Thursday, September 27, 2012, 8pm
Friday, September 28, 2012, 8pm
Saturday, September 29, 2012, 2pm
Zellerbach Hall

The Théâtre de la Ville-Paris production of

**Rhinocéros**

*by Eugène Ionesco*

Directed by Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota

Théâtre de la Ville’s revival of *Rhinocéros* is a co-production with the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg and Le Grand T, scène conventionnée de Loire-Atlantique (Nantes, France).

The U.S. tour of Rhinocéros is produced by David Eden Productions. The U.S. tour is made possible by support from Institut Français and City of Paris. Additional help has been provided by Vivendi, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States and the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques.

These performances are made possible, in part, by Patron Sponsors Marian Lever and Art Berliner, and Dr. Ross E. Armstrong.

Cal Performances’ 2012–2013 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

**Rhinocéros**

*by Eugène Ionesco*

**PROGRAM**

Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota has chosen to begin the performance with a short prologue, which is an excerpt from Ionesco’s only novel, *The Solitary*. This can be read as an intuition of the rhinoceros world to come.

**CAST**

Bérenger  Serge Maggiani
Jean   Hugues Quester
Daisy  Céline Carrère
Dudard Philippe Demarle
Bar Owner Charles-Roger Bour
Botard  Jauris Casanova
Waitress Sandra Faure
Housewife Gaëlle Guillou
Grocer, Mrs. Boeuf Sarah Karbasnikoff
The Old Man Stéphane Krähenbühl
The Logician Gérald Maillet
Grocer Walter N’Guyen
Monsieur Papillon Pascal Vuillemot

This program is approximately one hour and fifty minutes long and will be performed without intermission.
**Rhinocéros**  
by Eugène Ionesco

**SYNOPSIS**

In the town square of a small village, Bérenger arrives at a café to join his friend Jean, who confronts Bérenger over his drinking and his demeanor. Their discussion is interrupted by a rhinoceros that runs through the square frightening the villagers. As Bérenger confides in Jean about his affections for his coworker, Daisy, and his sense that she has feelings for their colleague, Dedard, Jean instructs Bérenger on how to win Daisy over. A rhinoceros charges through and tramples a cat, leaving the villagers to argue about whether or not it was the same rhinoceroses, with the discussion leading to a fight between Bérenger and Jean.

Bérenger arrives late to the publishing house where he works. Daisy sneaks him in, while the employees continue to discuss the appearance of the rhinoceroses. Their coworker, Botard, claims the matter is simply a case of collective psychosis. Racing into the office, Mrs. Boeuf announces that she was chased by a rhinoceros, which is now downstairs. As the rhinoceros demolishes the staircase to the office, Mrs. Boeuf recognizes it as her husband.

With office staff forced to depart by means of the window, Botard commits himself to finding an explanation for the rhinoceroses. Bérenger declines an invitation for a drink with Dedard, and visits Jean at home to apologize for their fight. At first, Jean has no recollection of the window, Botard commits himself to finding an explanation for the rhinoceroses. As Jean transforms into a rhinoceros, Bérenger barely escapes, as he discovers that everyone in the village is turning into rhinoceroses.

Bérenger awakens from a nightmare and checks for any symptoms of rhinoceritis. Dedard arrives and they discuss the nature of the epidemic. Bérenger decides to consult the logician about the epidemic, only to find out that the logician has also turned into a rhinoceros. Bérenger asserts that he will not become one. Daisy arrives, and Dedard soon departs and he, too, turns into a rhinoceros.

Daisy removes Bérenger’s bandage, but does not detect any signs of rhinoceritis. Bérenger resolves to defend Daisy. The telephone rings, revealing only the sounds of rhinoceroses on the line. Likewise, the radio broadcast indicates the rhinoceroses have control of the airwaves. As the stampeding rhinoceroses continue to rattle the house, Bérenger suggests that he and Daisy should repopulate humanity, like Adam and Eve. Daisy leaves to join the rhinoceroses, leaving Bérenger completely alone. On the brink of despair, Bérenger reasserts his intent to fight on.

