

# education

## ROUNABOUTTHEATRECOMPANY

**On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, as part of Roundabout Theatre Company's ongoing Lecture Series, Ted Sod, Dramaturg for the Education Department interviewed Dr. Annette Saddik, Associate Professor of twentieth-century drama and performance in the English Department at New York City College of Technology (CUNY), followed by audience Q & A.**

**Ted Sod: What can you tell us about Beckett and his play *Waiting For Godot*?**

**Annette Saddik:** Beckett was born in 1906 on April 13<sup>th</sup> which was both Friday the Thirteenth and Good Friday. He was born right outside of Dublin to an upper middle class, very nice family and he has often said that he had little talent for happiness, even though his parents did everything they could to make him happy. At the beginning of the play when Gogo (Estragon) and Didi (Vladimir) are talking about the boots, there is a line: "Oh, there's man for you blaming on his boots the fault of his feet." Beckett very much felt that it wasn't his circumstances that made him unhappy or made him moody or made him reclusive. It was the condition of being alive. He wasn't an unpleasant person at all. But he liked to be alone and he brooded a lot.

In the 1920's, he went into college and then started teaching for a while in Dublin and in Paris. He gave it up because he said that "he could not do it, because he couldn't bear teaching other people what he, himself, didn't know." You can see that theme over and over in *Waiting for Godot*, the idea that "oh, we don't know" and "it's not certain." So many people have called Beckett an existentialist or a nihilist. He resisted those labels. He said that he doesn't think that there is a nothingness, he just doesn't know. This is the condition of living. We are always waiting for something, whether it is something profound, like the meaning of life; or something to keep us going, like getting married; or waiting until "I get a new car or a new job or until the weekend comes." We are always waiting. We constantly desire and there is no end to that; but we don't really know what we are waiting for. Even Gogo and Didi talk about what Godot promised and it is not certain; and there is nothing definite.

In 1933, two deaths affected him very strongly: his father died of a heart attack suddenly. Beckett was quite young; he was 24. His first romantic affair was with his cousin Peggy Sinclair and she died quite young of tuberculosis. So he became even more depressed and he said that he did not know how to put this into words. He said that there is pain that just can not be expressed through language, so it just has to speak for itself.

In 1937, Beckett gave up academia and he traveled to Germany and then in the same year he moved permanently to Paris. He had a rift with his Mother. He loved his father and he got along very well with him, but not so much with his mother, he called her love "very

savage.” Beckett wrote novels and poetry during his early career. Beckett and James Joyce were close friends and Beckett actually helped Joyce with the research for *Finnegan’s Wake*. He served as his research assistant.

In 1938, he met a woman in Paris who was to become his wife, his partner for the next fifty years. In fact, he and his wife Suzanne both died in 1989 six months apart from each other.

**Ted Sod: Tell them how they met....**

**Annette Saddik:** Well, in 1938, while he was in Paris, he got stabbed in the street by a pimp, because he was refusing his solicitations. He was in the hospital. James Joyce got Beckett a private room. And, this woman, Suzanne, who Beckett had met once maybe ten years earlier came to visit him and they started a romance. Beckett was dating Peggy Guggenheim at the time. Beckett did not get married until 1961, in a secret ceremony in England. They were a good match for each other. They both liked their space; they both understood each other and Beckett needed friends. He had many close friends, he just did not have a talent for small talk. After he recovered from being stabbed, he went to the jail. He asked the pimp why he stabbed him and the pimp’s response was: “I don’t know sir, I’m sorry.” So Beckett dropped the charges and said he’s actually a nice guy.

In 1969, he won the Nobel Prize. Suzanne’s response was “What a disaster. What a catastrophe.” He wasn’t the type of person that would have refused it, he wasn’t nasty or unpleasant but he couldn’t bear to accept it. He asked that his editor go instead.

**Ted Sod: Basically he wrote four full length plays, right?**

**Annette Saddik:** Right.

**Ted Sod: Two of them are considered masterpieces: *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot*. But before we talk about *Waiting for Godot* and its place in the 20th Century dramatic literature, let’s talk about the title. You’ve already pronounced it Guh-DOE and obviously many Americans pronounce it that way. So why GOD-doe in this production and why the title?**

**Annette Sadik:** Americans do say *Waiting for Guh-DOE*. Accent on the 2<sup>nd</sup> syllable. The correct pronunciation is *GOD-doe*. Accent on the first syllable. Anthony Page did an interview recently and was talking about how Beckett pronounced it *GOD-doe*.

