

PROSCENIUM

The Creation of The World and Other Business

By Arthur Miller

The Creation of The World

Wednesday 22nd January to Saturday 25th January 2014
Compass Theatre, Ickenham

The Creation of The World and Other Business

Arthur Miller

Cast:

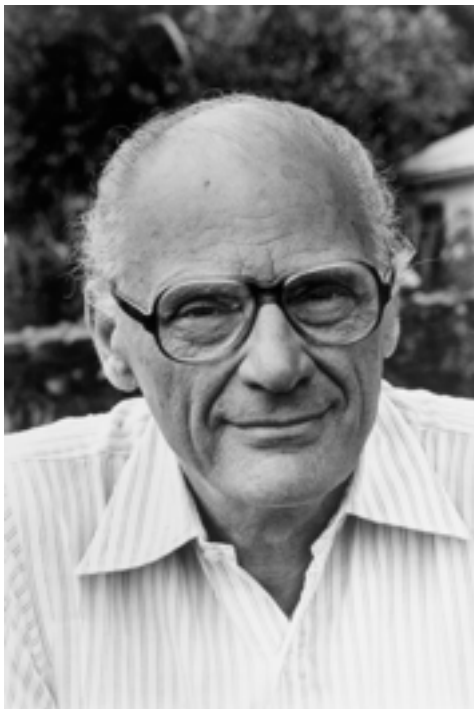
God.....David Pearson
LuciferKoral Neil
AdamBen Morris
EveClare Wooster
CainCaine Barrow
AbelPride Tuhwe
Angel 1Caroline Bronne-Shanbury
Angel 2Sheila Harvey
Angel 3.....Novelette Gordon

DirectorAnne Gerrard
Stage ManagerLinda Hampson
Assisted byKeith Bayross
Set ConstructionMark Brookes
.....Archie Brookes
Costumes.....Evelyn Moutrie
LightingPaul Robinson
Sound DesignCharles Anthony
MusicVince Eavis
Sound OperationPaul Davis

Arthur Miller

- 1915 17 October - Arthur Miller born in Harlem, New York.
- 1929 Miller family moves to Brooklyn when Isadore Miller's clothing business collapses in the Depression.
- 1932 On graduating from High School, Miller works in an automobile warehouse.
- 1934 Enrols as a student at the University of Michigan, initially to study journalism, but soon changes to English.
- 1936 Wins Avery Hopwood Drama Prize with *No Villain*. Enrols on playwriting course and strongly drawn to the works of Ibsen.
- 1937 *They Too Arise* wins the Theatre Guild's New Plays Award.
- 1938 Graduates from University and begins work with the Federal Theatre Project.
- 1940 Marries fellow student Mary Slattery. Works for nearly two years in the Brooklyn navy yard.
- 1944 *The Man Who Had All The Luck* produced in New York and wins the Theatre Guild National Award.
- 1947 *All My Sons* wins the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award.
- 1949 *Death of a Salesman*, produced in New York, wins the Pulitzer Prize.
- 1950 Adapts Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*.
- 1953 *The Crucible*, produced in New York, wins the Antoinette Perry and the Donaldson Prizes, but also incites the enmity of the House Un-American Activities Committee.
- 1954 Refused a passport to attend the opening of *The Crucible* in Belgium.
- 1955 *A View from the Bridge* and *A Memory of Two Mondays* staged in New York.
- 1956 Divorces Mary Slattery and marries Marilyn Monroe.
- 1957 Fined \$500 and given a suspended 30 day sentence for contempt of Congress, when he refuses to pass on names of people who had attended Communist meetings with him in 1947.
- 1958 Conviction quashed by the Supreme Court.

