio Caponio in 2005 which offers classes for people to explore their creativity through acting, music, and visual art. Jessica received her BFA in musical theatre and film at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and upon graduating studied

Meisner with William Esper at the William Esper Studio in Manhattan. She currently works for Cypress Films.

Randy Harmon (*Lighting Designer*) began his lighting design career in San Diego, CA at San Diego Mesa College. He worked for years as an electrician in San Diego before jumping into design at San Francisco's Improv, The Cable Car Theatre and ACT. He has designed shows for Jack Gallagher, Jeff Garlin, Nicky Silver and Comedy Central.

Zachary Michael Lawson (*Scenic Designer*)

Samuel Doerr (*Sound Design and Technical Direction*) Credits include: *The Naked Girl on the Appian Way*, (Roundabout), *Safety* (Crash Landing Productions), *Outword Bound* (Keen Company) *Sin: A Cardinal Deposed* (New Group Theater), *Dark Ride* (Open Circle Theater), *Defending the Caveman* (Stage Manager, Theater Mogul), (Film) *Adam* (PA, Serenade Films).

James Riemer (*Fight Choreographer*)

Patrick Bonck (*Stage Manager*) A recent transplant to New York City, Patrick's numerous Seattle-area credits include: *The Woman in Black*, *Tartuffe*, *Twelfth Night*, *Coriolanus*, *The Chosen*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and a world premiere musical with the Seattle International Children's Festival.

The Collective (*Producer*) is a collective of artists, descendants of the Group Theatre, charged with the responsibilities

of exploring and producing work that is rooted in truth, and cultivating an artistic home safe from the pressures of commercialism. To reach a broad spectrum, it aligns itself with emerging artists of all disciplines to create a unique body of work through a communal effort. It is The Collective's belief that artistic expression should be as essential to the American public as breathing, and through it we intensify our understanding and desire to life. The Collective's Board of Directors (all graduates of William Esper Studio) include: Brian Bannan, Melissa Ciesla, Victoria Dicce, Robert Z. Grant, Mike Houston, Kevin Kane, Heather Lawson, Brian Leider, Amy Schumer, Elizabeth Steinhart, and Rachele Wintzen.

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THANK YOU,
AND ENJOY THE SHOW.

SPECIAL THANKS

In this, its inaugural production, The Collective wishes to thank the following people, without whose support this production would not be possible:

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