Beckett’s playing with us – even with the title. Much has been made of the title. It’s a bit of a tease. Many people say that *Godot* is really *God* and that the “ot” at the end is the diminutive in French. So he’s mocking the idea of *God*; that *God* is really nothing, that *God* is little. Beckett does not accept this explanation. He said “First of all, I wrote it in French, where *Godot* doesn’t mean *God*, it has no relation to *God*.”

Secondly, he offered, “Godeau -- G-O-D-E-A-U -- is the name of a French cyclist and that’s where I got the name.” He teases us constantly with religious references in this play. He thwarts your expectations and plays with meaning, so the play is about how we impose meaning; how we make meaning. And he’s constantly giving us these clues that go nowhere and just, as in life; we don’t have an answer in the end.

**Ted Sod: Can we talk about the history of the play? Before we do that, however, he worked as part of the resistance during World War II, right?**

**Annette Saddik:** Yes, that’s right.

**Ted Sod: Then in 1948, I believe, he started writing this as “a diversion.”**

**Annette Saddik:** He previously, as I said, wrote poetry and novels and said they were exhausting and he wrote this play “as a diversion.” He wrote *Entendant en Godot* in French and then translated it himself into English for the British and American premiers.

**Ted Sod: It took about five years for it to get produced. And it was first produced in Paris. That production was somewhat successful, but people were extremely baffled by the play in 1953. Then it premiered in London not long after that and it was really controversial. It truly shook up the British critical faculty and the audiences. It wasn’t until later in the run that Harold Hobson and Kenneth Tynan wrote two positive Sunday articles. A number of playwrights, Jean Anouilh, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder, all defended the play. Then it came to America in the most bizarre circumstances. Would you like to tell them a little bit about those circumstances?**

**Annette Saddik:** It premiered in 1956 in America, quite interestingly, at the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami, Florida. Not the best place to premiere this type of play. It was described as: “the laugh riot of two continents.”

**Ted Sod: One critic retorted, “Is one of the continents Antarctica?”**

**Annette Saddik:** You can imagine what the audiences thought. People walked out.

**Ted Sod: In droves.**

**Annette Saddik:** In London and Paris, they were willing to give it a chance. In Miami, it was a disaster. Then it came to New York and the director Herbert Berghof...

**Ted Sod: The director had been replaced from the Florida production.**

**Annette Saddik:** Right, Alan Schneider.

**Ted Sod: He became quite an interpreter of Beckett; in fact, one of Beckett’s favorite director/interpreters.**

**Annette Saddik:** Beckett preferred Schneider, I think.

**Ted Sod:** Schneider was released, as was Tom Ewell, who played Vladimir. Bert Lahr played Estragon. So they come to New York and replace Ewell with E.G. Marshall. And the director was Herbert Berghof, husband of Uta Hagen and, of course, a great acting teacher and director. It lasted 59 performances. Then the following year, 1957, they open it on Broadway again, with an all-black cast.

**Annette Saddik:** It lasted...

**Ted Sod:** Nine performances. So the play has always been difficult for some audiences. Do you think that we have finally caught up with Mr. Beckett?

**Annette Saddik:** Well, I think we have to ask our friends here. One interesting thing about the productions is that right after the French production, which was in 1953; in 1954, a prisoner wrote to Beckett and said "I get it." And they performed it in the prison and it was a huge success. And in 1957, right after the American premiere, it was done at San Quentin with Herbert Blau as the director. They got it. It was not too intellectual for them. They weren't trying to find the meaning; they were just letting the play speak for itself.

**Ted Sod:** "They knew something about waiting", Beckett said.

**Annette Saddik:** So I think there's a sense with audiences, who are coming to the theatre, coming to a play on Broadway, by the great Samuel Beckett, to find this wonderful meaning. Becket said: "The meaning is there. It's not that complicated." And whenever he was asked who Godot was, he would say, "If I knew that, I would have put it in the play." So he's not holding anything back from you, he's just describing things as he sees them. Even though this is not dramatic realism; you don't have a beginning, a middle and an end, a truth is revealed and people look the way we expect them to look in real life. They sit. They wait. They play games. Pozzo comes and they think, "Oh this is Godot!" and you see a version of how we wait and why we wait, but in the end, nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes. "It's awful!" Gogo says. But things do happen. It's like the modern equivalent –*Seinfeld*—a show about nothing.

