THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE, FILM AND CREATIVE WRITING PRESENTS:

Beautiful Thing

by

Jonathan Harvey

SEPTEMBER 20 to 30, 2006
FREDERIC WOOD THEATRE, UBC
In cooperation with Celebrations Ireland, Theatre at UBC and the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts present a multidisciplinary celebration of Samuel Beckett. The genius of writer and Nobel Prize laureate Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) is being honoured throughout the world, in this, the centenary of his birth. We celebrate the legacy of the grimly comic Irishman with BECKETT CENT—a festival with plays, films, lectures and a master class. Also, generously sponsored by Culture Ireland, we present the exclusive west coast installation of “Samuel Beckett A Centenary Celebration”, an exhibition in the lobby of the Chan Centre during the festival. Compassionate, ascetic, wickedly funny and pessimistic, Beckett’s work serves an unrelenting quest to understand the essence of the self within the tragic realm of human suffering. In 1969 he earned the Nobel Prize for a body of work that “has transformed the destitution of man into his exaltation.”

October 3
Lecture with Errol Durbach and Taping of *Krapp’s Last Tape*  
7:30pm TELUS Studio Theatre

October 4
Lecture with Brian McIlroy and *Happy Days* Screening  
Royal Bank Cinema

October 5-7  
*Rockaby/Catastrophe/Rough for Theatre II*  
7:30pm TELUS Studio Theatre

**BECKETT ON FILM SCREENINGS:**

October 2  
*Documentary: Making of Beckett on Film Project*

October 3  
*Rockaby, Catastrophe, Come and Go*

October 4  
*Rough for Theatre I, What Where, Breath*

October 5  
*Not I, Ohio Impromptu, Act without Words I*

October 6  
*A Piece of Monologue, Play*

Both in style and content *The Skin of Our Teeth* stretched the bounds of theatrical convention when it premiered in 1942, and continues to resonate today. Hysterically funny and fiercely intelligent, this groundbreaking Pulitzer Prize winning play follows the exploits of a family facing an Ice Age, a great flood, a devastating war—and the coldest August ever!

“Wonderfully wise...A tremendously exciting and profound stage fable.”  
*N.Y. Herald Tribune*

“...humanity survives, and the play does even better - it thrives, nearly 50 years after it was written,”  
*Los Angeles Times*
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Director: Stephen Heatley
Set & Projections Designer: Lauchlin Johnston
Lighting Designer: Jane Loong
Costume Designer: Tammy Chan
Sound Designer: Patrick Pennefather
Once upon a time there were three apartments inhabited by three teenagers who were desperately sorting out how they fit into the world, and desperate to understand how to express and receive love. One had an absentee mother, one had a drunken and abusive father, and one had a mother torn between being a devil-may-care party girl (so hooked up with a boyfriend eight years her junior) yet feeling like the sands of time were slipping out from beneath her feet. After all, what eligible, sexy young woman has a son old enough to be tempted by the physical attractions of one of the neighbour kids...

Jonathan Harvey subtitles his play, "An Urban Fairytale". As we began rehearsals, the company and I mused on what we understand a fairy tale to be. In contemporary terms (i.e. as Walt Disney has reframed the Western view of these traditional stories), they usually end with, "and they all lived happily ever after", which indicates to me that the story does not investigate the lives of the characters beyond the time of the magical incursion (the awakening kiss, the fitting of the glass slipper, etc.). The handsome prince remains perpetually handsome, Sleeping Beauty will always be a beautiful princess, no one has to age or be subject to the indelicacies of a mid-life crisis. The stories are more about possibilities and an opportunity to muse on “what if”. That is how I believe that Jonathan Harvey sees his play. You don’t have to believe it is realistic, you don’t have to spend time and energy worrying about what will happen to the characters in the future (unless you want to), you just have to ask yourself “how would the world be different if it could work out the way it does in this story”.

G.K. Chesterton summed up the role of fairy tales in our culture very well, when he said:

Fairy tales are more than true – not because they tell us dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.

