

Staging Beckett

**Gavin Quinn, artistic director of Pan Pan Theatre Company,
Dublin.**

Interviewed by Trish McTighe, 28th March 2013¹

<http://panpantheatre.com>

Trish McTighe: Gavin, firstly thank you very much for taking the time to talk to me about Pan Pan's recent production of Beckett's play *All That Fall*. Before we discuss the production itself, I might begin by asking you for a brief outline of Pan Pan's history and ethos, some sense of the company's trajectory since it was formed, and what the company is currently doing.

Gavin Quinn: Well, Pan Pan was started in 1991 by Aedín Cosgrove and myself. So it was two people starting a company, straight after university in fact. I suppose we started the company because we didn't want to work for anyone else. But also I think to try making our own contemporary theatre, perhaps in many ways even making theatre that you might like to see yourself. Or as is the case for a lot of young companies, and young artists: we were simply experimenting, trying things out. We had studied at the Samuel Beckett Centre at Trinity College Dublin. There, Aedín and I studied a mixture of theatre history, theory and practical courses. We were very interested in European theatre and in the development of twentieth century arts practices and how that related to theatre. So in one sense we were making a definite choice that we would try to look at theatre as art, or towards contemporary theatre or progressive theatre practices — there are many different titles and 'avant-garde' doesn't make that much sense any more. We were really concerned with form and content and how they relate to each other.

Our first piece was called *Negative Act*, and was based on the idea of synthesis. It had hardly any words in it, but was an abstract, performative piece. In many ways the reaction to that first piece was interesting, as some people had a straightforward negative reaction and expressed a lack of comprehension. This obsession with meaning is interesting. I suppose we were trying to make a more sensual, visceral performance work. Whereas other people would say more positive things such as, 'I really enjoyed the atmosphere' or 'that really struck me'. From the very beginning we were aware of performance as a kind of language, and the importance of atmosphere. Precision is very important.

Prior to that we had done many student productions and we had done a couple of Beckett plays in college and prior to *that* I had read Beckett as a teenager. I was also aware of and familiar with the play *All That Fall*. I had gone to see *Waiting for Godot* when I was fifteen at the Focus

¹ This transcript has been lightly edited with additional notes by Professor Anna McMullan and Dr Lucy Jeffery.

Theatre. But that was a long way back and I think at the time, for teenagers in the 'eighties, being a pseudo-intellectual was very popular. There was a pseudo-intellectual socialism and you were expected to read heavy stuff at the age of twelve or thirteen, even if you didn't understand it. That was when I became aware of Beckett. But I also studied classics at Trinity, and Aedín studied the history of art. We decided to start a theatre company, and that very first show toured to Lyon in France and that was interesting because the reaction there was very positive. People there are asked us questions such as why a particular colour was used in the production. This was a completely different dialogue from anything going on in Dublin and made us very aware of what happens when you make work for different audiences internationally. From this early point however, we've always sought to make work here in Ireland also, while always hoping that the work will travel and be seen somewhere else.

Part of its inspiration was the European model. It goes back also to who your teachers were, the time, the place. There is no one way that you can pinpoint influence. The person who set up the drama department at Trinity, John McCormick, was a Francophile, a former head of the French department who had witnessed performances at Jean Vilar's Théâtre national populaire. He saw Roger Blin directing performances also, so was very aware of all these people and the director's movements of the twentieth century.² Other things happened along the way too: we had a lot of interesting courses from different colleges. We had subjects like scenography, radio drama and studied *All That Fall* with a lecturer from Kent University. He gave a module on radio drama and showed *All That Fall* as an example of Beckett playing with the medium. We heard lots of interesting radio dramatists and of course studied the history of BBC's experimentation, when it began to use radio as a medium other than for reading the news. We considered those who are known as the mute authors, Pinter and Beckett, and the idea of what silence means on the radio. Normally on the radio after five seconds an ad comes in, because it becomes dead airtime for example, so loads of influences there.

We did a lot of performances in college. In making our own work, we started off doing *Negative Act*. And then, as happens after a number of years you start to learn from your experiments. You become, I suppose, idiosyncratic; you make your work and then it develops further. And a theatre company or a name called Pan Pan, which is just a name we used to make our work, goes through cycles, as you do as well.³ So that's the context I suppose.

TM: In some of what you've said you've answered my next question which is of course to do with the choice to do Beckett: where did that emerge from? You've addressed that to some extent, this interest in theatre which is non-narrative, but also the education that you've had.