**Ted Sod:** It's often been described as "a show in which nothing happens – twice." What can you tell us about Lucky's speech?

**Annette Saddik:** Lucky's speech is very interesting. There have been volumes written on Lucky's speech; but one way to look at it is that he's making fun of all the academic discourses we have that are supposed to define meaning. And if you notice in the speech he keeps saying "for reasons unknown, but time will tell..." Well time never tells anything. We live; we hope; we wonder; we think; we have theories; we have ideas and then nothing is revealed to us in the end. And dialogue in the play is not there to provide meaning. It's not about what the words are saying and expressing. It's passing the time.

It's creating a diversion. They happen to be talking, because if they stop, then that's silence and that signifies death, that's the end. So they have to keep talking, they have to keep going on. I have to keep moving forward. That's one of the chords of the play.

**Ted Sod:** There are some people who say that this is the most important play of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Certainly it gave playwrights the freedom to write without encumbrance of location, character, and plot. It's character-driven, but at the same time, it's completely different from plays that were happening at the same time. To also give you a sense of what else was going on culturally, keep in mind, in 1954, the musical *Pajama Game* was also playing.

**Let's talk about whether or not you believe this is an important play and why? People have said that this play helped to create the reputations of Albee, Pinter and Mamet. All of these generations of writers that have come after Beckett were freed by this play. Do you believe this is true?**

**Annette Saddik:** Yes, I think so. If you notice the language, it's very minimalistic. It's very repetitive. Beckett very much believed that life was about patterns and repetition. So you see the patterns and the repetitions. Even Gogo thinks that Pozzo and Lucky are reflections of him and Didi, and they play at them at times. In Mamet, Pinter and Albee, there's similarly a minimalistic kind of language.

Martin Esslin decided that *Waiting for Godot* and other plays, some by Pinter and other playwrights, were part of a movement called Theatre of the Absurd. What they are doing is expressing that life is absurd. That there's no meaning, they are just expressing absurdities. Ionesco is another one of these playwrights. Beckett resisted that label. I'll tell you why in a minute. Another label he resisted was existentialist. Now keep in mind that this was after World War II, and Beckett wrote his poetry and prose pre-World War II. I think his career can be divided into three phases, pre-1945 when he did the poetry and the prose, after World War II he started writing plays; he wrote one play before *Godot* and it hasn't been produced, as far as I know and it was published after his death. His major period of writing plays was from 1946 or 1947 until about 1960. And then there are the later plays that are so minimalistic that in one of his plays it's just a mouth speaking. It just has an image of a mouth and that's all.

**Ted Sod:** That's *Not I*?

**Annette Saddik:** Yes, *Not I*. So Beckett was writing after World War II and Existentialism was a major philosophy, especially in France. Remember he lived in France from 1937 on. The difference between this kind of play and Existentialism—even though there are some same philosophies—is that Beckett never said that there is nothing. He never definitively said that there's a nothingness. He just said that it's undeniable that we don't know. Maybe there is something, but what it is? If there is something definite, something certain, we have no idea what shape it takes. And another big difference is that Existentialists spend a lot of time and language and long passages of language saying that language doesn't say anything; explaining that nothing means anything. Which is a

contradiction Beckett understood, and so what he does instead is he presents that, he shows it. He has pauses and silence and minimalistic dialogue to present that repetition. He presents the fact that we are just repeating the same patterns. So in a way he does reflect Existentialism. There is some truth to the idea that he is of the Theatre of the Absurd, but he's creating something new, and people either love it or hate it when they see it initially. People will see this and say "Wow! This is it!" Or people will say "Oh my god, what is that?" Many people will say, "This is depressing." But he called the play a tragi-comedy and he had coined that term. It's both tragic and it's comic. He's looking at life's tragic elements –it's boredom and it's repetition –and he's laughing at it.

**Ted Sod:** There's a wonderful line that Bill Irwin's character says that "Time goes so much more quickly when you're having fun." He also says "Habit is the great deadener."

**Annette Saddik:** Right, right!

**Ted Sod:** Which I guess is a good lesson for all of us. Let's talk a little bit about this particular production. This production came together because of Bill Irwin. He tried to get a Broadway production of it, which was more or less rejected by a lot of commercial producers, and he came to our Artistic Director, Todd Haines, who said, "Of course."