**DIRECTOR’S NOTE**

Individualism is not well considered. Not that we should all be looked at as sheep, but because we fear loneliness. Thus we form gangs, groups, associations, companies, even political parties, within which we rely on other people’s thoughts, which in turn become our own. And if we admire the lonely hero from a distance, we hate the tyrant, whom we believe to be alone, although, contrary to the saying, tyrants always have many friends.

There was once a man called Eugène Ionesco, who, carrying his solitude as a banner, turned it in to a kind of secret strength, neither heroic nor tyrannical; like that of a sad clown in a middle of a circus, causing discomfort in the bleachers who can’t wait to greet the supposedly reassuring figure of the happy clown. And as a Shakespearean buffoon to our world, Ionesco had to avoid several tyrants before he could spell out his enigma entwined home truths.

It is indeed important to know that the allegory of Rhinocéros originated in the fact that the author saw his best friends, the people who surrounded him, and little by little all his fellow citizens, turn to fascism in Romania in the Thirties.

The allegory will probably be interpreted as yet another denunciation of the servants, devout attendants of all the dictators facing rebellion in the South and East. But this is not exactly what Ionesco is telling us. There is no dictator of the rhinoceroses to which they all obey, they all turn into almost similar animals and do not identify themselves to a leader. It is a self-inflicted servitude, without a tyrant. What I suppose is an allegory is more like an epidemic. There is no Chief, no King of the Plague.

In it, we see a strange strength: we just become rhinoceroses, by cowardice, convenience, laziness, without being asked. It isn’t the tyrant that makes us do it, it’s the neighbor, it’s him, it’s you, and, in the end, it’s me. It can be assimilated to the tyranny of fashion or that of public manners, a mechanical description of the well know consumer society and above all the capitalist master.

The horror itself derives from the triumph of rhinoceroses in the streets: they are not hospitalised, imprisoned; they have won, and I, Bérenger, will have to withdraw from the world, unless I am attracted and if I do resist.

Rhinocéros would no longer be an allegory from the moment it would point to the beast or that from the beast, which lies within us. If we are from the beginning disgusted with Kafka’s Metamorphosis, that of Rhinocéros is rather meant to make us anguished, like discovering one is afflicted with an incurable disease, like when Bérenger wonders whether his voice has not become hoarse. And then we are overwhelmed with a spell of rhinoceritis, and at the end the proof of the general contamination of the minds will come when Daisy announces that the songs of the beasts are beautiful, in a way, a modern leper’s kiss which she deposits on their skin! The rhinoceros, into whose skin everyone rushes, thus acquires almost divine virtues: “They are Gods,” says Daisy. Hence no more need for a leader, since there is God. Yet the strength of Rhinocéros is also that beyond or within this obvious (collectivism, Nazism, communism, totalitarianism, etc.) or virtual (divine/demonic) allegory, one runs into this thick, massive, and solitary animal, that possibly only conceals itself, but that all by itself turns into a phantasm of reversal—a wild, collective, fast, almost light, herd.

What’s then left of this symbol is but the symbol of itself—“Rhinocéros” is just the name of the rhinoceros, which is the basic truth of all archetypes—the last word in the question, the master word of the jungle, is that it is an enigma in itself and that it shines in all its zoological strangeness like on the Dürer’s engraving.

Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota
The Théâtre de la Ville is designed to host national and international creation, to bring together all performing arts forms. Under the direction of Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota, it echoes a reflection, an interest and an increased sensitivity for artists who are at the crossroads of various disciplines.

Bertrand Delanoë, Mayor of Paris

Created in 1968, under the auspices of the City of Paris, and dedicated to “art in the diversity of its theatrical, choreographic and musical forms,” as stated by its founder, Jean Mercure, the Théâtre de la Ville has, over the years, become one of the most important cultural landmarks in Paris, mostly through its multidisciplinary and international dimensions in dance and music. With its two venues, a 1,000-seat hall in the heart of Paris and the more intimate 400 seat theatre in its two venues, a 1,000-seat hall in the heart of national dimensions in dance and music. With mostly through its multidisciplinary and inter ensemble, under Mr. Demarcy-Mota’s direction, tour throughout France and abroad (Russia, Portugal, Luxembourg, England, Turkey).