GQ: Yes, and with *All That Fall*, like with anything else, it's a personal connection. It comes out of the ether really because I had read the play though had never directed Beckett

² Roger Blin (1907-1984) directed the world premiere of *En attendant Godot* [*Waiting for Godot*] in Paris in January 1953. He directed the French premieres of *Endgame* and *Happy Days*, and worked with Antonin Artaud and Jean Genet.

³ Pan-Pan is an international radio signal denoting a state of urgency though without danger to life. The latter is signalled by the Mayday call.

professionally, with Pan Pan. Twenty years later we decide to do *All That Fall*. The idea was sitting there in my mind for twenty-seven years and those old debates from my teenage and college years came back to me. The other significant thing to do with Beckett is that Aedín and I worked on the very first Gate Theatre Dublin Beckett Festival in 1991.⁴ We did the sound and lighting for Jean Martin, who was the first actor to play Lucky.

TM: Yes, I've seen your name in the programme.

GQ: He was giving a performance of the Lucky speech, so it was interesting 'miking' up and lighting Jean Martin, and we also worked with David Warrilow on *Cette Fois* [*That Time*] and *Solo* [*A Piece of Monologue*] where we were providing the lighting and sound. He wanted a specific chair, and we picked one we thought was correct. We just picked one and we made a very bold decision. At the time the production manager at the Gate, Rupert Murray, said that we were going to have to give him other choices. So we went out and got twelve, laid them all on the stage and David Warrilow came out and picked the one that we picked. So we were delighted.

We were immersed in that scene because we worked on all the Trinity venues in the audio-visual section, which we helped set up and worked with other students. So we witnessed a lot of these pieces. We were very lucky, in a sense, to have had all that, but we never thought it necessary or didn't feel that the time was right for us to direct. Then we decided to do *All That Fall*. It's because I have a personal history with the play, it really spoke to me and I found it very moving. The fact that it is a thriller, so mysterious, and has the association with Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* interested me also. I found that relationship between music and Beckett very interesting.

Sometimes we made work which some people might call installations. So the idea for *All That Fall* was really to combine a couple of different elements. We have a sound designer [Jimmy Eadie] who adores Beckett and really connects with the work. He has worked with us for about 15 years making all kinds of shows, sometimes with live music, sometimes with composed music. We decided that we should do this because of all these cross-genre connections. In one way, we just dreamt it up and visualised it and it became very clear. I made a few notes and the first notes I made were the actual show. Sometimes it just works like that; it's not that you create an idea, but rather the idea comes to you. You know the Cézanne idea, the approach will come to you.⁵ You never know what project to do because so much of what you do remains just in your private notes. But *All That Fall* just seemed perfect to do at that time because it was so poignant. I think because I felt that some of the voices he created were clearly people

⁴ See Trish McTighe, "Getting Known": Beckett, Ireland, and the Creative Industries' in *That Was Us: Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance*, ed. Fintan Walsh (London: Oberon, 2013), 157-172.

⁵ For Beckett's letters to Thomas MacGreevy about Cézanne, see *The Letters of Samuel Beckett: Volume 1, 1929-1940*, eds. Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Lois Overbeck, Dan Gunn, George Craig (Cambridge: CUP, 2009). For an essay that considers the impact of Cézanne on Beckett's work, see Georgina Nugent-Folan, 'Personal Apperception: Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein, and Paul Cézanne's la Montagne Sainte-Victoire', *SBTA*, 27.1 (2015), 87-101.

in his life: it really felt like he had captured or made ghosts come to life. It was exciting in that sense.

TM: And anything specific about the medium? Obviously you have a relationship with the play, but the choice to translate something from radio into theatre is a very specific one and I wondered could you talk through that a little bit?

GQ: Well yes, I suppose it's about the trajectory of radio and the fact that our only purpose in making this piece, *All That Fall*, was simply to give people the time and the environment to listen to this piece in a very dreamlike or a controlled way. You enter the space and you get an opportunity to listen to this radio play, and not miss a moment, allowing yourself to be totally immersed in it. So that was the idea. And all the people listening to it become a kind of social sculpture. The spectators are really part of it. You become aware of people listening to it as you're listening to it; it's a private yet shared experience. In a way it's a little bit like a psychological experiment perhaps. I can't imagine what it was like when it first came out on the radio, on BBC, because so it was specifically about the idea of sound, and how words and music and sounds create the world. And especially about the idea of everything being created through the mind of the protagonists, making you wonder if what you hear is actually real. And that's what's so interesting about the radio: it mediates or oscillates between hallucination and reality, as Beckett said about *Embers*.⁶ I always liked the radio as medium; it's quite a comfortable space. I remember doing radio interviews and the comfort of being in a radio studio. There's something very particular about it. I suppose there are many different ways that people can interpret what we did with the play. Although, essentially what we did with *All That Fall* was simply to allow people to listen to it, as best we could.

