



A Dramatic Reading of
Death of a Salesman

Arthur Miller
Playwright

with

Alec Baldwin
and members of the
U-M Department of Theatre & Drama

Daniel Cantor
Director

*Death of a Salesman is presented by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York*

Saturday Evening, September 29, 2018 at 8:00
Power Center
Ann Arbor

Third Performance of the 140th Annual Season

UMS Student Experiences, including opportunities for students to learn from and perform with professional artists, are made possible through a generous leadership gift from UMS National Council Co-Chair Rachel Bendit (U-M BA '97) and U-M Regent Mark Bernstein (U-M BA '93, JD/MBA '96).

Media partnership provided by WEMU 89.1 FM, Michigan Radio 91.7 FM, WDET 101.9 FM, and Ann Arbor's 107one.

Special thanks to Enoch Brater, Daniel Cantor, Paul Feeny, Jennifer Knapp, Priscilla Lindsay, and Shannon Rice for their participation in events surrounding this evening's performance.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

CAST

Willy Loman / Alec Baldwin

Linda / Priscilla Lindsay

Charley / Leigh Woods

Uncle Ben / Alex Leydenfrost

Happy / Nico Dangla*

Biff / Jack Alberts*

Bernard / Ted Gibson*

The Woman / Juliana Tassos*

Howard Wagner / Jackson Verolini*

Stanley / AJ D'Ambrosio*

Miss Forsythe / Lolly Duus*

Letta / Georgia Spears*

Stage Directions and Narration / Eva Rosenwald

Understudy, Willy Loman / Tommy A. Gomez

CREATIVE TEAM

Director / Daniel Cantor

Assistant Director / Marty McGuire*

Stage Manager / Sam Schoenfeld*

Assistant Stage Manager / Blake Griffey

Dramaturg / Skylar Siben*

* Student from the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance

This evening's performance is approximately three hours in duration and will be performed with one intermission.

SYNOPSIS

Willy Loman, an aging and tired salesman, returns to his wife Linda in their Brooklyn home after an unsuccessful attempt to complete his drive to New England — his territory. Willy clings to delusions and memories, while Linda supports him and tries to make ends meet from his meager commissions. She worries every day about the suicide attempts that he's made.

His son Biff's arrival brings conflicting emotions: disappointment at his son's failure to "find himself" and hope that the one-time football hero will find success. Biff and his brother Happy are concerned with the man they find at home. Willy has crashed his car several times and has long conversations with his long-deceased brother Ben. Linda remains devoted to her husband and chastises her boys for not recognizing the worth of their father. After 36 years with the company, Willy has had his salary taken away, as his ability to make the sales pales in comparison to what he accomplished decades earlier when he opened up entire new territories for the company.

Biff tries to make his father proud by seeking out funding from an old boss so that he can make his own success. Biff and Happy plan a dinner with Willy to celebrate, but the dinner ends in disaster. Earlier that day, Willy meets with his boss Howard, trying to convince him to allow Willy to sell locally instead of traveling throughout New England. Instead, Willy is fired, but he still holds out hope for his son's success. However, not only has Biff not even been able to get a

meeting with his contact, but the boys abandon Willy at the restaurant and depart with women they've just met.

So many things haven't gone right for Willy over his life. He passed up the chance to follow his brother Ben to Africa, where Ben made his fortune. Biff's adoration for his father was rocked to its core when he showed up unexpectedly at Willy's Boston hotel room and made a discovery that destroyed Biff's faith in him.

Willy returns home humiliated, and Linda, furious, tells their sons to get out of their father's life. Biff and Willy have one final fight that leaves Willy touched with his son's love. The best way to provide for his success, Willy finally determines, is the life insurance policy he's been dutifully making payments on for years.

Willy Loman's tragedy is complete and his funeral largely ignored. In Linda's tearful goodbye, she tells Willy that the last payment was made on their house that day — they're finally free.

Reprinted courtesy of Trinity Repertory Company.

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

by Enoch Brater

In 1949, Arthur Miller took the train from Penn Station in New York to Philadelphia for the tryout of a strange new play he had originally thought of calling *The Inside of His Head*. From early on, the work seemed to demand a stage solution as difficult as it was elusive: how to render the past, the present, and the protagonist's increasingly desperate imagination as one continuous whole, without resorting to "flashbacks" (a term the playwright disliked) or the clumsy apparatus of frequent and intrusive scene breaks. The drama would be realistic, of course, but it presupposed a realism with a difference.