- 1961 Divorces Marilyn Monroe.
- 1962 Marries Inge Morath, a professional photographer.
- 1965 Elected President of PEN International.
- 1968 *The Price* opens in New York.
- 1969 Miller directs the London production of *The Price*.
- 1972 *The Creation of the World and Other Business* produced in New York.
- 1977 *The Archbishop's Ceiling* produced in Washington D.C.
- 1978 Visits China with Inge Morath.
- 1980 *The American Clock* opens in New York.
- 1983 Miller directs *Death of a Salesman* in Beijing.
- 1986 Miller visits Russia and meets President Gorbachev.
- 1987 An autobiography, *Timebends: A Life* published.
- 1991 *The Ride Down Mt Morgan* opens in the West End.
- 1992 The Young Vic stage *The Last Yankee*.
- 1994 *Broken Glass* opens at the Royal National Theatre.
- 1998 *Mr Peters' Connections* staged at the Almeida.
- 2000 *Resurrection Blues*, Miller's last full length play, staged at the Old Vic.
- 2005 10 February Arthur Miller dies.



The Play

The Creation of the World was written some five years after *The Price* and rehearsals began in 1972 for a Broadway opening in the Schubert Theatre. However, some difficulties arose and the director, Harold Clurman, and several cast members, left. Finally, after twenty one previews, the play opened on November 30th. A new play by Arthur Miller was bound, initially, to attract considerable interest but *The Creation of the World* was not the Arthur Miller the audience was expecting. Here was no excoriating exposure of the weaknesses and moral failings of contemporary American society; here was no intense and powerful presentation and analysis of human relationships and feelings. Instead they were greeted by Arthur Miller's first comedy, a parable inspired by the Book of Genesis where, as the play opens, God creates Eve as a companion for Adam – but cannot understand their reluctance to have sex! *The Creation of the World* is much more a play of ideas rather than of character and although the play is concerned with moral questions and does debate the nature of good and evil, the relaxed comedic tone of the dialogue, particularly that between God and Lucifer, can, on a first hearing, mask the seriousness of the discussion. The play closed after 20 performances: time now for a re-assessment.

The Director's View

Miller wrote the play during the five years he spent trying to get justice for an 18 year old boy accused of horribly murdering his mother. He became deeply involved in the concept of evil as he dealt with the appalling way the case was handled by the authorities. The boy was finally exonerated and freed. These events are echoed in the fratricide of Abel by Cain and the fear of Adam and Eve about a God who can permit such an act.

Miller read the Bible at college and he felt the need to fill in the details of the stories and investigate the complex character of the creator and the relationship of mankind with God – and good and evil. The play, while dealing with deep philosophical themes, has been written with wit and humour and includes a fair amount of sex and violence, quite a realistic mixture really. I trust it does not offend people with traditional beliefs but for me it poses the questions I was thinking about when I first began to look at religion with a sceptical eye.

The cast consists mainly of God, Adam, Eve and Lucifer, with the addition of Cain and Abel and three angels. The two boys are smaller but interesting parts and appear from the start as teenagers. The three angels, though small parts, are given some individuality and interest by their heavenly functions:

Chemuel is the angel of mercy, Azrael the angel of death and Raphael - though not described as such in the play - the angel of healing.

The Playwright's View

Like *The Price*, *The Creation of the World*, reconsidering Genesis, is essentially the fratricidal enigma, but seen now as a given of man's nature. In the setting of the original family, shorn of the societal influence, the play seeks in fratricide, the first dilemma and the bible's opening event, for a sign of hope for man. The fundamental competition between brothers for a mother's – and therefore God's - love is discovered with amazing perplexity for the first time. The purely loving and practical Adam and Eve, looking down with disbelief at the murdered Abel and the unrepentant Cain, can only fear for their lives under a God who not only permits such monstrous acts but has apparently designed mankind so as to perpetuate them. In this play the catastrophe is built into man's primal nature; in his very brotherhood he first tastes the murder of his own kind.

Against that ticking time bomb within us the defence, if there is a defence, is hardly more than Adam's imprecation to his wife and remaining son – to an Eve filled with hatred for a defiant Cain: 'Ask her pardon! Cain we are surrounded by beasts. And God's not coming anymore! Boy we are all that's left responsible – ask her pardon!' Cain, smiling and justified, walks adamantly away into his exile, leaving his father to call after him on his darkening desert, 'Mercy!' But Adam's outcry is also integral to man.

