

Staging Beckett Project Interview

Conor Lovett & Judy Hegarty Lovett, Gare St Lazare Ireland Theatre Company

Interviewed by Trish McTighe

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Gare St Lazare Ireland is an Irish theatre company that specialises in the work of Samuel Beckett. The company built its reputation on presenting Beckett's prose works in compelling and accessible solo performances that tour in Ireland and around the world. They have toured Ireland fourteen times since 1998 and have toured to over 80 cities in 25 other countries. Company core members are Judy Hegarty Lovett (director), Conor Lovett (actor) and Maura O'Keeffe (Producer) and collaborating artists have included Walter Asmus, Olwen Fouere, Will Eno, Ferdia Murphy, Caoimhin O'Raghallaigh, Lee DeLong, Christine Jones, Paul Clark, Melanie Pappenheim, Gary Lydon and Michael Harding. In 2006 for the Beckett centenary the company co-produced all of Beckett's radio plays for broadcast on RTE Radio with some of Ireland's most distinguished actors. In a 2013 co-production Gare St Lazare/Dublin Theatre Festival, Judy Hegarty Lovett directed the first major Irish production of *Waiting For Godot* since 1988. It ran at The Gaiety Theatre and toured to Belfast, Boston and Shanghai. This year it will tour to New York. Also in 2013 for the Brighton Festival, the company created a new work, *Here All Night*, inspired by and featuring texts and music by Samuel Beckett as well as original compositions by Paul Clark and improvisational music by Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh. It also features singer Melanie Pappenheim and actor Conor Lovett. www.garestlazareireland.com

This interview took place in Belfast while the company were touring their production of *Waiting for Godot* in 2013. The cast included the Conor Lovett, Gary Lydon, Tadhg Murphy, and Gavan O'Herlihy, with Judy Hegarty-Lovett directing. They had just played to sold out houses in Dublin and, after their run at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, brought the production to Boston.

Trish: I think that your production of *Waiting for Godot* comes at a really interesting moment in terms of the understanding of the relationship between the body and the text in your work, because you are readers of the text at the same time as you are generating corporealised performances of it.

Conor: Well, yes. I would say that we are readers of the texts as individuals, as private people. But as practitioners I think we are working with the texts in quite a different way. It seems elementary that when Beckett wrote a play, or indeed when any writer writes a play, its existence on paper is merely a blueprint for an event that takes place. Of course with the prose it's a different kettle of fish. They are written to be read and it's true that the likes of us, among many others, have stood them up into two and half dimensions.

Judy: I think the other thing that is important to note that with any kind of theatre the process and how the work is interpreted by the practitioners is always different. And there is no definitive version of any of those works; all of them will be in some way different. And also, what the practitioners experience in the making can be a very different process from what is delivered to an audience. We have twenty years of experience of working on Beckett's writing at this stage and our most recent production, *Waiting for Godot*, which will play at the Lyric Theatre here in Belfast, is obviously fresh in our minds and very particular to us at the moment. We worked on that piece back in 1992. So this is the second time coming to the work, with twenty-one years of experience of Beckett's writing in between.

Trish: So there is an immersion there...

Judy: A huge immersion from the first time approaching that work up to the present. And I suppose what is very interesting and very particular for me, is that I approached it the first time with much less trepidation or caution. And I felt that I was coming to it after twenty years of experience with more caution than I had at the beginning. This is interesting in itself, that that length of a relationship with a writer, and so late into that relationship, means that you are more careful rather than more reckless. I don't know why that is exactly, but I think it's interesting that that has been my experience.

Trish: So knowledge and experience have taught you to be cautious.

Judy: And more respectful, I think.

Conor: More respectful but also, I imagine, more willing to do first what Beckett did and if that is really not working, then change it.

Judy: Yes, just more aware of every detail that he puts in in any of the directions and really exploring and considering these carefully. We were just much more considerate of the reasons for the directions, what they are doing and what they mean. *Godot* is a tough nut to crack, as a piece of work. There is a lovely balance of heavy restriction and freedom that I experienced while working on the piece. To an extent, the first two weeks just involved blocking and following directions, and in a way I felt that Beckett did that very intentionally so that the director wouldn't have too much time to think about it.

Trish: So you go to the concrete, initially, what is *there*, the basic material.

