



ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE:
BALDWIN AND BUCKLEY AT CAMBRIDGE
(IN PROGRESS)

APRIL 23 - 24, 2021

8:30pm

APRIL 25, 2021

3pm

presented by

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ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE: **BALDWIN AND BUCKLEY AT CAMBRIDGE (IN PROGRESS)**

Conceived by Greig Sargeant with ERS

Directed by John Collins

Featuring:

April Matthis, Gavin Price, Greig Sargeant, Christopher-Rashee Stevenson, and Ben Williams

Stage Manager and Assistant Director: Maurina Lioce

ABOUT THE WORK

In 1965, James Baldwin and William F. Buckley, Jr. were invited to The Cambridge University Union to debate the resolution "The American Dream is at the Expense of The American Negro." The result was a provocative and profoundly relevant confrontation between Baldwin, one of the most powerful figures of the civil rights movement, and Buckley, often considered the father of 20th Century patrician conservatism. Building on its history of staging unconventional texts, New York-based ensemble Elevator Repair Service (ERS) will present the debate verbatim in a special video preview of this new work. As a more intimate and personal counterpoint to the debate, the final scene features a brief, imagined reunion between Baldwin and his close friend and confidante Lorraine Hansberry, who died only weeks before the debate.

The piece was conceived in late 2019 by long-time ERS company member Greig Sargeant. In the many months since those early conversations, the subject of the debate has only become more urgent. With both 1965 and 2021 in mind, *Baldwin and Buckley at Cambridge* – through a starkly simple design and an acting style that favors intimacy over impersonation – presents the debate as real, immediate, and of *this* moment.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Elevator Repair Service (ERS) is a New York City-based company that creates original works for live theatre with an ongoing ensemble. The company's sources range from found material (transcripts of trials, old movies, YouTube videos) to literature and conventional plays (both classical and contemporary). Founded in 1991, ERS has authored an extensive body of work that includes 19 original theatrical productions. These have earned the company a loyal following and made it one of New York's most highly acclaimed experimental theatre companies. *Gatz* (2006), along with *The Sound and the Fury* (2008) and *The Select (The Sun Also Rises)* (2010), form a trilogy of work based on great American novels from the early 20th Century. ERS productions share a commitment to risk-taking and reinvention, blending unusual texts with innovations in theatrical form. The finished works feature the company's signature dynamic performance style and playful sense of humor coupled with a rigorous commitment to psychologically complex performances. ERS has received numerous awards and distinctions.

John Collins (Director) founded Elevator Repair Service in 1991. Since then he has directed or co-directed all of the company's productions while also serving as the company's Artistic Director. ERS productions directed by John include *Cab Legs*, *Room Tone*, *Gatz*, *The Select (The Sun Also Rises)*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Arguendo*, *Measure for Measure*, and numerous others. The company's work, under his direction, has been seen in over a dozen countries as well as in cities across the U.S. John is an experienced sound designer and has worked for The Wooster Group, Richard Foreman, Target Margin Theater, and others. Current projects include *Baldwin and Buckley at Cambridge*, a new adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, and a new project based on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a United States Artists Fellowship, and a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award.

Maurina Lioce (Stage Manager and Assistant Director) has worked with ERS on *The Sound and the Fury*; *Arguendo*; *The Select (The Sun Also Rises)* (tours); *Gatz* (tours); *Fondly, Collette Richland*; *Measure for Measure*, and *Everyone's Fine with Virginia Woolf*. Other New York City Stage Management credits include *Half Straddle*, *Adrienne Truscott*, *Jim Findlay*, *David Byrne*, *Sibyl Kempson's 7 Daughters of Eve Theater & Performance Co.*, *Andrew Ondrejcek*, *Mike Iveson*, *Erin Markey*, *Suzanne Bocanegra*, and *Young Jean Lee*. She has been a member of Elevator Repair Service since 2014.