Recently, the Théâtre de la Ville has initiated a new project directed toward younger audiencés, “parcours enfant et jeunesse,” which presents, in cooperation with five other Parisian venues, multidisciplinary and international programs for young people throughout the year.

The Théâtre de la Ville is funded by the City of Paris.

Born in 1909 in Slatina, Romania, Eugène Ionesco (playwright) would become one of the most iconic figures of modern literature. A celebrated figure during his own lifetime, Ionesco settled permanently in Paris and was a central dramatist—alongside Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, and Harold Pinter—of the post-War generation. Among his dramatic œuvre are the one-act plays The Bald Soprano (1950), The Lesson (1951), The Chairs (1952), and Jack, or The Submission (1953); Amédée, or How to Get Rid of It (1954); The Killer (1959); Exit the King (1962); A Stroll in the Air (1963), and Hunger and Thirst (1966). Rhinocéros was first conceived as a short story, published in 1957 in a volume called The Colonel’s Daughter, before being adapted into a three-act play. The play premiered at the Odéon in Paris in January 1960 to excellent reviews. The play’s protagonist, Bérenger, has many parallels to Ionesco, who in real life between 1948 and 1955 worked as a real life between 1948 and 1955 worked as a director with his company to present it in Paris, in cooperation with Festival d’Automne, for three consecutive years. New choreographers are invited: Israel Galvan, Hofesh Schechter, and Lemi Ponifasio, as well as the younger French and foreign generation.

An artistic ensemble of the Théâtre de la Ville, bringing together Mr. Demarcy-Mota’s actors, his designer, and composer is put to work within the theater, where it engages in artistic research, educational activities, and audience development. The works developed by this ensemble, under Mr. Demarcy-Mota’s direction, tour throughout France and abroad (Russia, Portugal, Luxembourg, England, Turkey).

Among the many works Mr. Demarcy-Mota has directed for the stage are Caligula by Albert Camus (Lycée Rodin, 1988); The Suicide by Nikolai Erdman (Paris V University, 1999); The Story of the Soldier by Ramuz (Théâtre de la Commune d’Aubervilliers, 1993–1994); Leonce and Lena by Büchner (Théâtre de la Commune d’Aubervilliers, 1995–1996); Love’s Labour’s Lost by Shakespeare (Blanc Mesnil and Théâtre de la Ville, 1998–1999); Marat Sade by Peter Weiss (Théâtre de la Commune d’Aubervilliers, 2000); Six Characters in Search of an Author by Pirandello, Le Diable en partage by Fabrice Melguiot, and L’attendu by Fabrice Melguiot (Théâtre de la Ville, 2001–2003); Ma vie de chandelle by Fabrice Melguiot (CDN de Reims, Théâtre de la Ville, 2004); Rhinocéros by Ionesco (Théâtre de la Ville, 2004–2006); Marcia Hesse by Fabrice Melguiot. (CDN de Reims, Théâtre de la Ville, 2005–2007); L’Autre Côté, an opera by Bruno Mantovani (Festival Musica, Strasbourg, 2006); Tanto amor desperdiçado by Shakespeare (bilingual French–Portuguese version, Teatro Nacional Dona Maria II Lisbon, International Naples Festival, 2007); Man Is Man by Brecht (Théâtre de la Ville, 2007); Casimir and Caroline by Horváth and Wanted Petula by Fabrice Melguiot (Théâtre de la Ville, 2009); Bouli anné zéro by Fabrice Melguiot, (Théâtre de la Ville, 2010); Rhinocéros by Ionesco (restaging, Théâtre de la Ville, 2011); and Victor or power to the children by Roger Vivrac (Théâtre de la Ville, 2012).
Trained at Ecole du Passage and Théâtre en actes in Paris, and at the school of Théâtre national de Strasbourg, from which she graduated in 1996, Sarah Karbasnikoff (Grocer, Mrs. Bent) has worked with Adel Hakim, Stéphane Braunschweig, Declan Donnellan, Agathe Alexis, and Lionel Spycher, among others. As a member of Mr. Demarcy-Mota’s ensemble, she has acted in Marat Sade, Rhinocéros, Tanto amor desperdiçado, Man Is Man, Casimir and Caroline, Bouli année zéro, and Victor or power to the children.