TM: So in a sense the set design that you used, the kind of visual arrangements of space, that is something that was done to create this radiophonic experience?

GQ: Exactly, yes. And we were very particular about what we did, in terms of the way it was recorded. Most radio plays are done over a weekend with the post-production completed in a couple of days. We rehearsed this for about ten or twelve days, recorded it over two weeks and then did probably three or four weeks post-production. So some of the days that Jimmy [Eadie] and I were in the recording studio, we were spending twelve to fourteen hours a day editing, page after page, day after day, to get this sense of it being very exact. We created a kind of special chamber in the recording studio (which we called the 'Beckett bunker'). The idea was to try and make an anechoic chamber. So there were no sound reflections, or whatever is the specific radio term. You're just getting the voice of the actor, no room sound; there are no other elements, just the voices. Therefore when you hear it in the show you're simply hearing the voice, nothing else. It's a very particular recording in that sense because we were making a radio text to be played out loud and that's a little bit of a different experience perhaps. Although

⁶ Beckett said to Paul-Louis Mignon: '*Cendres* repose sur une ambiguïté: le personnage, a-t-il une hallucination ou est-il en présence de la réalité? La réalisation scénique détruirait l'ambiguïté.' Paul-Louis Mignon, 'Le Théâtre de A Jusqu'à Z: Samuel Beckett', *L'Avant-Scène*, 313 (1964), 8.

the radio play is played out loud on the speaker of the radio, with this, I think there is more of the detail of it.

TM: And regarding the decision to have the actors impersonate the animal sounds rather than to include extraneous sounds – am I correct that the actors made the sounds themselves?

GQ: The actors made the sounds, yes, which was what was done on the original BBC production, as everyone knows. Famously, apparently Beckett said he didn't like it or wasn't sure about it. But I think when they did it again with the real animal sounds, it wasn't as good. I thought that original idea was good and I have always been aware of the idea of paralinguistic utterances and I thought that was perfect for this. And with the actors doing these sounds you can create shifts in tone and create music. It has a great kind of lost quality. It is humorous but it also blends better, becoming a bit like a choral piece. It just seemed to be absolutely the right choice to make and there was no reason to make a difference choice.

TM: You are constructing a very specific soundscape.

GQ: Exactly, yes.

TM: As well as that, maybe we could talk a little bit about how you choreographed light with sound, developing a kind of rhythmic, interactive structure.

GQ: Obviously the main thrust of this production was that most of the experience takes place in the dark. That's how the text works. Beckett talks about how he didn't want people to stage the play for that reason. But when people listened to it first on the radio they listened to it in a lit room. This ['live' production] is even more extreme because it does take place mostly in the dark but with some illumination. The lighting is instinctive, partly responding to the text and partly responding to the time and feeling of performance. So this choreography of light that happens can sometimes seem illustrative, but at other times it seems that it's happening almost as a judgement call, in the way that you might compose music but not in a mathematical sense, rather more like a kind of instinctive composition. Those choices that *were* made were obviously made very carefully: some in advance and some by trial and error, but mostly all the decisions on the lighting come from the text and come from an interpretation. It's there to be in tune with the piece and it only works if it is in tune. If it's out of tune with the piece then it's obviously a definite choice that can be considered as an ad-libber choice, but in this sense I would say that the lighting is really in tune with the piece.

TM: To go back to your comments about precision and making those things fit together beautifully, I suppose the other question I have, to do with adaptation and some of the more experimental work that's being done on Beckett, has been to do with cross-genre adaptation. Your position on how you negotiated that cross-genre work is quite clear – but I wonder how the Beckett Estate has responded?

GQ: Well, we wouldn't consider *All That Fall* to be an adaptation.

TM: I beg your pardon.

