

In Homage To Eduardo De Filippo:

(1900-1984)

Playwright, Actor, Director

6:30 p.m. Monday, October 7, 2002

Martin E. Segal Theatre
The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue, NYC

Presented by
Jane E. House Productions
The Eduardo De Filippo Estate
Istituto Italiano Di Cultura, New York

Cosponsored by
Martin E. Segal Theatre Center
The Ph.D. Program in Theatre, The CUNY Graduate Center

THE PROGRAM

A Staged Reading of
The Part of Hamlet (*La Parte di Amleto*)
1940 one-act play
by
Eduardo De Filippo
Translated by *Mimi* and *Nello D'Aponte*
Reading directed by *Jane E. House*
Casting by Tom Rowan

Cast (in order of speaking)

Reader and Fireman Nick Raio*
Stage Doorman Caesar John Del Trecco
Renato Cartis, leading man/company co-director James Sobol*
The Seamstress Katharine Clark*
Angelo Zoppi, actor James Doherty
Riccardo Balzetti, actor Osvaldo Plasencia*
Gastone Rota, actor Vaneik Echeverria*
Franco Selva, ex-actor and servant Jonathan Teague Cook*
Adele Capecchio, leading lady Kathy Lee Hart*
Fabio Felta, company co-director Davis Hall*
Rita Baldelli, aspiring actress Carolina McNeely
* Members of Actors Equity Association

Scene: 1940, in any theatre in Naples

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Eduardo De Filippo and Farce, a post-performance discussion with
Albert Bermel

Professor Emeritus, Lehman College, CUNY
Translator and Author

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A Screening of ***Avarice and Anger***
an episode from
Les Sept péchés capitaux or *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1952)
Screenplay by Charles Spaak
Cinematography by Enzo Serafin
Directed by *Eduardo De Filippo*

Cast

Eduardo, clarinet teacher Eduardo De Filippo
Signore Alvaro, landlord Paolo Stoppa
Signora Alvaro, his wife..... Isa Miranda

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EDUARDO: REPERTORY, THE PART OF HAMLET, AND FILM

Eduardo De Filippo, born in Naples May 24, 1900, wore many hats in the worlds of theatre and film: stage actor, playwright, director, company manager, theatre owner, screen actor, director and screenwriter, and poet. He was the second of three illegitimate children. He and his siblings, Titina (1898) and Peppino (1903), were born from the union of Luisa De Filippo and Eduardo Scarpetta, the famous Neapolitan actor, playwright, and company manager. Eduardo made his stage debut with his father's company at 6 years old and joined the company of his step-brother, Vincenzo Scarpetta, when he was 12, remaining there until 1930. He wrote his first works for this troupe: *Farmacia di turno* (Pharmacy on call, 1920), *Uomo e galantuomo* (Man and gentleman, 1922), and *Ditegli sempre di si* (Always tell him yes, 1927). During the same period he also worked with other traditional theater companies and in revues. One of his first big successes was *Sik-Sik, l'artefice magico* (*Sik-Sik, the Masterful Magician*, 1930), a sketch written for a revue.

On 25 December 1931, the *Compagnia del Teatro Umoristico i De Filippo*, which Eduardo formed with Peppino and Titina, made its debut in Naples at the Kursaal Theatre, a cinema-theatre where the audience was treated to sketches or variety acts between film screenings. Eduardo's one act, *Natale in casa Cupiello* (translated and published in its longer form as *Christmas at the Cupiello House* and *The Nativity Scene*) was full of *lazzi* or comic bits and met with an enthusiastic response. Indeed the critical reception of this one act opened doors for the *Teatro Umoristico* to major theatres throughout Italy.