No one involved in the original production of *Death of a Salesman*, least of all the playwright, was sure that the gamble would work. The producer Kermit Bloomgarden, one of the play's principal backers, recommended a different title for the play. Convinced that no one would buy a ticket to a show with "death" advertised on the marquee, he suggested *Free and Clear*, highlighting Linda's monologue in the Requiem, which brings closure to the play. "The work I wrote is called *Death of a Salesman*," the playwright is reported to have said. When the curtain came down on the first performance at the Locust Theatre in Philadelphia, followed by too many moments of awkward silence, the tension, as Miller relates in his autobiography, was palpable and real. A lot was at stake, not only for Miller, but "for the future of the American theater." There was, finally, thunderous applause, followed

by the oddest thing of all: "men and women wept openly" and, after the applause died down, "members of the audience refused to leave and started talking to complete strangers about how deeply they had been affected by the play." Miller, who thought he had written a tough, hard-hitting exposé of the dangerous and deceptive myth of "making it in America," was entirely unprepared for the emotional punch *Salesman* delivered in performance. His play had all at once found a life of its own.

When Willy Loman, suitcase in hand, slowly walks onto the set of *Death of a Salesman* in one of the most famous stage entrances in theater history, he begins the long requiem that finally declares itself as such in the closing moments of the play. The work, Miller said, "is written from the sidewalk instead of from a skyscraper." Unlike Willy's sons, the audience hardly needs to wait for Linda's pronouncement to understand that "the man is exhausted. A small man can be just as tired as a great man." Miller's proletarian spirit permeates the entire play: Willy Loman, the salesman working on commissions that never come, is down on his luck (not that he ever really had any); Happy, who talks big, is the perpetual assistant to an assistant; Biff, who (unlike his father) knows he's "a dime a dozen," is the aging, fair-haired boy long gone to seed; while Linda, the homebody ignored by time, is unable to stem the tide of tragedy that soon engulfs them all, try as she might.

Death of a Salesman was a huge critical and box-office success when it opened in New York at the Morosco Theatre on February 10, 1949. The play won a Pulitzer Prize, a Tony Award, and Miller's second award from the New York Drama Critics' Circle. The playwright was only 35 years old.

Excerpted from Arthur Miller: A Playwright's Life and Works (Thames and Hudson, 2005). Enoch Brater is the Kenneth T. Rowe Collegiate Professor of Dramatic Literature and professor of English and theater at the University of Michigan.

ARTISTS

Since 1980, **Alec Baldwin** (*Willy Loman*) has appeared in numerous productions on stage, in films, and on television. He has received a Tony nomination (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1992), an Oscar nomination (*The Cooler*, 2004), and has won three Emmy Awards, three Golden Globes, and seven consecutive Screen Actors Guild Awards as “Best Actor in a Comedy Series” for his role on NBC-TV’s *30 Rock*. He has been a regular host and guest star on *Saturday Night Live*. (For his performance on SNL parodying Donald Trump, Mr. Baldwin received his third Emmy Award in 2017.)

Mr. Baldwin hosts the *Match Game*, the classic television game show, on ABC, with a portion of the proceeds going to charity. He will soon host a television talk show, *The Alec Baldwin Show*, on ABC this fall.

On stage, he has appeared in productions of *Loot* (Theatre World Award), *A Life in the Theatre* (Hartman), *Prelude to a Kiss* (Obie Award), *Macbeth* (NYSF), *Gross Points* (Bay Street), *On the Twentieth Century* (Roundabout), *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* (Laura Pels), *Equus* (Guild Hall), *Orphans*, and *All My Sons* (Guild Hall).

His films include *Beetlejuice*, *Miami Blues*, *The Hunt for Red October*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Malice*, *The Edge*, *The Departed*, *The Aviator*, *It’s Complicated*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Still Alice*, *Mission Impossible: Fallout*, and *Motherless Brooklyn*, among many others. He recently voiced the lead character in the Dreamworks animated film *The Boss Baby*.