Judy: Yes, and it takes a lot of time to get that right, to really properly consider that. It keeps you away from philosophising about the work or actually interpreting it in any way. It keeps you busy with the direction and I think that's probably intentional on Beckett's part. We

spent four weeks rehearsing this play; he would have spent eleven weeks on it at the Schiller theatre in 1975, '76. In terms of the process, somebody asked us recently if we find the Estate and Beckett's writing very restrictive because it's so particular. And I do, but I actually enjoy restriction and in some ways I enjoy in being shackled because you have to think of moving in very interesting ways when you are bound.

Trish: I understand. The energy comes from the restricted body itself. As Billie Whitelaw has discussed, there is a degree of liberation to be found within that restriction. I wonder could you highlight any specific examples from your work on *Godot* in the early 1990s as compared to what you did in the rehearsal period for this production? Anything specific that strikes you when you say that you approached this production with more trepidation and caution?

Conor: I recall that Judy was not particularly enamoured by the stage directions back then, as a young woman in her early twenties. The choreography was not exactly as written. The tree, for example, was this: [Conor holds up his right hand with fingers drooping toward the floor and makes a gesture of turning these fingers towards the ceiling, as leaves sprouting on a tree branch]. It's the tree, and now it's covered with leaves. It was something like that, and then we dropped it and continued.

Judy: Vladimir embodied the tree – how interesting!

Conor: So I think that this time there was a lot more adherence to the directions, with interest taken and consideration given to the fact that it is a three-dimensional event. Beckett does not just write the dialogue. He very clearly writes — as many playwrights do — the stage business. Beckett is very geometric in *Godot*. And it was wonderful to have done Lucky in a couple of other productions. But in both cases I was jumping in to a production that had already been made. I was replacing another actor.

Trish: That was the Gate production?

Conor: Yes, the Gate production and a production that Walter Asmus directed in California as well. So I wasn't as tuned in personally to all that geometry, all the wonders of, as Judy says, two weeks of blocking it and deciding who goes here, and when do I get over here, and how do they get there...

Judy: And when does he drop the rope?

Conor: All that. It is wonderful and it has always been our way with making theatre to have a minimum of discussion in the rehearsal room, to *do* the work, to stand up and do it. There will always be discussion. Yet there is more to be learned in my experience by standing up and doing and saying and speaking and the director seeing and hearing and watching, than in sitting down and pondering why he says this or why they do that. The actual doing of it is very, very telling and informative.

Judy: I think it's also interesting because of the connection between actor and character, the process of working on *Godot* is similar to what the characters are experiencing. There were

days when I felt like Lucky, if you know what I mean: you are carrying quite a bit of baggage and you're bent over. There is a bit of power-play because Beckett is very present in that play. And I suppose I hadn't experienced that before because most of the work that we've done over the last seventeen years has been concerned with the prose works. And one reason for that is not having Beckett over your shoulder all the time. There was a certain amount of liberation with the prose works, where we were together inventing where we would move.

Conor: And pause...

Judy: And how we would embody any of those characters and what kind gestures we would choose, so in a way we were writing our own stage directions...

Conor: But we always took the music of the text as our guide, quite apart from paragraph breaks and that sort of thing.

Judy: It's a very different way of accessing the writer and the writing.

Trish: Would you feel that — and I'm going to use the word adaptation here and feel free to disagree — there is a more conscious adaptive process when working on the prose. I don't know if you would agree with my terminology?

Conor: I don't feel that we've ever been adapting the text.

Trish: Terminology withdrawn!

Conor: Well, you said it was open to correction. And yet what we are doing was not intended to be done, though Beckett himself was the first to do it with McGowran and McGee, I think, with McGowran mainly —

Judy: And Barry McGovern.

Conor: Barry of course, but at that stage Beckett had given Colm O'Briain, Gerry Dukes, and Barry permission to do it, but Beckett was actively involved with McGowran's editing and choice of text, even directing I believe. I suppose when we do it, we are aware that it has been done by other people—

Trish: There is a tradition.