The repertory of the *Teatro Umoristico*, in its early years, consisted almost entirely of sketches and one acts, two- and three-act plays only being added later. Both Eduardo, the company's director, and Peppino provided works in Neapolitan. The company also performed plays by such playwrights as Luigi Pirandello (*Liola, Il berretto a sonagli (Cap and Bells)*), Lucio D'Ambra, Gino Rocca, and Ugo Betti. Among Eduardo's plays of the *Teatro Umoristico* period are the one-, two-, and three-act versions of *Natale in casa Cupiello, Gennareniello* (Little Gennaro, 1932), *Uno coi capelli bianchi* (A man with white hair, 1935), *La Parte di Amleto* (1940), *Non ti pago* (I won't pay you, 1940), and *Io, l'erede* (I, the heir, 1942).

The *Teatro Umoristico* company dissolved in 1944 when serious artistic differences between Peppino and Eduardo became apparent, and Eduardo formed the *Teatro di Eduardo* in which Titina took part. This new company opened at the San Carlo Theatre, Naples, in 1945 with *Napoli milionaria! (Napoli Millionaria!)*. Over the next 20 years, Eduardo wrote many other plays that achieved success both in Italy and abroad, among them *Questi fantasmi! (Oh, These Ghosts!)* (1946), *Filumena Marturano* (1946), *Le voci di dentro (Inner Voices)*, (1948), *La grande magia* (Grand Magic, 1948), *Sabato, domenica e lunedì (Saturday, Sunday, Monday)*, (1959), *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità (The Local Authority)*, (1960), *Il contratto* (The contract, 1967), and his last comedy, *Gli esami non finiscono mai* (Exams never end, 1973). The *Teatro di Eduardo* company broke up in 1978.

The Part of Hamlet and the 1939-1940 Repertory of the Teatro Umoristico

La Parte di Amleto was first performed in Milan, Italy, in January 1940 with Eduardo, Titina, and Peppino in lead parts; performances were repeated in Rome and Naples in March. The life of a theatrical touring company in 1940 was difficult and demanding. In the quest for fresh audiences, companies changed towns, and sets had to be dismantled, reinstalled, and adjusted for each new theatrical space. The repertory also changed frequently, and actors had to know the lines of many plays by heart; they would rehearse each day, reviewing old pieces in the repertory as well as staging new works. During the nine-month theatrical season, November 1939 through July 1940, *Teatro Umoristico* performed in eleven Italian towns using a repertory of 25 plays. Among the five new plays were Peppino's Neapolitan version of *Una donna romantica e un medico omeopatico* by Riccardo di Castelvecchio; *La parte di Amleto* by Eduardo; and *Si salvi chi puo*, Eduardo's adaptation of *Embriago di Sesto* by Gino Rocca. Among the company's "old" repertory were Eduardo's *Uomo e galantuomo*, *Ditegli sempre di si*, and *Natale in casa Cupiello*,

Jane House's Notes for *The Part of Hamlet*

Franco Selva refers to having performed in *La morte civile* and *Corrado*, two nineteenth-century plays. *La morte civile* (Civil Death, 1861) is by Paolo Giacometti (1816-82) who was influenced by romanticism. His plays – numbering over 80, many of them melodramatic historical dramas – served as vehicles for prominent Italian, nineteenth-century, actor-managers such as Tommaso Salvini (1829-1915) and Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906), who both became international stars and toured the U.S. *La morte civile* tackles the theme of divorce when the husband is a convicted murderer and afforded Salvini the opportunity to horrify audiences with his realistic portrayal of a man suffering the agonies of suicide by poison. Ristori performed the title roles in *Elizabeth Queen of England* and *Marie Antoinette* – in English no less – in both the U.S. and England.

Corrado (1873), a verse play by Leopoldo Marengo, was in the repertory of the touring company headed by Italian actor-manager and playwright, Luigi Bellotti-Bon (1820-83). Concerned about the lack of a modern Italian repertory, Bellotti-Bon commissioned over 70 new plays from prominent Italian authors and produced them lavishly with fine actors. Due in great part to his efforts, Italian theatre from 1860-70 enjoyed a period of prosperity despite the upheavals of the Risorgimento.

Franco Selva also refers to having performed in Ibsen, who was first presented to Italians by Eleanora Duse when she played Nora in *A Doll's House* in 1891.

