

PLAYS BY BOGUSLAW SCHAEFFER:

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P L A Y S

BY

BOGUSLAW SCHEAFFER

The Authorship Agency

Theater Department

Warsaw

Hipoteczna 2

WEBERN

Characters: Webern, his wife, Schoenberg, Hildegard and several other persons.

This is an almost classical in form play. It deals with the life and tragic death of the outstanding Austrian composer Anton Webern. The author with utmost sensitivity depicts the inner experiences, loneliness and desperation of the protagonist. The fate of the composer serves as a picture of the fate of the world in the first part of the 20th century. It is an exceptionally original work. It is most unusual that a composer has written a play about another composer.

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AUDIENCE I and IV

Two plays for one actor.

The starting points of both plays are lectures on music. They are quickly followed by other scenes which are put together on the basis of autonomous musical laws. The basic characteristics of the plays are: the open form and experimenting. Both Audiences are full of exceptionally original situations which pose quite a challenge for stage directors.

AUDIENCE II

A play for one actor.

A most ingenious and artistically written play. The actor, a lecturer, delivers here a lecture on music. However, he makes breaks on several occasions, for instance in order to present his irresistibly entrancing dream, or to talk of the role of chance in art. This play gives opportunities to especially talented actors to present their skills, although Schaeffer writes his plays only for such artists.

AUDIENCE III (ESKIMOS' PARADISE)

Characters: He and She.

A play of superb dramatic qualities. Every scene is written with great ease and with masterly sense of the theater matter. It is a play about two persons who undergo various transformations but they are never able to ultimately crystallize their personalities. The whole play is made up of a conversation. It touches upon all kinds of subjects: from philosophical problems to petty matters. The play is easy to stage at no great cost; stage setting is reduced to minimum.

AUDIENCE V

Character: one actor.

A play with many plot threads. A specifically developed imagination of the author causes that quite lengthy remarks on the contemporary art are frequently juxtaposed with, for example, absurd observations of the protagonist. An unusually thick theater matter deserves here special attention. The play overflows with humor. It can be staged in any circumstances.

SCENARIO FOR A NON-EXISTENT BUT POSSIBLE INSTRUMENTAL ACTOR

A play for one actor.

This play is largely devoted to the problem of the tragic loneliness of the contemporary man and commercialization of today's art. The leitmotiv of Scenario is a lecture on the sociological issues in new music. The lecture is delivered by one actor, who often has dialogues with himself. Special attention should be paid here to the poetic tinge of some parts. A complete success of the play depends on an exceptional talent of one actor.

FRAGMENT FOR TWO ACTORS AND CELLIST

Characters: two actors and a cellist.

The play consists of a series of dialogues presented by two actors, sometimes on a background of music performed by a cellist. In each of the short conversations the characters have different names, chosen systematically in the alphabetical order from A to Z. It is not a homogeneous play. The characters touch upon many various subjects. However, the conversation eventually proves how little they have to say to each other. The parts are uttered according to the laws of music, always with concentration and with gravity.

SCENARIO FOR THREE ACTORS

Characters: Actor I, Actor II, Actor III.

Four short acts.

This is a play about the theater. Its protagonists: Director, Composer and Painter, rehearse Play (Schaeffer's Fragment). It is an occasion for disclosing the condition of the contemporary art, and the truth about people who create it. The play has many themes; it has been given a musical form: I Allegro, II Minuet, III Andante, IV Finale. The exceptional theater qualities of the media employed by the author are amazing. Scenario is a study of antagonisms, spiritual attitudes and inability to communicate; it is an anatomy of egoism.

QUARTET FOR FOUR ACTORS

Characters: First violinist, second violinist, viola player
and cellist.

A play in 25 short scenes.

It is a play about inability and senselessness of combining people together into artificially homogeneous arrangements. The protagonists of the play are four musicians. Each of them follows a different passion, a different philosophy of life. In spite of this they attempt to create one, homogeneous body and they fail. The work is striking for its great musical qualities. Rhythimized speech, sound improvisations, choral showpieces, attempts almost to compose musical pieces out of various sounds, pieces of speech - all this makes up this fascinating play. It requires actors who would be capable of playing using their bodies as if they were musical instruments.

DARKNESS

Characters: Adolf, Ahr - Schreiter, Anne, Dr. Benson,
Captain Brown, Bruderschaft, Durand, Francise,
Dr. Freud, Goethe, Iris, Waiter, Inspector,
Matoll, Young Man, Natasha, Nurbeev, Pulitzer,
Putanelli, Cleaning Lady, Elderly Lady; Old
Man, Ybbes = Writer, Zapalniuk.

A play in 20 scenes.

The action of the play takes place in a hotel cafe. A group of people of various backgrounds, intellectual levels and sensitivity, gather together. The group present a sad panorama of society infected with omnipresent decadence and degeneration characteristic of our silently dying civilization. The play pictures devaluation of certain ideologies and intellectual attitudes against the background of inner poverty of the world lost in chaos. It gives possibilities of creating many superb interpretations of the characters. The work is tragic in its appeal but it is not devoid of subtle humor.