Conor: There is a tradition, yes. So we weren't too caught up in the idea that taking a Beckett novel and standing it up was a huge novelty. It wasn't the first time and we were quite enthusiastically just learning the lines, standing them up with Judy directing and finding out what was available. And as we have gone on further, we haven't really changed that technique. But the reason I shy away from it being an adaptation is because, I think, a starting point for us has been that Beckett is invariably writing in the first person and speaking directly to the reader. And on occasion he actually refers to the reader: "To whom would I deny it. To you dear reader, to whom nothing is denied." Something like that.

So if you're standing it up you are just talking to the audience as though the audience was the reader, except that now you have one hundred or five hundred of them all at once. An

adaptation, it would seem to me, would be where you would get different characters, different actors to play different roles, different scenery, and you somehow try to recreate the world that the reader's imagination is normally creating. We hope that the audience is still using their imagination. A producer friend of ours was bringing us to New York with *Molloy* many years ago and she said, "Now, how are you going to get the bicycle over here? Will you pick one up over here or will you bring your own one?" We said that we had no bicycle. She said, "yes you had a bicycle on stage, it was a big black bicycle." No, we didn't. So that was a great victory for the imagination.

Judy: I suppose it would be fair to say a "treatment" of the text?

Conor: A treatment, yes. But what is a treatment? It's a very open thing. I don't know what to call it; I just wouldn't use the word adaptation.

Trish: To revise then my earlier point, would you perhaps talk about finding the performance that is already latent within the text, with the suggestion that there is a sort of performative writing there already?

Judy: Well it certainly lends itself to it.

Conor: Yes, I'm not disagreeing with that, but we have to be careful to differentiate between performance in the theatrical sense and the sense in which the writer as his character is performing for the reader. I wouldn't mix the two up.

Judy: Certainly, but there is a certain kind of responsibility toward any kind of piece of work that is written first as a novel or as a prose work. If you're taking it and staging it there is a certain feeling that you are in some way interpreting that character, regardless of your intent. You've given a voice and a particular body to that work. And so, we have had very positive experiences in bringing those prose works all around the world. A lot of people have come to us and said they could not read the text in question, but when they saw it stood up and spoken like that, it opened up the whole world of Beckett for them. But you do feel responsible in a way, or there is some small niggling thing in your head that reminds you that you have put a particular voice to the text. People have said to me that they can only hear Conor's voice now when they read the text; I'm a little taken aback by this. I think that in some ways it's great, but it is limiting the work in other ways as well.

Trish: It is fixing what is a very fluid text using specific bodies, and a specific voice. I had the very same experience when I saw Barry McGovern's *Watt* several months ago. Now, I do hear his voice when I read the text. And as adept as he is at capturing its tones and rhythms, it does present a slight problem because it fixes a fluid text.

Judy: It's both a problem and a blessing, I suppose.

Trish: But as you said, you've been working with a text like *Molloy* and that had been an ongoing work so that – I'm not going to use the word adapt – but does it go through changes? So that even if it is the same body, the same voice, you are still exploring new ways to enact that perhaps?

Conor: In the early days we did change *Molloy* around. We added in and dropped out things, however I'm not sure when it became fixed in its current form. We are in a position probably to do a fifty-minute version or an hour and fifteen minute version. In terms of how it's changed, though, I think that that is borne out of our continued work on various other texts along the way and what we learnt from that ongoing process. We won't necessarily take *Molloy* into the rehearsal room if we're doing it next week and haven't done it for six months. I will run lines for roughly a day and we'll have conversations about it, but the piece won't get re-rehearsed, as it were. Having said that, our goal as theatre makers is to make the event happen at that moment for the people who are present in that particular configuration. So that's something that Judy is constantly directing me to remember, to *be* there; it's a Friday night, they'll be tired. An incredible amount of detail goes into reminding the performer that it's live. And then on the other hand, there is what we've learned through tackling the other texts, and then also what we've just learned as people, getting older and seeing in the text ourselves as we go along and thinking how we had never fully understood a particular aspect of it before. And in performance, the way somebody might respond or the whole audience might respond to a certain thing that makes you see it or hear it in a way you never heard it before.

Judy: The evolution of the work in some ways is because of doing the other works. I find that because of the work in particular on *The End*, which we did in 2008, and returning then either to *First Love* or *Molloy*, which are the two, I suppose, popular ones are the ones —

Conor: The commercial hits!