Eduardo De Filippo and Film -- Actor, Scriptwriter, and Director

Eduardo's extensive career as movie actor, writer, and director began in the 1930s. He made his screen debut in 1933 and over the next 50 years he acted in some 44 films, among them *Assunta Spina* (1947) with Anna Magnani, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1952, the segment "Avarice and Anger," which he also directed), *The Gold of Naples* (1954) with Sophia Loren, *Zibaldone* (1954), *Ferdinando I, King of Naples* (1960) with Peppino, and *Heart* (distr. 1985). Twenty-three of his film scripts, including film and TV adaptations of his own plays, were produced. Besides *Filumena Marturano* (1951), among them are: *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1963) and *Marriage Italian Style* (1964) both starring Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni and directed by Vittorio Di Sica, and *Ghosts – Italian Style* (1968), starring Sophia Loren, Vittorio Gassman and Marcello Mastroianni. Between 1938 and 1966 Eduardo also directed 13 films, among them *In campagna è caduta una stella* (In the Country Fell a Star, 1939), *Napoli milionaria* (1949), *Filumena Marturano* (1951), and *Shoot Louder, Louder ... I Don't Understand* (1966) with Marcello Mastroianni and Raquel Welch.

Bibliography

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Quarenghi, Paola. "Introduction to *The Nativity Scene*." In *20th Century Italian Drama*, edited by Jane House and Antonio Attisani, pp. 485-490. NY: Columbia University Press, 1995.

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ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Albert Bermel's published translations include more than 40 French and Italian plays. Among his original plays are 15 full-length plays and 15 one acts. His books of criticism deal with modern theatre, Molière, farce from Aristophanes to Woody Allen, and a study of Shakespeare's comedies. He has written scores of articles and reviews on theatre, film, politics, and literature. Bermel, a professor emeritus of theatre (and sometimes film) at The Graduate Center and Lehman College, The City University of New York, has also taught at Yale, Columbia, and Juilliard. He received a George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism and a Guggenheim Fellowship for playwriting. He lives in New Rochelle, N.Y., and is currently anguishing over several writing projects:

a memoir about a deprived and, in part, depraved childhood during WW2; his first novel, which may never be finished – the story of an economy that is hacking and shredding itself to bits; and a juicy romantic musical dealing with the depression of 1929 and thereafter.

Mimi Gisolfi D'Aponte (Translator) Professor at Baruch College and The Graduate Center, CUNY, has written extensively on Italian theatre, with special emphasis on Eduardo De Filippo. With Nello D'Aponte, she has translated five of Eduardo's one acts which are anthologized as *Theatre Neapolitan Style* and provisionally accepted by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

Nello D'Aponte (Translator) worked for many years with the NY delegation of ENIT, the Italian Government Travel Office. Together with Mimi D'Aponte, he translated *La Cantata dei Pastori* as *Shepherd's Song* (Studia Humanitatis, 1982).

ACTORS

Katharine Clark (Seamstress) Recent: *Exercise* (Manhattan Theatre Source Estrogenius Festival); *Raw Footage* (NY Fringe); *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet, Theatre works USA); and *Meat* (A.T.A.) playing a gazelle. As Hypothetical Theatre Co. member: *Francine and The Other Wife*, and the upcoming staged readings of *The Sparrow Project* and *Venus Reclining*. Training: Ithaca College (BFA in acting).

Jonathan Teague Cook (Franco Selva) Last seen on TV in "Law and Order," "All My Children" and in the films *Salome* with Al Pacino, and Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog*. NY stage *First Light* directed by Tom Rowan for Ensemble Studio Theatre's Octoberfest. He was a member of the Colony Theatre where he appeared in *Cask of Armontillado*, adapted and directed by Tim Kelleher.

Caesar Paul Del Trecco (Stage Doorman) last seen in *Green Eggs and Hamlet* (Rivera Theatre). Other: *Love of Frankenstein* (Bela Lugosi, The Actor's Playhouse), *Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (Theatre for a New City), *Blue Narcissus* (Boston Playwright's Theater). Brief appearances in commercials, films, & TV movies.