April Matthis (Lorraine Hansberry). With ERS: *The Sound & the Fury*; *Fondly, Collette Richland* (NYTW); *Measure for Measure* (The Public); *Everyone's Fine with Virginia Woolf* (Abrons Art Center); *Gatz* (Perth Festival). Off-Broadway: *Toni Stone* (Roundabout/OBIE Award for Performance); *Fairview*, *LEAR* (Soho Rep); *Signature Plays—Funnyhouse of a Negro* (Signature Theatre); *IOWA*, *Antlia Pneumatica* (Playwrights Horizons); *On the Levee* (LCT3). Regional: *Little Bunny Foo Foo* (Actors Theater of Louisville), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Yale Rep). TV: "Instinct" (CBS), "New Amsterdam" (NBC). Film: *Black Card* (HBO, Showtime), *Fugitive Dreams* (FantasiaFest, Austin Film Festival). OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance.

Gavin Price (Mr. Heycock) has performed with ERS in *Gatz*; *Everyone's Fine with Virginia Woolf*; *Measure for Measure*; *The Select (the Sun Also Rises)*; *The Sound and the Fury*; *Arguendo*; *Fondly, Collette Richland*; *A Sort of Joy* (MoMA). His other projects include the award-winning short film *Boccamazzo Construction*; *The Return of Adam* (Metropolitan Museum of Art); *XX-ID* (New Museum); *Merce Cunningham Retrospective* (MCA); *Saint Fortune*, co-founder. He has also performed and designed with *Theater in Quarantine*, *CabinFever*, *Sibyl Kempson*, *Moises Kaufman*, *Mabou Mines*, *Target Margin* and *Face the Music*. Listen to his bands on Spotify & iTunes: *The Witch Ones*, *The Tender Band*, *Cabin Fever*.

Greig Sargeant (James Baldwin). NYTW: *Bonnie's Last Flight; Fondly, Collette Richland; The Little Foxes; The Sound and the Fury*. The Public Theater: *Measure for Measure; The Sound and the Fury*. The Vineyard Theater: *Strictly Dishonorable*. BAM/Next Wave Festival: *The Parable Conference*. Baryshnikov Arts Center: *Go Forth/Please Bury Me*. ERS: *Gatz*. Target Margin: *Uncle Vanya*. Regional: The Walker Arts Center, RedCat, Axial Theater, Johnny Carson Theater, Montclair State Theater, The Spoleto Festival. International: Culturegest - Lisbon, Vienna Festival, Holland Festival, Adelaide Festival. Film: *Help Me Mary* dir. by Annie Tippe, *The Bad Infinity* dir. by Graham Sack. Company Member: Target Margin Theater, Elevator Repair Service. Training: West Virginia University (MFA), William Esper.

Christopher-Rashee Stevenson (Mr. Burford) is a theater artist from Baltimore, Maryland. He is a current SUITE/SPACE ('20-'21) artist at Mabou Mines and an alum of Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab '18. His work as director and performer has been featured at The Performing Garage, The Tank, JACK, HERE Arts Center, The Actor's Studio, American Repertory Theater, Millennium Film Workshop, Lincoln Center Education, LaMaMa, and the Eubie Blake Jazz Institute. He is currently working on a post-Covid chamber version of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* as well as an Afro-futurist mash-up on the vampire genre using everything from Stoker's *Dracula* and Bill Gunn's *Ganja & Hess* to Octavia E. Butler's *Fledgling*, a piece on blood & survival.

Ben Williams (William F. Buckley, Jr.) is an actor and sound designer. He produces and curates category : other (category-other.com), an award-winning platform for experimental audio. Collaborators include: ERS, Minor Theater w/ Julia Jarcho, Lily Whitsitt, Christina Masciotti, Suzanne Bocanegra, Kate Benson, Geoff Sobelle, Julie Atlas Muz, and many others. Awards for sound design: OBIE, Lortel, Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, and Third Coast International Audio Festival's inaugural Audio Unbound Award (for *Songs of Speculation*, co-produced with Jillian Walker). benwilliamsdotcom.com



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