

To paraphrase Edward Albee: you measure the success of a Beckett production by standing in the back of the house, eyes closed, and listen to the balance of sound and silence.

To paraphrase Beckett's "muse", Billie Whitelaw: she didn't know what Beckett's words meant, and didn't care. She did know, however, how he wanted his words to sound and was wholly devoted to creating that aural landscape, Beckett's canvas.

Xerxes Mehta termed Sam's later works "Ghost plays". A voice ... of a living creature? Speaking to whom? Herself? Someone beyond? Not an audience. There is no "audience" in a Beckett play.

Sam, himself, said he no longer belonged in theatre.

A critic and reviewer of one of my own Beckett productions, *Krapp's Last Tape* spoke of poetry and silence, even light as poetry – and all must be honored.

So what is the performer to do to prepare for a Beckett role?

First and foremost, slow down. Speak your lines with a slowness which borders on the painful. Practice that until you are comfortable with this (likely) new fangled tempo. Then play. Break up the lines in surprising ways, new ways, and listen for the sensation of new meanings. There is no right answer. There is no right way. There is no meaning.

What you bring as a performer is your own sense of rhythm, pace, phrasing ... you are more a musician than an actor. More a sculptor or painter than a person – yet you are a person and you use every fiber of your being to transport those who listen and hear to another place.