Judy: Yes, the singalong ones! The ones that we get invited back with quite a bit. There are similarities between all of the characters and even repetition of lines – in many ways these texts form one song. These pieces influence the other pieces as well. And there is this constant feeling that these characters are so interconnected and belong to each other in this strange Bouffonesque place. I could hardly call them human, but maybe they might be termed “specimens” on the margins of somewhere. You could put them in a room together, I suppose. And they're interesting people. And they belong to each other in a way, and make sense to each other and are almost as one, at least in terms of not being fully of *this* place. I think they are sort of sublime characters; they're between somewhere else and here, not belonging to any particular place. Very recently we had Colm Tóibín help us with a fundraising event in New York and he said a really remarkable thing about Beckett which struck a chord with me. He said that for him, when he first saw Beckett in Co Wexford, where I think he's from —

Conor: Enniscorthy.

Judy: Yes, Enniscorthy —

Conor: He saw McGowran.

Judy: Yes, he saw McGowran and he said that it was like a revelation to see this writing and this man who was clearly a great medium for this writing. He said that within the same

sentence you saw the pauper and the king. He hadn't seen that ever before. Beckett was able to achieve that in terms of that character, neither tramp nor king, but both, as Beckett would say himself: between the vernal and the sere. I think his characters are magical and it's there throughout his work, it's in all of his work. Where are those places? Who are those people?

Trish: I suppose when it comes to the drama there are generic distinctions made yet you talk about characters echoing each other across genres in a sense. These distinctions that we draw in our minds between a prose work or a radio play or a piece for the theatre break down a little bit. And I know you've worked on the radio as well, so just to pick up on a few things that we've been discussing about sound and the act of listening and hearing, and I'm asking this because my colleague David Tucker saw your piece in Brighton —

Conor: *Here All Night*.

Trish: And I wondered if you wanted to speak a little bit about that, continuing on perhaps from this idea of the characters and how they emerge across genres but also in relation to music, sound and voices in your work. . .

Conor: *Here All Night* was born out of when we did Beckett's radio plays. We worked with the composer Paul Clark from London.

Conor: When we did the radio plays, Judy, Paul and I were very taken by the idea that in the future we could work on some exploration of Beckett's use of music, not just in the radio plays but across his works. I think what's fascinating is how Beckett's music is all part of the same song, as Judy would put it. What we homed in on with the choice and selection of music and the pieces where the music was used was that in Beckett there is a constant conflict between the romantic and the scientific, the mathematical or the—

Judy: The permutations.

Conor: Love and permutations.

Judy: That was the original working title in fact.

Conor: *Love and Permutations!* In *Watt* for example, there are several pieces of music: the frog, *crik crik* chorus, again very mathematical and they're all on different beats, the *crik* the *crak*, the *crak* and they all come together but once in the entire thing. I didn't see this; I would not have had the patience to figure that out, but Paul saw it quite quickly, and elsewhere when Watt is lying face down in the ditch, a chorus of voices comes to him across the air and he recalls the entire words, and the music then is in the addendum or appendix or whatever it is. And the person on bass just can't make the notes and is from time to time exclaiming "Jesus!" or "Christ!" and just can't reach them, so he is being stretched within the context of his capacities within the chorus and Paul was able to bring that out. Then in terms of the actual line-up, musically we had classical cello, classical piano, a chorus of three female voices, a soprano, Melanie Pappenheim, and on fiddle Caoimhín Ó'Raghallaigh who is an Irish traditional fiddler and an amazing musician — he was able to contribute the romance, if you will, to the musical mix, against the classicism of the other players. And

Paul's tradition, his own way of working, is to battle the different musical possibilities within a score. We are very pleased with that piece and we think it has a long life ahead of it. We really want it to be seen and to be heard.