GQ: I think the way it works is that, in a sense, it's not new. Adaptation would indicate to me that it becomes something different, that it becomes a new work that's added to the Beckett canon. In our sense it's definitely not an adaptation. We're trying to make a production that we think works for the text, so it's slightly different. With these productions we are trying to facilitate the ideas that are in the text itself. And the way that we have negotiated with the Beckett Estate is that when we asked them for permission and for the licence to do *All That Fall*, we wrote exactly what our intentions were for the piece and they thought it sounded like a like a good idea. And we made our case based on letting them know exactly what our intentions were and what the atmosphere was. So, thankfully, they said yes.

And in the case of *Embers* they have also agreed to let us do it.⁷ We are definitely not making an adaptation or making a new piece. With *Embers*, I don't want to say too much because it hasn't been made yet – like it might bring bad luck. Essentially an audience will be able to hear and listen to the radio play *Embers*, with a slight reversal from *All That Fall*. Because in *Embers*, what we are trying to reflect on is what Beckett was trying to do, and I think he was trying to activate the inner voice of the listener. And we're hoping to do the same thing. It becomes very clear that it's not simply just a collection of fragments or stories, there is something else going on about memory and about the sub-conscious and also about Henry himself being the creator of his own stories, Henry as the artist. Then there's also the personal relationship to the text, in terms of who the characters are based on, for example on Beckett's mother and so on. *Embers* is a labyrinth of feelings. It's quite fascinating to read some of the commentary on it. It's interesting when you think about embers, and then when you think about Shelley's similar line 'the mind in creation is as a fading coal'.⁸ But the association between embers and the sea is fascinating and it's really appealing. So I think we're trying to put on a production of *Embers* that will present the dramatic poetry of Beckett, because he is a dramatic poet really, as well as a creator of performance.

TM: And you will maintain the radio aesthetic, the aesthetic of listening?

GQ: Yes, the effect is that the words will be amplified, as will the experience. *Embers* is an interesting text. If you read some of the criticism of *Embers* when it first came out, the first negative criticism was from someone who said that it lacks a centre.⁹ And I think Beckett is quoted as saying he wasn't sure whether it works or not (though this may have been a

⁷ *Embers* was performed at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin from 5 – 17 August 2013. A short video with commentary by Andrew Clancy, the sculptor involved in Pan Pan's production of *Embers* can be found at <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/staging-beckett/2014/09/03/embers-pan-pan-sculpture-and-theatre/> [accessed 7 August 2018]

⁸ See Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry' in *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* (London: Edward Moxon, 1840).

⁹ John Pilling described *Embers* as 'the first of Beckett's dramatic works that seems to lack a real centre: it relies very considerably on repeating a cluster of phrases [...] and it has a structural slackness deriving from the two main topics failing to blend.' Pilling, *Samuel Beckett* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 98.

straightforward response to somebody just asking him to say something). But you can really feel in *Embers*, as he set out to do perhaps after *All That Fall*, he was really examining, not necessarily the mechanical medium alone, but radio itself in a much more sublime way, almost a deeper investigation. I think the doubt over Henry's existence is even more pronounced. You may think *All That Fall* is only happening in Maddy Rooney's head, but Henry feels like this strange protean, provisional being. It's like hearing somebody else's memories out loud.

When I read *Embers* I wasn't initially sure about the idea of doing another radio piece. But because they're so different each piece can inform the other. And what we learned with *All That Fall* can make its way into *Embers*. I really feel that with *Embers*, if it works, you can get this real sense of being transported into Henry's psyche and hopefully our production will do that, that you will feel the haphazardness of somebody's life. And it gets into some very interesting territory, *Embers*: the inside-outside idea, unconscious, and it all becomes a kind of fog. I think one reason that *Embers* is more difficult as well is because of the amount of characters being introduced and people trying to follow the Bolton-Holloway story; that can be quite tricky.

TM: I'm looking forward to seeing what you do with it. And I suppose just a couple more things, more generally about festivals and the kind of spaces that you've performed in. I was just curious because your production has toured to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Happy Days Festival in Enniskillen and the Edinburgh Festival and I wanted to see if you could offer some commentary on those kinds of spaces. On the one hand to do with the material space, the way that the production fits best into a particular kind of space (a black box space or black box style of theatre), but also the kind of spaces that are offered to you by festivals in general.

