

# THE PLAY ABOUT

# THE BABY

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15th  
TO  
17th

MARCH

UEA  
DRAMA

STUDIO

TICKETS

£6

£3.50



UEA  
NORWICH

ROBIN TARGET

THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY  
By Edward Albee

CAST: GIRL: Claire Carter  
BOY: Theo Leonard  
MAN: Dan Roberts  
WOMAN: Jessica Pidsley

ARTISTIC TEAM: DIRECTOR: Jordana Zeldin  
PRODUCERS: Charlie Mafham and Jordana Zeldin  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR &  
STAGE MANAGER: Charlie Mafham  
DRAMATURG: Kristen Kozlowski  
LIGHTING DESIGNER: Chris Howcroft  
SET DESIGNER: Corin Depper  
POSTER DESIGNER: Robin Tarbet

TECHNICIANS: Jack Robson  
Simon Davey  
T.J. Galloway  
Laura Coombe

MUSIC: Robert Schumann's Kinderszenen, performed by Wilhelm Kempff

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Kate Kreke, Jack Robson, Mel Spencer

SWEET THANKS TO:

Ian Abbot of the National Student Drama Festival, Christopher Bigsby, Rob Castell and the Drama Society Committee, Tony Frost, Head in the Clouds, Jon Hyde, Rob Little, Cat Lumb, Jeffrey Marganian, Merly of Thorns, Richard Mills, Barry Read of Barry Read's Fabric Ltd., Harry Rigg, Robin Tarbet, Ed Zeldin.

Chairs provided with compliments of habitat

## ALBEE AND ADOPTION

by kristen kozloski

The greatest artists are the ones most adept at using their own lives as inspiration for their work. Edward Albee is a master of this, taking his family background and related fears and traumas and using them liberally in his plays. Adopted at the age of 18 days by Reed and Frances Albee, one of the most recurring themes in Albee's work stems from the mystery of his early pre-adoptive experience.

Born in 1928 to Louise Harvey, he was given to an adoption agency and taken into the home of the Albee's soon after. Whilst caring for him materially the Albee's were not nurturing or affectionate people and he developed a far stronger bond with his nanny than with his adoptive parents. The emotional neglect and distance, which he suffered from his parents. The emotional neglect and distance, which he suffered from his parents while growing up fuelled his work as an adult. Most of his plays address questions about the relationship between parents and children and the responsibilities that both have one to another. His adoption left him unable – despite knowing the name of his birth mother – to find out about his original family history. Without the security of a loving and nurturing home, Albee was left with only questions, questions that he attempts to answer in his writing: what does it mean to be a parent or a child? What is a family?

The characters of *BABY* may or may not have children in the same way that Albee may or may not have had parents, either biologically or emotionally. Whilst childhood themes are but one of the many expressed in his plays, they take centre stage in *THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY*.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

by jordana zeldin

My intention here is to write both a helpful and succinct “director’s note” about our production ideas and the themes of Edward Albee’s THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY. I want to help to make sense of some of the play’s brilliantly confounding moments without giving anything away. I want to share with you some of the (ever-revolving!) conclusions of the cast and I have made about the piece without forcing you to make the same choices in your interpretation. There are no spoilers in these notes and it is my hope that they will be understood as just that, notes. Read them, take them in, or toss them over your shoulder!

This play can be understood in a finite number of ways: What is its story? What is its story for you? Your personal reaction is precious.

At the play’s core is the idea that reality is determined by need, determined by the individual’s experience of it. The same philosophy can be applied to your experience of that play this evening. Is this play, for you, the story of a young BOY and GIRL that are prematurely ripped from their protective womb-like world into the piercing light of painful experience? Can it effectively be understood as a birth in two acts?

How do you understand the play’s awareness of itself as a piece of theatre, MAN and WOMAN’S multiple levels of performance – despite the latter’s claim. “I’m not an actress! I want you to know that right off”? How does their relationship (performance?) with you, the audience, differ from that with each other, with BOY and GIRL? Is MAN and WOMAN’S consciousness of the audience a sign of experience? Can BOY and GIRL’S inability to recognise a world beyond their own (literally you, as audience members sitting in your chairs) be seen as a symptom of their naïveté?

Finally, what do you make of the baby? Its appearances are so brief that the play seemingly neglects it. BOY never touches it and although the younger

couple are presented as its parents, their relationship with it is undefined. Is the play's title just a trick? Can the play be said to be about everything *but* the baby? Or, conversely, is the baby at the play's centre; if a broken heart is a prerequisite for parenthood, can MAN and WOMAN'S mission be understood as a necessary rescue from foolish and neglectful parents? Is there a baby at all?

I hope these notes give you some things to think about as you watch tonight's performance, as you go through it ... Enjoy!

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This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.

This production has been entered into NSDF '06.

The NSDF is a unique week-long event showcasing live student performance.

If you'd like information on NSDF please visit [www.nsd.org.uk](http://www.nsd.org.uk)

To buy tickets or discuss sponsorship call Rachel on 01803 864 836.

To book a selector, contact Ian on 01803 864 836 or [ian@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:ian@nsdf.org.uk)

For general artistic enquiries, contact Andrew at [Andrew@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:Andrew@nsdf.org.uk)

Want to see the play a second time? Bring a friend to another performance and get your ticket for free!

The March 16 post-play discussion will be moderated by Tony Frost of the UEA Drama Department.

Don't miss the UEA Drama Society's summer production of:

William Shakespeare's  
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

APRIL 27-29

The Garage, Theatre Street, Norwich.