Trained at the Conservatoire d’art dramatique in Strasbourg in 1992, Stéphane Krähenbühl (The Old Man) is a member of Mr. Demarcy-Mota’s ensemble and has acted in Love’s Labour’s Lost (Shakespeare), Six Characters in Search of an Author (Pirandello), Rhinocéros and Ionesco Suite (Ionesco), Man Is Man and Variations Brecht (Brecht), Wanted Petula (Melquiot), Casimir and Caroline (Horváth) and Victor or power to the children (Vitrac). He also acts with Catherine Delattres, la Compagnie de l’Élan Bleu and Pierre Diependael. He appears in several short or TV films and is a very active theater teacher in secondary schools.

Hugues Quester (Jean) has acted under the direction of the greatest European theater and film directors—Patrice Chéreau, Jacques Lassalle, Giorgio Strehler, Claude Régy, Roger Planchon, Lucian Pintilie, Stéphane Brunschweig, Alain Tanner, Raúl Ruiz, Jacques Demy, Serge Gainsbourg, Eric Rohmer, Krzysztof Kieślowski, João César Monteiro—in mainstream and avant-garde productions of classical and contemporary texts. He met Mr. Demarcy-Mota in 2001 and has since worked with him in five different productions: Six characters in search of an author (earning the critics’ best actor’s award in 2002), Rhinocéros, Man Is Man, Casimir and Caroline, and Victor or power to the children.

Following his training at Ecole nationale supérieure des arts et techniques du théâtre, Gérald Maillot (The Logician) worked with several companies, in particular with Thierry Lavat for Marin Sherman’s Bent, which earned a Molière for best play in 2000. He subsequently worked in television and cinema. His first work with Mr. Demarcy-Mota was in Love’s Labour’s Lost.
Clémentine Aguettant (prop design) studied at Ecole nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs in Strasbourg and specialized in scenography at Ecole nationale supérieure des arts et techniques du théâtre. She has designed props for all of Mr. Demarcy-Mota’s works since 2007.

Christophe Lemaire (assistant director) studied film and psychology, and has been closely associated with Mr. Demarcy-Mota since high school. He is a founding member of the current ensemble and has taken part in each of its works as artistic collaborator and assistant director. He is also involved in all publications and is an advisor for the theater programming of the Théâtre de la Ville.

François Regnault (artistic collaborator) graduated from Ecole Normale Supérieure (Ulm) in 1963 and is professor in the philosophy and psychoanalysis departments of University of Paris, where he has been a senior lecturer since 1985. He taught at Conservatoire national d’art dramatique de Paris from 1994 to 2001. In theater, he has worked as translator and artistic collaborator with Patrice Chéreau, Brigitte Jaques-Wajeman (with whom he created the Pandora Company), and Mr. Demarcy-Mota.

David Eden Productions, Ltd. (tour producer) has been one of the leading American organizations devoted to producing international work in the United States for more than 25 years. Most recently, David Eden Productions has produced American tours of Gate Theatre Dublin’s Krapp’s Last Tape, Endgame, and Watt: Galway’s Druid Theatre in The Cripple of Inishmaan, The Walworth Farce, and DruidSyng; and the Georgian folk music Ensemble Basiani. Other recent tours include the Gate Theatre Dublin’s Waiting for Godot, Declan Donnellan’s Twelfth Night, Propeller’s The Winter’s Tale, Piccolo Teatro di Milano’s Arlecchino, the Russian Patriarchate Choir of Moscow, Batsheva Dance Company, and the State Ballet of Georgia Bolshoi prima ballerina Nina Ananashvili.