Arthur Miller: 'Timebends' 1987

The Critic's View

Arthur Miller's new play *The Creation of the World and Other Business*, which opened last night at the Schubert Theatre, is a biblical based parable concerned with good and evil and the human dilemma. It emerges as a victory of craft over artistry and mind over matter. It is a play that wants to be taken seriously because it is dealing with serious moral subjects and to be taken all the more seriously because it is dealing with those subjects in a serio-comic fashion.

This is Mr Miller's first Broadway comedy, and as such deserves the most careful scrutiny. Mr Miller has done the Broadway stage some service, and it is a real pleasure to have him back and to see him trying to extend his territory. I think most theatre-goers will want to see this play, if only because Mr Miller has won the interest of the theatre world and therefore deserves that world's attention.

Mr Miller is trying to write a play about evil. He has veered towards the subject in the past. His Ibsenite concern with guilt and responsibility has always carried a strong feel for evil in it. The moral rectitude of his public stance also reveals nostrils flared to scent the devil. But is God also the devil? Who, in the name of creation, Mr Miller wants to know is responsible for the mess we are in? He deliberately fills his play with a folksy talk and simple jokes. The key is deliberately low, the mood determinedly frolicsome.

Mr Miller has cast his play in three acts. Each act is concerned with one of three questions on the Human Dilemma. In the first God creates Eve for Adam, and, when Eve is tempted, both are expelled from Paradise. It explores the proposition, in the playwright's own words: 'Since God made everything and God is good – why did he make Lucifer?'

In the second act Eve gives birth to Cain, watched over interestedly by Lucifer. This act's question: 'Is there something in the way we are born, which makes us want the world to be good? In the final act, Adam and Eve and their two sons, Cain and Abel have made some kind of adjustment to the earth. Then tempted by a winning combination of both God and Lucifer, Cain kills Abel and is sent out as a wanderer. The scene is said to discuss: 'When every man wants justice, why does he go on creating injustice?'

Mr Miller pictures God as an avuncular and benevolent paranoiac madly hungry for praise. Lucifer is, in effect, the most honest figure within the firmament. While Adam, with his simple fervour and rabbinical wisdom, and Eve, who has a sense of chicken soup with barley around her skirts, seem like any decent Jewish immigrant couple trying to do their best for their kids in the new country.

Clive Barnes, December 1, 1972

Miller and the Bible

It was only in college that I discovered the Bible, but as a man-made collection of fascination literature by different authors. Slowly, however, it began to matter less that humans had authored the Bible for what remained was hypnotic. I wondered why. The stories are told with the sparseness of electrical diagrams, perhaps that's part of the fascination – you are left to fill things in, to create what had been omitted. Over the years the question of whether God *exists* gave way to another mystery – why are men, generation after generation, pressed to invent him again? I more or less settled for the idea that God is *always about to exist*, and this gives a legitimacy to jumping the gun somewhat and saying He already does.

Arthur Miller: 'Timebends' 1987

Vita and Virginia, by Eileen Atkins

A play adapted from the correspondence between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West.

By turns funny, touching and tender, the piece provides a remarkable insight into a twenty year relationship between two extraordinary women.

Directed by Shirley Wootten
Wednesday March 19th to Saturday March 22nd 2014
7:45 pm, Compass Theatre, Ickenham
Box Office : 0208 954 4110

About Proscenium

Proscenium was founded in 1924. Since then, the aim of this experienced group has been to present classic and contemporary plays to as wide an audience as possible. Since 1990, performances have taken place at the Harrow Arts Centre and, more recently, at the Compass Theatre, Ickenham.

The company meets three times a week, at the Harrow Arts Centre for rehearsals, so that four plays are presented in each season. Social, fund raising activities and play readings take place throughout the year.

Secretary : Clare Wooster
Chair : Dave Pearson

Contact us at www.proscenium.org.uk