Judy: And it's a big exploration that happened unfunded — some of it was funded but a lot of it was done just out of sheer interest and passion over a two-year period. Therefore it really had its time in the making, something which I believe most creative works need and are being denied within this dominant model of a three or four week rehearsal, with a presentation after which everything is over. I really enjoy the process of working on any piece of work over a long period of time. But one other interesting thing to say about the process of making *Here All Night* is that there are also some similarities to the process we had while working on *Godot*. The form that you're working with becomes the process. And much of our struggle—which is much of Beckett's struggle as well—is how to meld and marry words with music. Some of that was actually happening for us, in terms of how do we put the text alongside the music, how do we help them to work together, and to complement each other. Here we are within that piece of work, working on words and music from the radio plays as well, which are asking exactly the same questions. Also then trying to tie together the very traditional, improvised music of Caoimhín Ó'Raghallaigh, whose background is in tradition music, which means he rarely reads music when he plays, alongside people like Chris Allen and John Paul Gandy, who are also on top of their game, and are highly skilled and classically trained musicians. Watching those two forms come together was almost like learnt language and free music coming together, struggling against each other, but working together all the same. So it was really interesting that the process that we were going through was exactly the process that was being reflected in the work. I really enjoyed that aspect of it.

Trish: You may have mentioned it in relation to *Waiting for Godot*, but in terms of following form, there is a balletic quality to the play. The Schiller production introduced a level of physical precision, a choreographic quality, a response to something musical perhaps. I wondered if you experienced something like this.

Judy: Definitely. I would think the language almost insists upon it. Conor would have that quite naturally, just from doing the works for so long. I think Conor is a very interesting physical mover, having trained with the Jacques Lecoq school.

Conor: That informs what I do greatly.

Judy: That has a huge influence on how you deal with text. By training physically for Beckett you're in the right place in fact to deal with Beckett's language.

Conor: You are right that the music in the text demands a physical response; Judy and I see that immediately and I suppose it's something that you are perhaps slow to impose on other performers because they have to find their own way into it. We've seen it kicking in over the course of this production. What we know from experience is that there is enough imposition already and you don't want to burden people with that, when already they're dealing with Lucky or Estragon or Pozzo — these are already big enough challenges. However it's

wonderful when we see it kick in, as everybody begins to understand that this is almost a dance piece.

Judy: And that precision of language dictates a precision of movement. And when you see those flourishes of very precise movement, it's a mirror of the language itself and it makes such sense.

Conor: One thing that we're cautious of also is that you don't want to overcook that element because when you're dealing with any technical aspects of performance you want it to be invisible, and to be part of the whole, and not to stand out on its own or distract—

Trish: Not to have mechanical qualities, if that's what you mean?

Conor: Exactly, yes.

Trish: In regard to physicality in *Godot* then, I wondered if you had specific body types in mind and if you wanted to talk a little bit about that.

Judy: I wouldn't say that there is an absolutely specific body type for Lucky, maybe only in a really practical sense, as it does need to be someone physically fit. It's quite a demanding role: you are shuffling and we have weighted the bags. To be able to do that and to sustain it physically, you need a certain amount of physical prowess. So I suppose being fit helps. I'm sure plenty of people have approached the role without being super fit and managed it anyway. To make it a reasonable ask, or sustainable over a long run, I think being physically fit helps. Beckett was probably quite specific about it being somebody slim or tall. I'm working on the *Theatrical Notebook* which I've kept close to my heart throughout this whole process of working on *Godot* — it was lent to me by Gerry Dukes as I don't have my own copy. I know that Beckett was fairly particular about the physical shape of both Vladimir and Estragon also. However, you can take everything absolutely to the word, but you also have to be open to what you need for your production or what works on stage or what performers are available. I think more than anything what is really important with Lucky is breathing, and I think we definitely struck it in this piece. Tadhg Murphy is a really great performer and a lovely person to work with. From the get-go I felt that he was really in the right place because he began the work with a discussion of how he wanted to get the breath right for Lucky. He compared it in some way to surfing, which was an interesting analogy. He achieved a kind of meditative quality and the breath that is needed in any kind of physical endeavour. I have never timed Lucky's speech but I'm sure it's about five minutes and, in terms of your delivery and breath, it's hugely physical, even though it takes place in a very short and concentrated time. Therefore it's vital that you make physical the music in that speech. Getting the breath right for that is really important. That's my attitude to the physical aspect of it. Not the actual physiognomy of the person.

Trish: It's interesting how a range of body types can fit that role and it is to do with training and physical control and building strength to tolerate the demands. Please tell me a little bit more about *Waiting for Godot*. I would like to ask you a little bit about your set. We've talked about how you corporealised the tree in your early production of *Waiting for Godot*

and you have followed a much more formally designed approach with the current production. I wondered if you wanted to talk a little bit about the set for this production and those differences between this production and the earlier one.

