

THE UNIVERSITY OF GDAŃSK SAMUEL BECKETT SEMINAR

THE VIRTUAL BECKETT

Organized by The University of Gdańsk
in partnership with Florida State University (USA), Federal University of Goiás
(Brazil) and the Trinity Centre for Beckett Studies (Ireland).

Thursday, 13 May 2021, 21.00 CEST

Chair: Tomasz Wiśniewski (Beckett Research Group in Gdańsk)

Speakers: S.E. Gontarski (USA), Nicholas Johnson (Ireland), Kathryn Mederos
Syssoyeva (USA) and Diana Zhdanova (Russia), Przemysław Wasilkowski (Poland),
Adrianna Cudnik (Polska), Philip Salata (USA), Daniel Jackson (USA), Lloyd Bricken
(USA), and Kyle Gillette (USA)

(Registration required: tomasz.wisniewski@ug.edu.pl)



Jon McKenna in SE Gontarski's laboratory film *Beckett on the Baltic*

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12. Międzynarodowy Festiwal Literatury i Teatru
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Trójmiasto 10–16 maja 2021

“You turn on without moving from your place the light above you. Your eyes light on the watch lying beneath it. But instead of reading the hour of night they follow round and round the second hand now followed and now preceded by its shadow.”
(*Company*)

Dedicated to the memory of
Ryszard Ronczewski and Professor Jerzy Limon

Programme:

21.00 Introductory remarks: **Tomasz Wiśniewski**

21.10 Beckett and the Virtual: **Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva (USA) and Diana Zhdanova (Russia)**

21.30 Round Table Discussion: **Przemysław Wasilkowski (Poland), Adrianna Cudnik (Polska), Philip Salata (USA), Daniel Jackson (USA), Lloyd Bricken (USA), Kyle Gillette (USA) and Nicholas Johnson (Ireland)**

22.20 Closing remarks by **S.E. Gontarski**

The University of Gdańsk Samuel Beckett Seminar is held on 12th and 13th May 2021 as part of the Between.Pomiędzy Festival of Literature and Theatre. Our intention is to respond to the unprecedented relevance of contemporary topics like incessant waiting, overwhelming frustration, uncertain futures, and enforced isolation, to the lives of people around the world. We are well aware that artistic representations of typically Beckettian themes are no longer matters for highbrow speculation conducted just among scholars but have become part of the common experience of everyone. Concentrating on the ways in which the artistic achievements of Beckett have triggered enormous creativity in the virtual world (in Wuhan, Moscow, Warsaw, Dublin, Tallahassee, Worcester, Boston, and elsewhere), we also intend to take this opportunity to review several activities of the research group, including a laboratory film, *Beckett on the Baltic* (by S.E. Gontarski), and various forms of approaching *Ohio Impromptu*, a miniature that Beckett sent to Gontarski forty years ago this year.

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Prior to the event watch the following recordings. For research purposes only.		
<i>Rockaby</i>	Directed by Diana Zhdanova. With Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva. Sound design by Derek Phillips	https://vimeo.com/547672736/2f742d85a7
<i>Rough for Theatre I</i>	Directed by Philip Salata. With Alexandr Drugov and Piotr Siwek.	https://vimeo.com/547160955/a51c0b234b
<i>Breath</i>	Conceived and Designed by Farrah Karapetian	https://vimeo.com/547242037/072b86cd24
<i>Krapp's Last Tape (work in progress)</i>	Directed by Marc Grandsard. With Lloyd Bricken.	https://vimeo.com/547661818/b0815aa1bb
<i>That Time (work in progress)</i>	Directed by Przemek Wasilkowski. With Adriana Cudnik.	https://vimeo.com/547335576/b432a21a96

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<i>Ohio Impromptu</i>	Directed by Kyle Gillette. With Lloyd Bricken and Kyle Gillette.	https://vimeo.com/546453330/21b18040da
7 poems by Samuel Beckett	Directed by Bartek Cieniawa and Michał Telega, with Rafał Szumera, Paweł Monsiel, Bartek Cieniawa.	https://vimeo.com/548035816/b1b7ad35b5

All pieces were produced by anomalousco.com, for the festival *Beckett and the Virtual*.

SPEAKERS:

S. E. Gontarski is a Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of English, Ph.D., Ohio State. A writer, director and filmmaker who specializes in 20th century Irish Studies, in British, U.S., and European Modernism, performance theory, History of Text Technologies and Modern(ist) book history. He has been a resident Fellow at the Djerassi Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation at Bellagio, the Bogliasco Foundation and a Visiting Scholar at the American Academy in Rome. He has been awarded four National Endowment for the Humanities research grants, has twice been awarded Fulbright Professorships, has been Guest Editor of the following: *American Book Review*, *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, *Modern Fiction Studies* and most recently *Drammaturgia*.