And we are lucky enough to have these wonderful artists all sign on to do this piece. Anthony Page, the director, has history with this show. He directed the first British revival of this play at The Royal Court with Nicol Williamson, who, he told me, during rehearsals, just disappeared and they couldn't find him. Beckett was in rehearsal for about three weeks. So Page had first hand experience with Beckett. He told me that Beckett was very precise about the rhythms, the music of the piece and kept asking him to strip away the set. So Anthony says that Beckett would probably not care for the set today, but Anthony felt it was very important to fill the space. And, of course, the set has been lauded by many of the reviews.

Do you sense that this play always benefits from having comic actors attached to it? Because it's not always the case. Do you see Vladimir and Estragon as Abbott and Costello? Laurel and Hardy?

**Annette Saddik:** Sure, there's that and Ralph and Norton in *The Honeymooners*. There's the playfulness and you have the bowler hats that come from Vaudeville; the routine with the hats.

**Ted Sod:** Which is all written in the script.

**Annette Saddik:** Absolutely that's all written in the script. Without the comedy, I think this would be a really boring and tragic play.

**Ted Sod:** Nathan Lane did a wonderful interview with a group of funders that I facilitated. He said he was having dinner with Elaine Stritch and she said. “Oh, Nathan, if that play isn’t funny, it’s a long fucking night.”

**Annette Saddik:** It has to be funny; it’s the comedy that’s the brilliance. They’re laughing and they are having fun with it and doing it so well, and I think, honoring the tragic.

**Ted Sod:** One thing that Anthony told me when I interviewed him was that in his early career he came over here to study with Sanford Meisner. It was important to him to try to bring the Meisner technique to the classics. He wanted to do Shakespeare and the Jacobean plays using some of Meisner’s well-regarded techniques. He understands that the actors have to own it. There is an emotional through-line in this play and the actors have to find it and that can be very difficult. They have to own it in order to make it playable and their own. Did you see that today?

**Annette Saddik:** Oh, absolutely. The artists are connected. Gogo and Didi and Pozzo and Lucky, you can see the connection between them, and you can hear the rhythms. You can see the timing and the emotional through-line, so, yes, absolutely. And I like the set.

**Ted Sod:** I think it’s definitely different from what’s described.

**Annette Saddik:** Yea, usually when I’ve seen this play it’s been a tree—a small tree – and that’s it. And there’s supposed to be a mound or a rock that the characters sit on. And I don’t know if you noticed the difference, but between Act I and Act II is that there’s a few leaves on the tree in Act II. And that signifies, of course that time has passed. We don’t know how much time exactly, but time has passed. And that’s it. I agree with Anthony Page that in such a large space it would seem a little too bleak or vast without a set of this size.

**Ted Sod:** And the lighting, which happens rather precipitously, that’s all in the script. It all happens the way it’s asked for.

**Let’s talk about Pozzo and Lucky because I think they are open to a lot of different interpretation. How do you see them? You did intimate that you see them as a reflection of Vladimir and Estragon, but how do you see them as characters? What do you think Beckett is trying to tell us with this master-slave relationship that gets reversed in the second act?**

**Annette Saddik:** There are some patterns I see with Pozzo and Lucky. There is that master-slave relationship. Gogo and Didi are waiting for this master. They are waiting for Pozzo and he seems so authoritative, that they believe he’s Godot and he’s not. And you see how he treats Lucky. He beats Lucky. He controls him. He tells him to carry bags of sand, and it’s basically just to torture him, there’s no point to it. But then at the end Pozzo

and Lucky come back and Pozzo is blind and Lucky is dumb – he’s mute –you can see from the beginning of the play that time degenerates.

At the beginning, Gogo is sitting on a mound and his feet hurt, he’s in pain. Throughout the play the characters are in pain; there’s decay, there’s degeneration. So it’s not surprising that when Pozzo and Lucky come back, they’ve degenerated somehow – they’ve lost their sight, they’ve lost their ability to speak. And when Gogo and Didi ask them, “Why? What happened,” Pozzo gets very frustrated and says, “Well One day! This just happened. That’s how life is; I don’t know when it happened.”

I think Pozzo and Lucky are there partly to reflect Didi and Gogo because we’re all patterns of the same thing at some level. We all go through the same thing, but we’re all individuals at the same time. They are also there to discuss the idea that things change and memory is unreliable, time can’t be pinned down and things degenerate. Pozzo will not always be the master and Lucky will not always be the slave. The idea is that one day you’ll be up here and one day you’ll be down here. Things change, nothing ever stays the same, nothing’s static. I think Pozzo and Lucky address that at some level.

