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by

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albee

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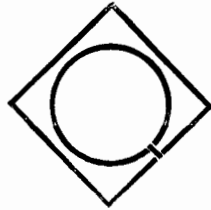
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by Iosif Naghiu

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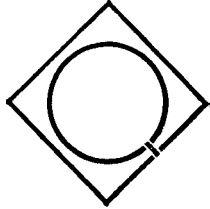
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THE QUESTORS THEATRE

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Saturday, 9th October, 1971

EDWARD ALBEE ON WRITING PLAYS . . .

The basic crisis the theatre is in now is that the audience wants to have a re-affirmation of its values, wants to see the status quo, wants to be entertained rather than disturbed, wants to be comforted and really doesn't want any kind of adventure in the theatre, at least from living playwrights—they'll take it from the dead ones because that's part of the lit-cult.

The pressure on playwrights to sell out to what the audience wants is enormous. They don't have to go to Hollywood; they don't have to write for television; they're encouraged to sell out even if they stay in New York and write for the theatre. Actors sell out in order to earn a living and support their families; they're encouraged to act in bad plays because it's the bad play that the audience wants. But there's no lack of good plays, no lack of good actors. I've always thought that it's the responsibility of the playwright to show people how they are and what their time is like in the hope that perhaps they'll change it . . . the language in 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?' is idiomatic . . . I suppose I must enjoy playwriting since I do it; I try not to do the things I don't enjoy. Being a playwright is enjoyable except for that six-week period from the first day of rehearsal until the day after the opening, which is the worst time in the world. Writing in itself is exhilarating, absorbing, involving. I can't think of anything else I'd rather do.

How does it happen? I usually discover that I have started thinking about an idea which I know is going to be a play. The process may take anything from six months to two and a half years, and during that period I don't think about the play very much except that I realise from time to time that I **have** been thinking about it, and when the characters who are going to be in the play begin to take shape I improvise with them.

I choose a situation that is not going to occur in the play itself and test the characters out to see how they behave in it, how they react within the situation, what they will say to each other in a situation of that sort. When they start behaving on their own and take over from me and seem quite natural and believable in an improvised situation, then I suppose I know that it's time to start writing the play. I try to let the unconscious do as much work as possible, since I find that is the more efficient part of my mind. The actual writing itself usually takes a fairly short time—the shorter plays and the one-act plays anything from a week to three weeks. The two longer plays have taken about three weeks or a month an act, but it is enjoyable; it must be . . . There are two interesting moments of discovery. The time of sitting down at the typewriter and finding out what you've been thinking about—that's rather exciting. Then, in spite of the anguish of it, the rehearsal period is exciting too, because you want to find out to what extent what you thought the play would look like and sound like can relate to what emerges. This doesn't really have much to do with acting or directing; it's how close your vision can be realised. It's quite fascinating . . .

From a 'Conversation between Albee and Sir John Gielgud', first published in 'Atlantic Monthly', and in 'The Observer', April 18th, 1965.

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A DELICATE BALANCE

by Edward Albee

Cast in order of appearance

Agnes PATRICIA LEWIS
Tobias COLIN PRONGER
Claire FRANCES MARTIN
Harry PHILIP WRIGHT
Edna **DOROTHY WOOD**
Julia HELEN BLATCH

ACT I Friday Night

ACT II Scene 1 Early Saturday Evening
Scene 2 Later that Night

ACT III Early Sunday Morning

There will be an interval of 15 minutes between Acts I and II and a 10 minute interval between Acts II and III.

(A warning bell will be rung before the play recommences).

Directed by MIKE CUSTANCE

Sets designed by DAVID WATERHOUSE

Sculptures by PETER TRELOGAN

Costumes designed by MAUD CULHANE

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Sandwiches and coffee are available in the New Foyer before performances and refreshments including ice cream will be served during the intervals.

Members of the audience are requested to refrain from smoking in the Auditorium.

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