Mr. Baldwin is a 1994 BFA graduate of NYU Tisch and received an honorary doctorate in 2010. He is co-chairman of the board of the Hamptons International Film Festival, and president of the board of Guild Hall in East Hampton. He serves on the board of People for the American Way, the NYU Tisch Dean’s Council, and the

New York Philharmonic, and he is also the radio announcer for the Philharmonic.

With his wife, Hilaria Thomas Baldwin, he maintains The Hilaria and Alec Baldwin Foundation, supporting numerous causes, primarily in the arts. He is the author of three books: *A Promise To Ourselves* (his critique of the California family law system), his memoir *Nevertheless*, and, along with Kurt Andersen, a Trump parody memoir entitled *You Can’t Spell America Without Me*. He also hosts an interview podcast, *Here’s The Thing*, produced by WNYC Studios.

Mr. Baldwin has two daughters: Ireland Elliese Baldwin and Carmen Gabriela Baldwin; and three sons: Rafael Thomas Baldwin, Leonardo Angel Charles Baldwin, and Romeo Alejandro David Baldwin.

Daniel Cantor (*director*) has worked as an actor and director in venues across the country. As an actor, Off-Broadway credits include *Things You Shouldn’t Say Past Midnight* at Promenade Theater, *Tuesdays With Morrie* at Minetta Lane Theatre, and *Strictly Personal* at SoHo Playhouse. He was in the original national production of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. Chicago credits include work at Goodman Theater, Court Theater, Victory Gardens, Drury Lane Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Silk Road Rising, Next Theater, and American Theater Company. Regional credits include American Conservatory Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Cleveland Play House, Studio Theater, TheaterWorks (Hartford), Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Contemporary American Theater Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Worcester Foothills Theatre, Mill Mountain

Theatre, and National Shakespeare Company. TV and film work includes *Empire*, *Chicago PD*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Conviction*, *The Sopranos*, *As the World Turns*, *Loving*, *Asphalt Man* (Korea), *Miskits*, *The Auteur Theory*, *Alchemy*, *Justice*, *House of Satisfaction*, and *Alternative Universe: A Rescue Mission*.

As a director, Mr. Cantor has directed in New York at the Westbeth Theater Center, PSNBC, SoloArts, StandUpNY, and the National Historic Theater. He directed an outreach project, *Prospect High: Brooklyn* for the Roundabout Theater, and has directed for the UV Theater Project, a Chicago company he founded. He served as associate director for productions at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and the Marriott Theater, and has directed productions at many universities including Wesleyan University, Northwestern University, and U-M. He currently serves as an associate professor of acting and directing and is the head of the BFA performance program at U-M.

Tommy A. Gomez (*understudy, Willy Loman*) has worked extensively as a regional actor for the past 25 years with an emphasis in the classics. He spent nine consecutive seasons with the American Conservatory Theater, and has been part of five seasons with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and in 16 Shakespeare productions with the California Shakespeare Theater. Other regional credits include: Old Globe Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks L.A., Theatre Works (Palo Alto), Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival, Georgia Shakespeare Festival, Marin Theatre Company, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Purple Rose Theatre Company, and BoarsHead Theatre.

Alex Leydenfrost (*Uncle Ben*) is a resident artist at the Purple Rose Theatre Company (PRTC). His PRTC credits include *Wake*, *Gravity* (as Sir Isaac Newton), *Best of Friends*, *Some Couples May...*, *White Buffalo*, *Superior Donuts*, *Redwood Curtain*, and *Vino Veritas*. Other Michigan stage appearances include *The Impossibility of Now* (Tipping Point), *Good People* (Performance Network), *Panache* (Wilde Award for "Best Actor in a Comedy"), and *The Gravedigger: A Frankenstein Story* (Williamston Theatre). A native New Yorker, he has appeared Off-Broadway at The Pearl Theatre (*As You Like It*, *Tartuffe*), Circle-in-the-Square (*The Valley of the Dolls*), and many Off-Off-Broadway theaters. His recent film credits include Mitch Albom's *Have a Little Faith*, *Pilot Error*, and *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*. He is a full-time performing arts teacher in the Ann Arbor Public Schools and co-sponsor of the Pioneer High School Theatre Guild.