GQ: In terms of the physical space the simple concept for *All That Fall* was that it works best in a theatre where you can take out all the seats. Theatre isn't really radical, even theatre that's very experimental. Mostly you come in and you sit on the seat and you watch something in front of you, no matter how radical the artists may think they are being. It's the simple idea of audiences walking into a space, and having their expectations altered because all the seating is gone — this is the first thing. Because what you are doing is walking into an entire space, it's best that it's in a theatre where there is normally a bank of seats, and then people who might go to the theatre normally come in and it's as if you went into your house and all the furniture was removed and you'd once again feel the space. And that's what I think was very interesting about that Beckettian relationship to space, even if you think of the extremity of that with something like *Quad*, the exhausted space.¹⁰ So it was a simple idea that people walk in and get a sense of it as an installation. And I think Beckett's work is very close sometimes to an installation, to happenings, to moments, to messing around with semiotics and all those kind of ideas. So that was the idea, and it works best in those kinds of physical spaces.

Festivals are interesting because we do suffer a little bit from the festivalisation of culture, but in terms of theatre and in terms of what can be done, the festival does give you the safety net: the audience is prepared to accept the different intentions of different artists. Sometimes, it

¹⁰ See Gilles Deleuze, 'The Exhausted', trans. Anthony Uhlmann, *SubStance* 24.3, Issue 78 (1995), 3-28.

being a festival, people will go with you. Sometimes, obviously if you're putting on a piece, irrespective of the venue, they may go back to seeing theatre as a craft, prioritising full houses. They may have a very narrow interpretation of the word entertainment and it might become a bit difficult. So festivals allow you to make work in relationship to other work in a festival, and the audiences tend to be a little bit more open and perhaps are able to go outside of their normal experience. And audiences are different. Mostly people who make work are more conservative than their audience but sometimes it's the other way around. But festivals do help contextualise. For instance, something like the BAM Next Wave Festival is an extremely famous festival, the progenitor of almost the whole avant-garde scene in America. This festival in particular allows you to have a very particular audience and they are well used to seeing work and are well aware of Beckett. The Dublin Theatre Festival, for our own work of course, allows your work to be seen alongside international work of a certain standard. It's a strange one because when we go away we always play in bigger theatres. For example, *Playing the Dane*, the piece we did on Hamlet, when we did that in New York and at the Melbourne Festival we were playing to 900-seaters and we were doing two hundred-seater theatres at home. So in a sense when we go abroad it's almost like we're in a different stream. The festival does change a lot and I think that's why the likes of the Dublin Theatre Festival creates a kind of frame whereby you can plough away...

TM: As a mode of consuming culture it has negative connotations, but leaves open the possibility for theatre workers.

GQ: It does exactly, yes.

TM: I wonder if there's anything else that you'd like to add about the production, about *All That Fall* in particular?

GQ: Regarding the sculptor: that's just to do with *Embers*. Andrew [Clancy] has designed shows for us before – *Oedipus Loves You* for example, and he also designed the project with one hundred actors in which he created a kind of horseshoe space that had one hundred individual rooms in it and where each performer had an individual audience member (*One: Healing with Theatre*). And we've worked with him for a long time – I've known him a long time as well. He is going to work with us in an equal dimension on the project. I like the combination of sound designer, composer and sculptor, lighting artist and myself as director (although I wouldn't really see myself in that position); bringing them all in as equal parts. It's about making a space, but also it is specifically going to be the work of a sculptor in this case.

TM: Of course, as you've referenced, a lot of Beckett's work is so visual, he can almost be seen as a visual artist. I think it's very interesting to have this awareness of the visual dimension.

GQ: Absolutely. Most people like me who work in theatre are definitely working in the wrong art form; we got trapped at an early age. But it's very true and I think that's what everyone knows about Beckett, not only his personal friends. This is as well as his knowledge of music,

his knowledge of visual arts, and his connectedness. I find it bizarre that these days all the art forms have been separated; there is a theatre festival, or dance festival or an opera festival. It seems kind of ludicrous and that everything is so separated and often people don't travel between the two. But Beckett is the one person who seems to travel. In New York, lots of composers and visual artists came to see *All That Fall*. Beckett attracts people from different art forms to view the work.

TM: That was visible at the Gate Festival in 1991 on which you worked; there was a combination of art exhibitions, sound exhibitions – many types of art within the one event. I suppose I will finish with this: if you could assess for me or even make suggestions about what Beckett's work means to you as a director and its significance for Pan Pan's continuing project.