DAYBREAK

Characters: Adam, Bedday, Cedziak, Dedalus, First Actress, First Actor, Second Actress, Second Actor, Fanatic, First Dummy, Second Dummy, Third Dummy, Fourth Dummy, Fifth Dummy, Sixth Dummy, Girl, Tram Driver, Old Man, Cellist (silent part).

A tragicomedy in two acts.

The play presents interhuman relationships (also: inhuman ones) which prevail in the world conquered by ideological evil. This work is a study of a stagnant society which is terrorized by myths and force. The gloomy atmosphere of Daybreak is brightened by the characteristic of Schaeffer humor.

DAWN

12 characters.

A play with quite a dose of abstraction. It is imbued with metaphysics, transcendence and mysticism and it is unusually equivocal and rich in symbolism. The play presents a picture of the contemporary world and the painful side of human existence. Eventually, however, Dawn is an optimistic drama, since the heroes persistently fight against their unfortunate fates and thus they give sense to their existence. The play poses a very difficult task to the director and actors: they have to possess ample artistic consciousness and display perfection in their theater craft.

SINS OF OLD AGE

Characters: FIR, SEC, THI, supernumerary, three Actresses
who play a number of various roles.

The play consists of 15 scenes.

The play consists of the text of Scenario for three actors which is greatly supplemented with numerous additional plot threads and characters, which gives new undertones to the work. It is a play about aging of culture, about the ease with which the contemporary upstarts destroy talented individuals. Every media employed here surprises with its exceptional theater qualities. The plot is distinctly delineated.

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DUCKY

Characters: Showman, He, She.

18 scenes constructed on the basis of the laws of music.

The double-plan plot takes place in a theater. Showman's attempts to find and define himself, reflections on philosophy or art are intertwined with funny episodes. His and Her parts are very demanding but very interesting as well. Both characters undergo numerous metamorphoses in the course of the play. Similarly like in the majority of Schaeffer's plays the stage setting is reduced to minimum.

THE ACTOR

Characters: Actor, Tailor, Garbage Man, Beautiful Lady,
Margaret, Girl, Director, Porter, Boor,
Painter, two Supernumeraries (not necessary).

A play in 22 scenes.

This is another Schaefferian play which takes place in a theater. It consists of scenes which have almost no logical connection. Their protagonist is mostly Actor. The plot systematically moves towards its climax - the victory of the needs of lower order (Boor) over the world's values (which are not perfect either). Generally speaking, it is a play about life and its various impersonations, about the confrontation of what we want of the world with the arid, boring reality. Owing to the author's imagination the play is an extraordinary material for stage presentation.

REHEARSALS

Characters: Director, Actress A, Actress B, Actress C,
Actor A, Actor B, Actor C.

A play in 19 scenes.

First four scenes are a specific kind of experiment which presents rehearsals of invented fragments of theater performances. The whole plot takes place in a theater. The actors and Director want to give some meaningful shape to their theater. They fail because of the stupid megalomania of Director and his disregard for the advice of the actors. The theater depicted here presents its more interesting and true side. The view of the stage world is very critical in the play. The work is imbued in very singular atmosphere. The author approaches here himself and his art with much skepticism and great distance.

SEANCE

Characters: Master, Adam, Agenor, Albert, Ernest, Evarist,
Ada, Adelaide, Anne.

A play in 36 scenes.

This play tells about the fall of the protagonist (Master), who reached the bottom of vulgar existence, and about his comeback to the heights of the human living. It depicts vividly the conflict between two philosophical attitudes (the antagonism Evarist - Master), and between the forces of good and evil (almost religious in character). The play tells also how man deceives himself and how he tries to find things which do not exist in reality. One can detect here a metaphysical sphere. A talented director can bring out of the play its mysterious poetic qualities.

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Theaterstücke von Boguslaw Schaeffer

- 1955 Webers
- 1964 Das Eskimoparadies
(Aufführungen in Warschau, Hirschberg, Krakau, Wien und Oslo)
- 1966 Quartett für vier Schauspieler
(Aufführungen in Lodz, Posen, Krakau, Thorn, Breslau, Hamburg, Mexico, Salzburg, Athen und Rom)
- 1970 Szenar für drei Schauspieler
(Aufführungen in Krakau, Bialystok, Stettin und Warschau)
- 1980 Die Dämmerungen
(Aufführungen in Warschau)
- 1982 Das Morgenrot
(Aufführungen in Posen und Köslin)
- 1985 Sünden des Alters
(Aufführungen in Warschau)
- 1987 Katscho
(Aufführungen in Posen, Stettin und Warschau)
- 1989 Der Schauspieler
(Aufführungen in Lodz)
- 1990 Die Proben
- 1990 Die Herrgottsfrühe
- 1990 Die Séance