James Doherty (Angelo Zoppi) Understudied last year in The Pearl Theatre's *Exit the King, Much Ado About Nothing, Romeo and Juliet* (Fr. Lawrence). Other NY credits: *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio, 1010 Players), *Richard III* (Buckingham), *Imaginary Cuckold* (Sganarelle), *Christmas Carol* (Scrooge). Regional: Virginia Shakespeare Fest., Mill Mountain Theatre (VA), Commonweal Theatre (MN), Highlands Playhouse (NC), The Publick Theatre and The Mohawk Playhouse (MA). He lives in NY with his wife, Karen.

Vaneik Echeverria (Gastone Rota) Givola "the Florist" in *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*; Master Jacques in *The Miser*; Ferdinand in *The Tempest*; Puck, Lysander, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Nicholas Devise in *The Lady's Not for Burning*; Henry in *Stand-Up Tragedy*; Johnny Boyle in *Juno and the Paycock*; Slim in *Of Mice and Men*. Film: *Chow Bella, Placas, The Tale of the Illian Oak, Infamous*. Vaneik is a long-time Slam Poet and educator.

Davis Hall (Fabio Felta, Managing Director) Most recently, Davis was featured in *Stink'n Rich* at the Delaware Theatre Company, *Happy End* at Columbia University, *Amadeus* at Indiana Rep, *Ten Little Indians* at The Dorset Playhouse, *The School for Scandal* at The McCarter Theater in Princeton, *Victor/Victoria* at The Paper Mill Playhouse, and on "The Guiding Light" and "As the World Turns." He appeared with Jane House in *Tartuffe* at Center Stage in Baltimore.

Kathy Lee Hart (Adele Capecchio) Ms. Hart's career spans stage, daytime and primetime TV, film, commercials, cabaret, and stand-up comedy. Most recently she appeared as Aida Gianelli in Joe Di Pietro's *Over the River and Through the Woods*, a joint production by Emelin Theatre and Queens' Theatre in the Park. Last season her voice graced several Coca Cola Winter Olympics' spots and she had a tap-dancing stint on *Sex and the City*.

Carolina McNeely (Rita Baldelli) NY theatre: *Antigone*, *Vinegar Tom*, *Night before the Trial*, *Ashes, Ashes...*; and NY Theatre Workshop's Mon. @ 3 series, Ensemble Studio Theatre's Octoberfest, a reading of *Eurydice* (McCarter Theatre). Film: *Opal's Diary*. Regional: *Twelfth Night*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, *The Hostage*.

Oswaldo Plansencia "Bobby" (Riccardo Balzetti) Showtime's *Fidel*, based on the life of Fidel Castro. Film: *For the Love of the Game*, *Summer of My Dreams* and the upcoming *Black Fire*. Theatre: *Mistress of the Inn* (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre), *Blood Wedding* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Innocent Erendira* (Spanish Rep. Theatre), and countless play readings at The Public Theatre, Hartford Stage, South Coast Rep. Training: NYU Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Acting program.

Nick Raio (Fireman, Reader of Stage Directions) studied theatre at SUNY New Paltz. Commercials: "Stacker 2" (as a gangster) and yet-to-be-released Budweiser (as a cop). Notable TV work: "The Sopranos" as a gangster associate of Tony Soprano's father. Cops and gangsters pay the bills, but his favorite role so far was Bottom in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Danbury Actors Rep).

James Sobol (Renato Cartis) Recent: Harris in Arlene Hutton's *Closing Costs* (Samuel French Festival), *As You Like It* (Orlando, Peterborough Players), understudying Dallas Roberts and Chris McCann in Off-Bdwy premier of Charles L. Mee's *True Love*. Regional: American Rep. Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Co., National Shakespeare Co.. Film/TV: *Night'* (dirs. Wachowski Brothers), *Cosby Mysteries* (NBC), *Million Dollar Mysteries* (FOX). Training: A.R.T. Institute at Harvard University.