Conor: [to Judy] That's you!

Judy: Well you are on the stage, Conor, so you have your own way of speaking about it. But just to talk about the way the set was imagined: firstly, we have a really good relationship with Ferdia Murphy who I admire a great deal and I found fantastic to work with. We started working on this about a year in advance of the piece and much of that was through discussion and different ways of looking at it but I would say that from the get-go, I had a few different visions of what I wanted and what I would have liked to have achieved with the set. But mostly I took from the *Theatrical Notebooks* the sense that Beckett was quite open to it being a road; it wasn't always a country road, it was just a road, evening, a tree.

Conor: I understand that the road eventually became less of a big deal.

Judy: Well it was always discussed as a road apparently without being written as an actual direction. He was quite open to that being nowhere or at the very least a non-identifiable place, something that does not necessarily look like a road; 'a road' is pretty broad as a direction. And he changed the mound to a stone. He made various different changes and interpretations in fact, and I know that he did discuss a round space at one stage, because he wanted a connection with the language, the idea of the figures out there on a plateau, to connect with the idea of a platter (being served up on a platter/served up on a plateau). Ours is a disc; it is round, and I really liked the idea of connecting with the idea of stone — "the stone, the stone in Connemara"— and it having a stone-like look. And also, what for me is very present in the text is a kind of mirroring throughout of characters. I think it's fascinating and quite brilliant that every single character has the chance or the possibility to reach the full spectrum of being really cruel and very kind. Nobody lands on any one particular type or behaviour. You could certainly say that Vladimir probably is more the thinker than Estragon. Certainly aspects of the character fall on one side more than another but they both display great diversity. Lucky looks crippled and bent over, but he kicks Estragon and he cries. So he cries and he kicks, so he is both violent and vulnerable and I think the same of Pozzo.

Conor: And he gives up his dinner.

Judy: He gives up his dinner. Pozzo is both terribly vulnerable and very cruel, and at times kind. So all of the characters display the full spectrum of humanity. They all mirror each other and I think there is, as Beckett describes it, huge symbiosis between all the characters. I wanted to work with the idea of the dreamscape too. For me, the crux of the play is uncertainty and I wanted the landscape or the environment that they were in to be uncertain, as in whether they are on the moon, or whether the moon is up there. So when the moon does appear it looks like an exact reflection of where they have been standing, so that there is an immediate questioning of where they are: are they of the moon? Or are they on it? And also that the sun is the mirror of the moon, and that sort of thing. We never see the sun setting in

Godot, which is interesting. Most people focus on the moon coming up but it does say that the sun sets and the moon rises. I have never seen a production in which the sun sets.

Trish: I suppose the moon has become such an iconic image that people draw upon it as a symbol of the play. That's very interesting that your thinking was mirrored in the set design.

Conor: I was just going to say that I recall you [to Judy] saying that there are so many references to dreaming, "another of your nightmares", "was I sleeping while the others suffered...."?

Judy: "Am I sleeping now?" Are we watching something that is perpetually happening? Are they dreaming what is happening?

Conor: "Nothing is certain when you're about", as though you are not always about, you only come at night, in the evening, when I'm asleep. But who knows, everything is up for grabs, you can jump in on things but you can rarely pin anything down and —

Judy: Most importantly, yes.

Conor: I think you've seen the moon in rehearsal and in performance so many times. I think the beauty of it is that when the moon rises in your production —

Judy: It appears like a click of a button, because it says "suddenly".

Conor: That's right. When the moon appears, then and only then can you see it. Of course you can already see it is a disc they're standing on, but then and only then do you see that it's the same, that it mirrors the moon. Of course, they're not on the moon, but I think that's the beauty to it. The question arises temporarily and is gone again. And that is so true to the play itself, it seems to me.

Trish: We started out talking about corporeality, in terms of blocking, in terms of material, that sense of presence, of materiality, disappears for a moment and instability is generated in performance. It's lovely to hear you speak so sensitively about those moments.

Judy: He offers both. Beckett offers both.

Trish: It's not an either/or situation.

Conor: Exactly.

