

Risley Theatre

Cornell's only student run theatre

No Problems By Mathew Belmonte

Feb 9th 7:30pm
Feb 10th 7:30pm

No Exit By Jean Paul Satre

Feb 16th 8:00pm
Feb 17th 5:00pm, 8:00pm

Cornell Shakespeare Troupe presents
A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM

Feb 23rd and
Feb 24th

Directed by Cornell RPTA Ed Schiff

Vincent By Leonard Nimoy

March 1-3 8:00pm
March 4 2:00pm

Institute for German Cultural Studies Presents

Berlot Brecht on Trial

March 9th

Durang Harangue:
An Evening of Short Plays

Wednesday March 14th
Thursday March 15th

Cornell Shakespeare Troupe presents

The Tempest

March 29-31 8:00pm
March 31 3:00pm

Skits-O-Phrenics Spring Show

Melodramatics Theater Company presents

SWEENEY TODD

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street By Stephen Sondheim

Performances April 11-21
visit the website
www.melodramatics.com
for more details

The Visit By Friedrich Durrenmatt

April 27-28th 8:00pm
April 29th 9:00pm

Fabulous Expectations

By Gaea Denker-Lehrman
Slope Day Weekend

*all show times and dates subject to change

Spring '07
Season

risleytheatre@cornell.edu
www.rso.cornell.edu/risleytheatre

Risley Theatre Presents...

No Problems

A new play by Matthew Belmonte



Author's Note

No Problems is a play about two Americans who are running away – one from the ghost of his father, the other from the dreary twilight of a life. Each of them has been brought up on a democratic ideology, the peculiarly American faith that a person can be anyone or do anything they want, as long as they work hard enough for it. Having such power over one's own destiny, of course, brings an uncomfortable realisation that one must be responsible for one's own limits and shortcomings. We all resent being controlled, yet we all crave it. A fear of death, of being smothered and negated, drives us to separate ourselves from parents (or institutions, or governments). And a fear of life, of being responsible for ourselves in an indifferent world, brings us back to seek out their protection.

The central character in this play is a young man named Percy. If he's a hero, he doesn't know it yet. His great great grandfather was an unsuccessful revolutionary in 1848. One hundred twenty years later, his father was lost in another war, on the other side of the world, also waged in the name of democracy. Raised by an overprotective mother and unable to get away from the shadow of his dead father, Percy sees his life as a series of decisions over which he has no control. To escape from this he's left his mother's house in Madison, Wisconsin and set off across Europe with some muddled idea of discovering his roots and getting a better idea of who he is. Though he doesn't realise it, in setting forth on this quest for control of his own destiny he's taken up the mantle of his ancestors.

Like most heroes, Percy receives encouragement from the forces of good and is tempted by the forces of evil. In this case it's Elvis, the King of Rock and Roll and the leader of a new American revolution, who turns up to tell him that the call to adventure is one that he can't refuse. Conversely, Richard Nixon, the man who sent Percy's father to die in a Vietnamese jungle, cannot be anything but evil – or can he? Dualities like that of good and evil are the intellectual equivalents of our parents. They allow us to make some sense of the chaotic world in which we find ourselves. Like our parents, they protect us. But, like our parents, they limit us. Percy's ancestors have given themselves to various struggles in the name of liberty, but if absolute liberty is what he's after then he'll have to travel beyond such dualities.

The play opens as Percy is sitting on a train on his way to Paris, his nose buried in a biography of Marcel Proust...

ACT I	<i>Proust and Elvis on the mystery train to Paris</i>
ACT II	<i>From Paris to Zürich with Tricky Dick and the Democratic Ideology</i>
	<i>Ten-Minute Intermission</i>
ACT III	<i>Riding the dream world from Zürich to Vienna</i>
ACT IV	<i>The final frontier</i>

Production Staff

Directors	Clare Alloy-Relihan Lauren Cohen
Technical Director	Nathaniel Jones
Sound Director	Stacia Eggleston
Publicity	Matthew Belmonte

Cast

Percy	Melanie Redeye
Lance	Brian Mayer
Elvis Presley	Jen Wholey
Richard Nixon	Alex Roth
Women	Adri Mills Mary Thomas
Frenchwoman	Lu Yuen Xing
Magyars	Neil Patel Rion Wight Diana Taft Lu Yuen Xing

Special Thanks

Brian Beeners
Elaine Bushey
Gaea Denker-Lehrman
Gideon Stone
Ben Williams the Elder
Brad Wilson
and
Risley Theatre Subcommittee