**Ted Sod: What about the little boy? It’s intimated that he has a brother; do you have a sense of his meaning? He’s a messenger, yes?**

**Annette Saddik:** He’s a messenger. He’s a tease. He says, “I mind the goats. My brother minds the sheep.”

**Ted Sod: And Godot probably has a white beard.**

**Annette Saddik:** Right. Godot has a white beard and he does nothing. He may just be a messenger, but we grab on to that. Goats, sheep, white beard, there must be something here. And really he’s just relaying information. Other times they say Godot has to consult his bank account and his agents –so that kills the idea that he’s God. There’s this constant playing back and forth

**Ted Sod: Excellent, great stuff, Annette. And now it’s your turn to ask some questions and try to find the answer.**

**Audience Question 1: I wanted to comment on the relationship between Didi and Gogo and how it reflects so many relationships, the bickering, the reconciliation, the caring. And ask about the relationship between Pozzo and Lucky, I couldn’t help but wonder if the sado-masochistic relationship was a reflection of the Second World War and the relationship between Hitler and the German people.**

**Ted Sod:** That’s an interesting observation. Want to comment on that?

**Annette Saddik:** Absolutely, and that’s all there. In *Endgame* there’s this same kind of relationship between Clove and Hamm, all this bickering and reconciliation; this love/hate, embrace me; you stink of garlic. So that is definitely there. As far as the Pozzo

and Lucky relationship reflecting what was going on after World War II that also is certainly a valid response. Beckett was fighting for the French Resistance as we mentioned. He's not political, he did not consider himself political at all, but in this case, he thought something had to be done and he very narrowly escaped arrest and prosecution. A lot of his friends were caught. Yes, I think that's definitely all in there.

**Ted Sod:** Many times the relationship between Didi and Gogo is compared to a marriage, yes?

**Annette Saddik:** Absolutely, people have asked me: Are they gay? Well, I don't know! There's no sexuality in the play, so it becomes a moot point. It's the relationship that is intimate.

**Ted Sod:** I will say that Beckett, when he was alive, had been petitioned many times, to allow women to perform this play and every time, he denied it. He had productions closed down because, he said, "women don't have prostates."

**Annette Saddik:** He wanted to be true to the play, to the script. And one of the important parts of the script is that Vladimir's prostate is enlarged and he always has to go to the bathroom. He didn't want that changed; it was part of the rhythm, the meaning.

**Audience Question 2: What were the forces that brought Nathan Lane and John Goodman to the play?**

**Ted Sod:** Irwin motivated the play. He played Lucky in the 1988 Mike Nichols production with F. Murray Abraham as Pozzo and Robin Williams as Estragon and Steve Martin as Vladimir. It was a star-studded production and no one could get a ticket. Beckett was still alive – it was right before he died. There were issues around Robin Williams' improvising. I mean, what would you expect?

Bill Irwin was thrilled when Nathan accepted, because he was their first choice, as was Goodman. It's interesting because there was another actor announced to play Lucky, who dropped out for health reasons or whatever, and John Glover, who's a phenomenal actor, and has a phenomenal career, struggled with whether or not to take the role when he was asked. That role is a killer; it has a three-page monologue. I remember him saying that he had asked Anthony if he could have an hour everyday to work on the monologue as part of his acceptance. It's just a dream cast. The little boys are marvelous as well. I think they're both eight or nine-years-old. It's a dream cast and of course we're thrilled to have a hit.

**Audience Question 3: I would like to hear a little bit about the director's interpretation about the play and how the actor's developed their roles.**

**Ted Sod:** I was not in rehearsal everyday, but I know there was an interview in the New York Times with Anthony Page, and he said the rehearsals were very difficult. It's a very difficult play to do. It's about finding your way in and telling the truth as you understand

it. I believe that Anthony's interpretation has honored the text. He comes from the Royal Court and the Royal Court primarily does new plays. He comes from the tradition of honoring the text and bringing whatever the artists combined can bring. He said that each of the artists that you saw today has a very different way of working and a very unique comic and tragic sensibility. I'm sure his job was getting them to live in the same world. That's any director's job. Once your cast and that's a gamble, every time, for every director, it's about making sure that the world of the play is reflected and that everybody is in the same play. I believe that's the process that he used. As I said earlier, he wanted the actors to own it. One of the interesting aspects of this production is the whole improvisation that goes on around Lucky's speech. That's not in the script, but they created it themselves through rehearsal. So they found their own way into this piece.