[from: <http://english.fsu.edu/faculty/sgontarski.htm>]

Founding Artistic Director of AnomalousCo, and Associate Producing Artistic Director of Beckett and the Virtual, **Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva** specializes in collaboratively devised, transdisciplinary theatre. Her work has been seen in Saint Petersburg, Russia at New Holland

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Pavilion; in San Francisco at Circus Centre, Bindelstiff Studios, Thick House, Galería de la Raza, Off-Market Theatre, City Solo, and Franconia Performance Salon; at Maine's Barn Arts Collective, Utah's Kayenta Center for the Arts, and New York's Cloud City; at the San Francisco Fringe, Portland Fringe, and Providence Fringe Festivals; and online in the US, Poland, and Russia. Dr Syssoyeva holds a PhD from Stanford University and is editor of a three-volume study of collective creation and devised theatre: *A History of Collective Creation; Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance*; and *Women, Collective Creation, and Devised Theatre* (Palgrave Macmillan). She is the recipient of multiple grants and residencies, including residencies from CEC Arts Link, Barn Arts Collective, and the Colby College Irving D. Suss Visiting Artist fund, and grants from the Fulbright and Mellon Foundations.

Producing Artistic Director of *Beckett & the Virtual*, **Diana Zhdanova** is a Graduate (Suma Cum Laude) from the Acting Studio of V.M. Filshinsky at the Russian State Institute of the Performing Arts in St. Petersburg. Associate Artistic Director of *AnomalousCo*. Among her many performance credits, Ms. Zhdanova played Zochka in the award-winning production of T. Slobodzianek's *Our Class*, which took the Audience Choice and Special Jury prizes at Poland's 2019 ITSELF International Festival, and St. Petersburg's prestigious Золотой Софит (Golden Spotlight) Special Jury Prize for "Most Impressive Production of the 2020 Season." With *AnomalousCo*, she has collaborated as an actor-creator on *Camille & Rose*, *Sin*, *Indecent*, *Augustine's Dream*, and the short film "The Stalking," for which she conceived and co-wrote the screenplay, and played the lead role.

Przemyslaw Wasilkowski is a graduate of the Drama Faculty of the National Academy of Film, Television and Theatre in Lodz. He holds a Doctor of Theatre Arts (dissertation advisor: Prof. Krystian Lupa). From 1994 to 1999, he was a trainee in the Workcentre of Jerzy Grotowski, Pontedera-Italy. Member of artistic crew and performer of creative opus of Workcentre *Action*. Major theatrical co-operatives as an actor : The New Theatre in Lodz, The Polish Theatre in Poznan, The Bretoncaffe Theatre Warsaw, The Studio Theatre in Warsaw, The Silesian Theatre in Katowice, and lately, The Institute of Jerzy Grotowski as a part of the Master's Season (Mauzer, dir. Theodoros Terzopoulos), *Song of the Goat Theatre* (Apocrypha, dir. Grzegorz Bral).

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Significant foreign co-operatives: Zona Castaglia – Torino; ARCAT – Paris. Active theatrical stage director (*MC HCW Project* – based on *Attempts on Her Life* - Martin Crimp; *Zona Tenebrarum* based on *Steppenwolf* – Herman Hesse; *Black on white-and-blue* based on *Crave* by Sarah Kane; *The End of a Long Day* – based on works of Samuel Beckett). His own (director and performer) theatrical works were widely presented on stages from Poland through Italy, France, Greece, Finland to Japan (multiple times). Lately, occupied by various individual artistic projects, created in co-operative with The Centre of Education and Cultural Initiatives in Olsztyn and The Raft Association.

Daniel Jackson works in live performance and digital media at the intersection of technology, interactivity, and identity. His work interrogates the possibilities that new technologies provide for creating surprising experiences that question our understanding of the world. His recent works include *An Old Ruinous Vault, With a Strong Grated Door, Through Which the Moon-Beams Are Gleaming* – exhibited as part of San Antonio’s CAM Perennial group art show; and *Basement Complex Suite 102* at Jump-Start Performance Co. In addition to creating and producing his own work, Daniel has spent time working in various capacities with Andrew Schneider, Young Jean Lee, Radiohole, The Wooster Group, and Jump-Start Performance Co. He is currently, physically, in San Antonio, Texas and holds an MFA in Interactive Media for Performance and Integrated Media from the California Institute of the Arts.