Welcome to our fairy tale. The time this company of artists has spent preparing this production has been an enchanted one for all of us. I hope you will share our enchantment tonight.
It seemed like a good idea at the time. Thamesmead is located approximately 15 km East of London, on the south bank of the Thames. After WWII, an abundance of cheap, prefabricated units had been built in London to solve a housing shortage, and much of this housing stock had begun to fall into disrepair. Thamesmead was created in the late 1960’s as a way to solve many of the resulting inner-city social problems—less diplomatically known as “slum clearance”. The plan was to provide a large number of homes for the neediest people and to use land that was considered without value. Much of the land selected was marsh land that had been inundated in the North Sea Flood of 1953, so the original plans called for housing units to be built on the first floor or higher, with the ground floors used for parking. Buildings were to be connected with elevated concrete walkways. The oldest parts of Thamesmead—such as the area in which Beautiful Thing is set—are a mix of nearly identical medium rise and 12 story buildings built from pre-fabricated concrete blocks. The vision of Thamesmead was to provide a mixture of housing—private, rentals, different sizes etc—but in the early years it was primarily considered a dumping ground for many problem tenants from other areas. Since the first residents began to move in, the new suburb, dubbed the City on Stilts, has been plagued by high crime levels, graffiti, vandalism and a lack of amenities like shops and schools. Currently Thamesmead is home to approximately 45,000 people.

**Jonathan Harvey**

Hailed as “the new theatrical voice of his generation”, Jonathan Harvey was born in Halewood, Liverpool in 1968. His father was a postman who went to college late in life and went on to become a social worker. Mrs Harvey was a family planning nurse, which Harvey cites as “always quite a saucy job for my mother to have when I went to secondary school. When it came to sex education, I knew all about it!”

Harvey’s first serious attempt as a playwright was in 1987. Fuelled by the attraction of a £1,000 first prize to young writers from the Liverpool Playhouse, the result was *The Cherry Blossom Tree*, a garish blend of suicide, murder and nuns. This effort won him the National Girobank Young Writer of the Year Award.

Feeling very encouraged, he went on to write *Mobair* (1988), *Wildfire* (1992) and *Babies* (1993), the latter winning him the ‘George Devine Award’ for that year and The Evening Standard’s ‘Most Promising Playwright Award’ for 1994. 1993 also saw the premiere of *Beautiful Thing* at the Bush Theatre in London.

*Beautiful Thing* was a West End hit, sold out its five-week run and won author Jonathan Harvey an Olivier nomination as well as the John Whiting Award. This celebrated play was subsequently made into a film which developed a cult following.

Restricted from theatrical licensing by Harvey until recently, *Beautiful Thing* has just completed several successful revivals including runs in London’s West End, Chicago and San Francisco.

With many Theatre, TV and Film credits to his name, Harvey is also on the writing team for the British TV classic *Coronation Street*, where he was drafted in to guide the program’s first gay character. Television and film works include: *West End Girls* (Carlton); *Love Junkie* (BBC), the 1998 hit/cult comedy series starring Kathy Burke and James Dreyfus, *Gimme Gimme Gimme* (Tiger Aspect) and *Murder Most Horrid* (BBC).

Harvey also wrote the book for *Closer to Heaven*, a stage musical with songs and music written by the Pet Shop Boys. *Closer to Heaven* ran for nine months at the Arts Theatre in London in 2001 and recently ran in Australia in 2005.
Beautiful Thing

by Jonathan Harvey

Director  Stephen Heatley
Set & Projections Designer  Lauchlin Johnston
Lighting Designer  Jane Loong
Costume Designer  Tammy Chan
Sound Designer  Patrick Pennefather

Cast

Leah  Olivia Rameau
Steve  Ira Cooper
Jamie  Kevin Kraussler
Tony & Ronnie  Evan Frayne
Sandra  Joanna Rannelli

Beautiful Thing takes place in the Thamesmead Housing Projects in Southeast London in 1993

The performance is approximately 105 minutes long.
There is one 15 minute intermission.

Patrons should be aware that there is some coarse language and smoking onstage during tonight’s performance.

The use of cameras or any other recording device is prohibited in the theatre.

In consideration of others, please turn off all pagers and cellular telephones.