Priscilla Lindsay (*Linda*) is professor and chair of Theatre & Drama at U-M. She performed in over 30 seasons (over 50 roles) at the Indiana Repertory Theatre (IRT). She has directed over 25 plays professionally, and a number of plays at U-M (*Tartuffe*, *You Never Can Tell*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Three Sisters*, *Henry IV, Part I*, *You For Me For You*). In addition to her theatrical talents, Ms. Lindsay is a voice-over commercial artist. In 2014 she returned to the IRT to star in *The Game's Afoot*, and followed that with *The Last Romance* at the Purple Rose Theatre in Chelsea, Michigan. This summer, Ms. Lindsay appeared as Anfisa in the Ragdale Residency production of *Three Sisters*.

Ms. Lindsay attended U-M as a professional theater program fellow and

received a BA and MA. Following her formal training, she performed professionally at the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas. Subsequently, she was appointed associate professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, as well as a member of the Missouri Repertory Theatre Company. She was the associate artistic director at the Indiana Repertory Theatre for 12 years. She also headed up the IRT's Summer Conservatory for Youth program and was director of the Young Playwrights in Process playwriting competition.

Eva Rosenwald (*stage directions and narration*) is delighted to be a part of UMS's staged reading of *Death of a Salesman*. An Ann Arbor native, U-M alumna, Ms. Rosenwald has worked for many years in theater and film, commercials, industrials, and voiceover, and is in her 14th year with the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) Players at U-M. She is a proud member of the Actors' Equity Association.

Leigh Woods (*Charley*) was a senior in high school when he first saw *Death of a Salesman*, and it has been a favorite of his to teach, read, and see ever since. His acting has included stints with the Harvard Repertory Theatre; the Charles Playhouse in Boston; Cincinnati's Playhouse-in-the-Park; the Surflight Summer Theatre in Beach Haven, New Jersey; the Berkeley Stage Company; the Old Chestnut Drama Guild in Berkeley, California; the Brown County Playhouse in Columbus, Indiana while teaching at Indiana University; and more recently at the Michigan Shakespeare Festival and at Ann Arbor's Performance Network. The chance to act in *Salesman* is a dream come true.

UMS welcomes Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Cantor, and the cast and creative team as they make their UMS debuts this evening.

U-M STUDENT ARTISTS

Jack Alberts (*Biff*) BFA Performance Class of 2019; Hometown: Chicago, Illinois.

AJ D'Ambrosio (*Stanley*) BFA Performance Class of 2020; Hometown:
Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

Nico Dangla (*Happy*) BFA Performance Class of 2021; Hometown:
Seattle, Washington.

Lolly Duus (*Miss Forsythe*) BFA Performance Class of 2021; Hometown:
Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Ted Gibson (*Bernard*) BFA Performance Class of 2020; Hometown: Westport,
Connecticut.

Blake Griffey (*assistant stage manager*) BA History of Art Class of 2019;
Hometown: Toledo, Ohio.

Marty McGuire (*assistant director*) BFA Performance: Directing Class of 2019;
Hometown: Birmingham, Alabama.

Sam Schoenfeld (*stage manager*) BFA Design & Production Class of 2020;
Hometown: Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Skylar Siben (*dramaturg*) BFA Performance: Directing Class of 2021;
Hometown: Jupiter, Florida.

Georgia Spears (*Letta*) BFA Performance Class of 2019; Hometown:
San Francisco, California.

Juliana Tassos (*The Woman*) BFA Performance Class of 2019; Hometown:
Tustin, California.

Jackson Verolini (*Howard*) BFA Performance Class of 2019; Hometown:
San Rafael, California.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



Rachel Bendit and Mark Bernstein

*Supporters of UMS Student Experiences, including opportunities
for students to learn from and perform with professional artists.*

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 11/17 An Evening with Audra McDonald
3/15-16 *Triptych: On the Work of Robert Mapplethorpe*
4/5-6 Théâtre National de Bretagne: William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 10/19 UMS 101: Dance (Hubbard Street Dance Chicago)
(Power Center Green Room, 121 Fletcher Street, 6:00 pm)
*Paid registration is required for this event; please visit
bit.ly/UMSClasses (case-sensitive) to register.
In partnership with Ann Arbor Public Schools Rec & Ed.*
- 10/19-20 Post-Performance Artist Q&A: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
(Power Center Auditorium)
Must have a ticket to that evening's performance to attend.
- 10/20 You Can Dance: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)
Registration opens 45 minutes prior to the start of the event.

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.