To address the question about the director's interpretation, I think it was the director's interpretation to let the actor's own it and to be as true to the script as he can be without being reverential.

**Audience Question 4: I seem to recall a television production. Did I make that up?**

**Ted Sod:** I think it was one with Zero Mostel in the 60's on the BBC. Go to IMBD on the Internet. There are a lot of TV and film versions. More than you would think. I believe Beckett watched the Mostel version and was very disgruntled by it and said, "My play was not meant for this box." He had been pursued to do a film version with Peter O'Toole and he kept saying, "No, it's not a film." So you're right there was a television version, but I don't know if it's available.

**Annette Saddik:** I've seen Beckett on film, and there's a film of *Endgame*. I don't know if you know that play. I find it extremely painful. There's something different about it on stage, and I agree with him that his plays are not meant for that kind of space. To watch this on TV or on screen is just not the same thing. The humanity does not come across in the same way.

**Audience Question 5: What was Beckett's religion?**

**Annette Saddik:** That's a very good question. He was raised Protestant, in a Protestant family, but he had no use for it. He went to Trinity College at Dublin and he said that "he's familiar with the mythology of religion, so he uses it." It's one of the "mythologies" that he felt comfortable with. He denied any association with any particular religion and he was asked by the prosecutor at a trial once –one of his cousins was being sued for something- if he was Christian, a Jew or Atheist and he said, "None of the three." He doesn't own any sense of non-belief, but he doesn't consider himself a believer.

**Ted Sod:** I will say that Anthony, the director, did say that there was a religious response from Beckett in this play, having been brought up a Protestant. He feels like there is some response to religion in this play.

**Audience Question 6: I noticed at the last moment Didi and Gogo grabbed hands...it was a lovely moment. Whose idea was that?**

**Ted Sod:** I don't know, but I will ask Peter Hanson, our terrific stage manager and if you give me your email, I will email you the answer.

**Audience Question 7: I guess what struck me from thirty years ago when I read it, is that seeing it is a completely different experience. You can't possibly imagine it when you are reading it on the page.**

**Annette Saddik:** There's always a varied reaction from students seeing it. They don't dislike it as much as I expect them to. I think seeing it brings out the comedy for them, and they don't realize how funny the play is, until they see it. I think the tenderness and the caring resonates with them and the sense that they are like a bickering married couple. So they see the humanity and the human relationships in it and that comes across more in production.

**Audience Question 8: I was wondering if you could comment more on the master-slave relationship. I feel there's sort of a master-slave relationship with Estragon and Vladimir. I feel like there is a sense of bondage in the play to the idea of should we wait—the sense of being tied down, the rope to hang themselves. Could you talk a little more about that?**

**Annette Saddik:** If you remember towards the end, "Well, we can't leave, we have to stay." "Why not?" "We'll be punished." It's not just a religious reference. Obviously it comes to mind for a lot of people, but as you said, there's also a sense of this bondage to life. We can't go against social expectations; we can't do what we're not supposed to do. And you're right, there is this sado-masochistic theme going on. Beckett has said that this play does express human beings' need to dominate each other constantly. Gogo is in a sense, and I think it came across in this production, is the more physical one and the simpler one. By simple I don't mean unintelligent, but simple. He takes things at face value. Whereas Vladimir is more intellectual; he's in his head. They're constantly vying for position on one level or another. The scene with the hanging is very interesting because it comes out of nowhere. They're bored and they want something to do. They're depressed, but not really and so it comes up: "Well let's just hang ourselves and it will give us an erection." And they get very excited. And there's a sense that they'll feel something. Because there's really no excitement in this play, just that symbolism of "we'll be excited, we'll get an erection with all that follows." This idea of excitement and release goes through the whole play.

**Audience Question 9: Was this play originally envisioned to be with this wonderful physicality with the players on stage?**

**Annette Saddik:** Absolutely. That's what the play is about. It's not about what the language means, it's about what the language is doing, about the physicality of the play.

**Ted Sod:** I'd like to wrap it up. I'm sorry we didn't get to all of you, but I want to take this opportunity thank Dr. Saddik. The next lecture series is on June 20, for *The Tin Pan Alley Rag* which is about the fictional meeting between Irving Berlin and Scott Joplin.