Thank you.
Production

Assistant Directors  Patrick Gauthier, David Savoy
Production Manager  Jay Henrickson
Technical Director  Jim Fergusson
Set & Projection Design Advisor  Ron Fedoruk
Lighting Design Advisor  Ron Fedoruk
Costume Design Advisor  Alison Green
Assistant Sound Design  Rizwan Hussain
Dialect Coach  Jonathan Holmes
Voice Coach & Dialect Coach  Lisa Beley
Movement Coach  Catherine Burnett
Stage Manager  Natalie Brougham
Assistant Stage Managers  Nykiya Graham, Cassandra Tattrie
Stage Management Advisor  Jayson McLean
Costume Supervisor  Jean Driscoll-Bell
Properties Supervisors  Janet Bickford, Lynn Burton
Lighting Crew  Jason Ho, Breanne Jackson, Rod Ormiston, Ashley Serl, Ryan Warden
Lighting Operator  Kristin Robinson
Projector Operators  Rod Ormiston, Jeff Hitchcock
Sound Operator  Jason Ho
Stage Carpenters  Jim Fergusson, Don Griffiths
Scenic Artist  Lorraine West
Scenic Painters  Rachel Glass, Lauchlin Johnston, Stacy Sherlock
Head of Wardrobe  Tlell Raffard
Dresser  Carmen Alatorre
Makeup Artist  Jill Wyness
Makeup & Dresser  Chantelle Balfour
Stage Crew  Emily Keller
Publicist  Deb Pickman
Poster & Program Design  Ian Patton
Web Design  Linda Fenton Malloy
Front of House Staff  Eurassia Adamson, Marijka Brusse

Theatre at UBC Administration

Head, Theatre, Film and Creative Writing  Robert Gardiner
Theatre Program Chair  Stephen Heatley
Theatre Program Administrator  Gerald John van der Woude
Manager, Technical Production  Jay Henrickson
Communications, Audience Services & Technology  Ian Patton
Marketing & Communications  Deb Pickman
Theatre Program Secretary  Karen Tong
Financial Clerk  Carol Lai
Box Office  Amin Miremadi, Tony Koelwyn
above: Concept Sketch and Set Model for Beautiful Thing by Set & Projection Designer, Lauchlin Johnston
right: Costume Sketches for Beautiful Thing by Costume Designer, Tammy Chan
A Guide to East London Slang

Slag, slapper: Slut, tramp, whore, etc.

Libs: Short for “liberties.” Ie) they’re taking liberties (advantage) of me.

Blindin’: Fanstastic.

Bubble and Squeak: A meal made of fried potatoes and other leftover vegetables.

Spotted Dick: A steamed pudding with currants, best eaten with hot custard.

Kip: Nap or rest.

Knackered: Tired, exhausted.

Git: Idiot.

Skint: Broke.

Pucker: Good, great.

Oi: Hey!

Cor: Wow.

Snap: Right back at you.

Frottage: Sexual activity without penetration that can include any form of sexual rubbing, whether naked or clothed.

Bagsy: Dibs on.

Knock you up: Knock on your door; stop by your house.

Jumper: Sweater.

Pop Culture References

Richard and Judy: Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan are married co-stars of daytime television programmes. They are widely known as simply Richard and Judy and are famously beloved of the UK’s homemaker and student populations.

Crimewatch: A long-running and high-profile television show, produced by the BBC, that reconstructs unsolved crimes with a view to gaining information from the members of the public. First Broadcast in 1984, it later spawned America’s Most Wanted.

Question of Sport: Long running BBC quiz show that features two teams of sports stars answering questions on their own and other sports.

Grange Hill: Grange Hill is a dramatic children’s television series which is shown on BBC One. The program has covered may controversial topics such as rape, drug addiction, and suicide.

Gazza: Nickname for Paul Gascoigne, former English footballer known for his colourful personality.

Anne Diamond: Best known as host/presenter of morning shows on British television.

Hello! Magazine: A weekly magazine specializing in celebrity news and gossip.

Oswald Moseley: Much-hated politician principally known for founding the British Union of Fascists in 1932.

East 17: English boy band from the 1990’s.

Bob’s Full House: A popular quiz show hosted by Bob Monkhouse, which was based on Bingo.

Mastermind: Quiz show well-known for it’s challenging questions, intimidating setting and air of seriousness.

University Challenge: Quiz show in which teams representing English universities compete. Taken off the air in 1987, and revived in 1994.

Sky Channel: Satellite television channel broadcasting to Europe.

Gary Lineker: Former English footballer who scored 10 World Cup goals (6 in 1986, and 4 in 1990) for England and in now a sports broadcaster for BBC.

Home and Away: An Australian soap opera.

Wincey Willis: Television personality who became famous as a weathergirl.
Touchstone Theatre
and Theatre at UBC present

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Photo of Bob Frazier by David Cooper