Adrianna Cudnik is an actress, singer, musician, and speech therapist, and company member of the National Theatre of Education in Wrocław, Poland. Ms. Cudnik studied acting at the Aleksander Sewruk Advanced Acting Studio at the State Dramatic Theatre of Stefan Jaracz in Olsztyn from 2014-2018, and is graduate of the Karol Kurpiński State Music School (Międzyrzec Podlaski) with a 1st degree in Piano. She received her BA in speech therapy from the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, and her MA in general and clinical speech therapy from the University of Warsaw.

Philip Salata is a multimedia artist with a foundation in literature, performance, and more recently film. After his BA in Modern Literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Philip joined the Workcentre of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards, an international centre for research in

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performance based in Pontedera, Italy. There, as a performer and pedagogue (2008-2014), he focused on the creation of contemporary theatre work based on traditional performance craft, a form of research that borrowed from disciplines of social study, though more importantly focused on the relationship between self and one's community.

Lloyd Bricken is an actor, deviser/director, and musician, and develops embodied-research from traditional performative practices and songs from his homeland of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana. With the Workcentre of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards, his team explored transformative and theatrical possibilities of songs and traditional spiritual practices from the US South. As lead actor, composer, and assistant to Mario Biagini, Bricken played a key role in developing performances: *I Am America*, *WatchNight*, *Electric Party Songs*, *Not History's Bones - A Poetry Concert* and *The Hidden Sayings*. Devised with actions and songs created using the poetry of Allen Ginsberg and traditional Southern spirituals and shouts, they toured internationally to more than 20 countries. Bricken leads workshops and hosts conferences in many institutions worldwide. Since 2018 he co-directs *The Great Crossroads Project* with artists from Sao Paolo, Brazil and Birmingham, Alabama, and collaborates with Parvathy Baul of Santiniketan, India.

Kyle Gillette has directed work ranging from devised projects to plays by Beckett, Eno, Handke, Vogel, Witkiewicz, Wilder, Brecht, and Euripides. He recently directed the premiere of Rachel Joseph's *Antigone in the City* (2019) at the Festival Laboratorio Interculturale di Pratiche Teatrali in Fara in Sabina, and has collaborated on Teatro Potlach's *Cittá Invisibili* since 2016. Kyle's publications include two peer-reviewed books, *The Invisible City* (Routledge, 2020) and *Railway Travel in Modern Theatre* (McFarland, 2014), as well as a short volume on Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Routledge, 2016). His essays and reviews appear in *Performance Research*, *Theatre Journal*, *Modern Drama*, *Comparative Drama*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, and the *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* as well as *Imagined Theatres* edited by Daniel Sack, and *Pirandello's Visual Philosophy* edited by Lisa Sarti and Michael Subialka. Kyle is a Professor of Theatre at Trinity University.

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Nicholas Johnson is Associate Professor of Drama at Trinity College Dublin, where he convenes the Creative Arts Practice research theme, and co-founded the Trinity Centre for Beckett Studies. The 2020 publications include *Experimental Beckett* (Cambridge UP), *Bertol Brecht's "David" Fragments* (Bloomsbury), *Influencing Beckett/Beckett Influencing* (L'Harmattan), and the "Pedagogy Issue" of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* (29.1, Edinburgh UP). He works as a dramaturg with Pan Pan, Dead Centre, and OT Platform. Recent directing credits include *Virtual Play* (1st prize, New European Media awards), *The David Fragments* (after Brecht), *Enemy of the Stars* (after Lewis). He has held visiting research positions at FU Berlin and Yale.

During the Festival, as a part of Beckett Seminar, he organises theatre workshops on 15th May, at 4 - 7p.m (Gdańsk/Paris time).

The University of Gdańsk Samuel Beckett Seminars have been organized every year since 2010 by the Beckett Research Group in Gdańsk, led by Tomasz Wiśniewski. They have been attended by scholars and artists from various parts of the world and have resulted in several publications, film documentaries, workshops/laboratories, and theatre productions. Guest speakers have included: Marcello Magni (Complicite), Douglas Rintoul (Transport Theatre), Jon McKenna (UK), Antoni Libera (Poland), Jaroslaw Fret (Teatr ZAR), Enoch Brater (USA), H. Porter Abbott (USA), Derek Attridge (United Kingdom), Antonia Rodríguez-Gago (Spain), Nadia Kamel (Egypt), Mark Nixon (UK), Luz Maria Sánchez-Cardona (Mexico), Robson Corrêa de Camargo (Brazil), Octavian Saiu (Romania), and Patricio Orozco (Argentina). Professor S.E. Gontarski is the honorary patron of the research group. For more information see: www.between.org.pl.

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