GQ: In terms of continuing... it's strange with Beckett because people think it's quite rigid but I feel that it fits in very well with the work that we have been trying to do. We're always trying to make theatre where the audience thinks for themselves. Obviously, we're trying to ask the audience questions, not necessarily give out answers. Therefore, I think that with Beckett it's enough to have things suggested. He's not dogmatic, he's certainly not trying to tie up everything in little neat bundles and that is why Beckett fits in with our work; because Beckett is a great artist, but also because he's a modernist, because he's other than a realist or he is individual; he creates the work that he wants to create. I think that's why it works for us to work with Beckett, because I always feel Beckett's work is very necessary; it is very central and that's what Pan Pan has been trying to do, to show that everything doesn't have to be obvious.

TM: And I suppose the one thing we haven't talked about is that it's very evident from what you've said and from your work how you move away from an overreliance on narrative and narrative structures and resolution and meaning in the theatre.

GQ: Yes, exactly. It's very difficult though. When something has quality, it has quality. You get people like Herbert Blau making these statements like 'the only method is to be very intelligent'.¹¹ Yet we all know that I suppose. With Beckett, maybe what you get is the rebelliousness; the task of the artist is to be singular in a standardised world. I think that's what Beckett does. He has his process and you are trying to have your process too. You are a proceduralist, in one sense. It's a journey rather than a fixed item. I don't want to be glib and say the work is universal but it's so rich and so profound and so well thought out and still connected to his own spirit and his own life as well as his artistic life or aesthetic life that it is something to admire. And we can work with Beckett. It makes sense for us to make more and more Beckett, as well as trying to make our own completely original works. You could argue that every work is original because of the way it is staged but to be clear, it seems to be a good partnership for us. It's very difficult because I think a lot of Beckett's work is ironic, it's

¹¹ See Herbert Blau, *Sails of the Herring Fleet: Essays on Beckett* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

contemporary, it has a thought-out structure to it, it's conceptual. So these are all the things that make interesting performances.

TM: What you've done in the past is approach texts with a certain degree of, not necessarily irreverence, but awareness that, as you said, when you produce something in the theatre you do produce something which is new, it is not simply a revisiting of a text, it's a new art object that emerges.

GQ: Exactly. And it's not necessarily a radical break but certainly you are focusing on perhaps the real qualities of performance, and these go back to the artist: form and line and colour. But it's more than that too because at any one point you are already trying to make sense, whether subconsciously or consciously, of your surroundings. They might be in the past or they might be in the present. It goes back to this idea that no matter what you do, having no plot is also a plot. But it's still the interaction between the actors and the audience. You have a way of making work, you've been making work for X amount of years and you start to realise what choices you want to make on stage. When you come in contact with something as well thought out and of such poetic quality as Beckett, you try to understand it and you are trying to make clear for an audience what is at the heart and centre of that piece: making an atmosphere or making a performance which will keep it real and alive and not have it become a museum piece, because it's very important that you blow into the museum, just gently. That is the trick when you're directing Beckett, because it's very difficult and people have this conversation a lot about how to act Beckett. You have to find your way through.

TM: I saw John Hurt play Krapp last night, as you say it is quite difficult to approach the text that is so well known in terms of how to negotiate those things that have become slight clichés, such as the banana cliché in *Krapp's Last Tape*.¹² Hurt very deliberately stepped over the banana in a very knowing way...

GQ: Exactly, yes. I was there too actually and I noticed that as well. And I've seen the performance before and exactly that. So rather than go for it, he slips on the banana. It's almost a kind of knowingness that's very exciting when you see that, a different decision being made. It usually only happens in opera because people know opera so well. They might know the opera very well, they might have seen it fifteen times and they'll understand when someone makes a different choice, whether it's singing-wise or movement-wise or idea-wise. It's interesting when you get the chance to see the performances over and over again.

TM: You are seeing the beauty of variation as well as the joy of familiarity which is quite an interesting thing. Maybe I should wrap up at that point. Just to say thank you very much for what was a very interesting conversation. I wish you all the best with – I realise *All That All* is running in Dublin next week.

¹² *Krapp's Last Tape*, dir. Michael Colgan, lighting Jim McConnell and Krapp, John Hurt. This production was on at the Gate Theatre, Dublin from 9-28 March 2013. Hurt also played the role in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2006 directed by Robin Lefevre.

GQ: That's right yes. It's going to be on at the Samuel Beckett Centre as part of the IETM [International network for contemporary performing arts] event.

TM: And *Embers* will be produced in August, if I'm right.

GQ: That's right yes. It will be on in Dublin and then at the Kings Theatre at the Edinburgh international Festival.

TM: Well thank you very much and I wish you the best of luck.

GQ: Thank you.