

PRE-SHOW IN-THE-KNOW

FAST FACTS

TITLE:

Endgame by Samuel Beckett

ABOUT THE PLAY:

Hugo Weaving returns to Sydney Theatre Company in Samuel Beckett's modern masterpiece, which takes the end of the world so seriously it makes us laugh.

Hamm is a blind tyrant, unable to stand. Clov is his son, unable to sit. Hamm's parents, Nell and Nagg, are living in bins.

Sheltering in an underground room, Hamm orders Clov about. Clov looks out the window for signs of life, but all seems lost and there is no one there. Inside, the characters pass the time, brutally toying with each other in the way only family can. These four people, perhaps the last, are playing out the game of life to its inevitable end.

What has happened outside? Will Clov leave Hamm to die?

In the mix of dark comedic repartee and distilled insight, Beckett's singular voice rings clear – absurdity in the face of meaninglessness, sorrow in the face of futility, humour in the face of mortality

With our acclaimed production of *Waiting for Godot* in 2013, Hugo Weaving and Andrew Upton began a conversation with the work of Samuel Beckett. With *Endgame*, they pick up where they left off.

The two plays are, in many respects, companion pieces – *Endgame*, completed in 1956, acts as a subterranean coda to *Godot*. Both were informed by the wholesale destruction of the Second World War and the sense of impending yet intangible doom promised by the nuclear age.

If *Godot* redefined the possibilities of theatre, *Endgame* cemented Beckett's place as the foremost playwright of his era.

"Like the funny story we have heard too often, we still find it funny, but we don't laugh any more."

CHARACTERS

Hamm - Hugo Weaving

Clov - Tom Budge

Nagg - Bruce Spence

Nell - Sarah Peirse

STYLE

Theatre of the Absurd

RUNNING TIME

1 hours and 50 minutes including interval.

ACTIVE AUDIENCE

THINK ABOUT:

- The cyclical nature of human existence and the meaninglessness of life
- The post-apocalyptic world of the play that is governed by endings and in a state of decline
- The absence of hope
- The human need for connection with one another

WATCH AND LISTEN FOR:

- Hamm's pet dog
- Dripping water on stage
- Repetition
- Dialogue layered with meaning

MEMORABLE MOMENTS:

- The opening five minutes of the play
- Clov's flea
- Nagg and Nell trying to kiss
- Hamm's story about the boy and Nagg's story about the trousers