Judy: Very, very classical, very rigid, very particular. And then total improvised freedom as well is available. It's just brilliant.

Trish: One final question. I suppose that you've found something similar really in the prose, it has given you that kind of freedom to work at the same time as offering these moments of lyrical beauty.

Conor: Again, I think, Judy referenced *The End* earlier, I think that *The End* and *The Calmative* which we also produced in 2009 or 2010 and in his early work in general

(whenever that work is supposed to be) there is this incredible fluidity to the reality. In *The End*, the character is constantly saying, “oh no, that’s wrong” or “that’s all a pack of lies, I feel”.

Judy: It’s like he constructs this thing and then shatters it completely again.

Conor: “It seems to me that was much later”, and “Oh no wait, I didn’t have my hat at that stage”.

Judy: “What have I said, my greatcoat”.

Conor: In *The Calmative*, which is one of my favourite pieces to perform because you feel like you’re in some kind of David Lynch movie. You feel like you’re running through this nightscape town, meeting people who may or may not be real, there are fleeting glimpses of strange people. This guy sits down and offers you a calmative for a kiss and it’s a surprising moment! But beautifully constructed and conjured. And I think having done the two of those, I see in Judy’s —

Judy: That it influences *Godot*.

Conor: I see in Judy’s approach to *Godot*, without having gone through those prose pieces in the way we did, there would be perhaps less emphasis on the fluidity of reality in *Godot*.

Judy: And the first line in *Godot*, “Nothing to be done”, or “there you are again”, “Am I?” It’s the first thing he says: am I here? It’s brilliant.

Trish: Both instability and the concrete working together. And very clear that the prose work has informed your production.

Conor: Absolutely. And again they were all written just prior.

End of interview.

Gare St Lazare production history since 1997

All productions are directed by Judy Hegarty Lovett except *A Piece of Monologue* which was directed by Walter Asmus.

***Molloy* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (1997, 4 Irish tours and international touring continues)

***Malone Dies* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (2000, Premiered at Kilkenny Arts Festival)

***The Beckett Trilogy* (*Molloy*, *Malone Dies* & *The Unnamable* by Samuel Beckett)** performed by Conor Lovett (2001) Premiered at Kilkenny Arts Festival, International Touring continues.

***Lessness* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Olwen Fouere (2002), Premiered at Kilkenny Arts Festival, Dublin Fringe Festival and National Theatre London.

***Enough* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Ally Ni Chiarain (2004) Dublin Fringe Festival, National Gallery of Ireland.

***A Piece of Monologue* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (2004), Rubicon Theatre, Ventura, California, Irish Tour and International Touring 2006.

***Worstward Ho* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Lee DeLong (2005) ***Texts For Nothing* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (2005) Premiered at Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture, 2006 Beckett Centenary Festival Dublin, Los Angeles, Bard University.

Seven Radio Plays. *All That Fall, Cascando, Embers, The Old Tune, Roughts For Radio 1 & 2 and Words and Music.* (2006) Casts included Anna Manahan, John Kavanagh, David Kelly, Denis Conway, Olwen Fouere, Catherine Walsh, Mark O'Regan, Louis Lovett, Ally Ni Chiarain, Michael West, Annie Ryan, Conor Lovett, Louis Hegarty Lovett, Ruby Hegarty Lovett. Original music by Paul Clark.

***First Love* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (Premiered at Siamsa Tire, Tralee March 2008, Irish Tour and International Touring continues). London 2014.

***The End* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (Premiered at Kilkenny Arts Festival August 2008, Irish Tour and International Touring continues.).

***The Calmative* by Samuel Beckett** performed by Conor Lovett (Premiered March 2010)

Here All Night – A music and text based creation inspired by, and featuring music and text by, Samuel Beckett with original music by Paul Clark and Caoimhín Ó'Raghallaigh. Performers Conor Lovett - text, Melanie Pappenheim - singer, Caoimhín Ó'Raghallaigh - fiddle, Christopher Allan - cello, John Paul Gandy - piano. Premiered at Brighton Festival 2013. New York, November 2015.

***Waiting For Godot* by Samuel Beckett** (Premiered at Dublin Theatre Festival 2013.) Toured to Belfast & Boston in 2013. To Shanghai in 2014 and will tour to New York in 2015.