

**the SINGULAR LIFE** BUCKNELL DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE PRESENTS:

❖ ❖ ❖ **of ALBERT NOBBS**

**OCTOBER 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, NOVEMBER 1**  
**8:00 p.m. university theatre in coleman hall**

.....  
**ENTERTAINMENT** ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ **TO LAST A LIFETIME**

*"Take a Stroll by the River Dodder"* Adapted from a short story in George Moore's *Celibate Lives*, 1927

**"What matter whether she calls me father or mother? They are but mere words that  
the lips speak, but love is in the heart and only love matters."** —Albert Nobbs

# Department of Theatre and Dance presents **The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs**

by Simone Benmussa • Director Gary Grant • Scene Designer F. Elaine Williams  
Lighting Designer Steven A. Draheim • Sound Design Andrea Preschle & David B. Ames  
Costume Design Eileen Marks Lloyd • Dialect Coaching Barry Kur

## THE PLAYERS

Albert Nobbs .....	Valerie K. Marsden
Hubert Page .....	Mary Jordan
Helen Dawes .....	Jessica Alexander
Mrs. Baker .....	Wendy Millman
Kitty McCann .....	Jennifer Maslowski
Chambermaids .....	Joanna Fassel Vanessa Jones
George Moore's Voice .....	Paul Heimer
Alec's Voice .....	Mark Minsavage
Joe Mackins's Voice .....	G. Matthew Hannah III
Little George Moore .....	Jamin Prosseda

Musical Selections — "The Boys of Wexford" sung by Barry Kur  
"The Butcher's Boy" sung by Jennifer Maslowski, Vanessa Jones, Joanna Fassel  
"The False Bride" sung by Jennifer Maslowski

*The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs* is performed without intermission.  
Smoking, the taking of photographs, and the use of recording devices are strictly prohibited.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Born in Tunisia into a Jewish family, but educated in a Catholic convent, Simone Benmussa entered the theatre, as many women have done, through the back door. As an administrative aid for the Paris-based Renaud-Barrault Theatre Company, Benmussa labored as the literary advisor helping to chart the evolution of the ideas of the French avant-garde in the 1950's. In this role of the woman who has espoused another's cause, her life parallels the life of her most celebrated stage character, Albert Nobbs. Until a scheduled production for the Petit Orsay suddenly cancelled, and Barrault substituted Benmussa's *Portrait of Dora*, Benmussa remained a talented women waiting in the wings for recognition.

*The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs* is based on an incident reported in a 19th Century newspaper. Albert Nobbs, the presumed male head waiter in a Dublin hotel, lived her life as a man and her sex was discovered only after her death through a coroner's examination. Emphasizing the loneliness of her situation, the Irish novelist, George Moore, first narrated this story in a collection called *Celibate Lives* in 1927. Benmussa, on the other hand, recreated Nobbs as a prisoner of the Victorian view of women. She shows Nobbs taking on the disguise of a man in order to get ahead; her motivation is, first and foremost, economic, a matter of survival or of the need for a better life. After losing both her parents, her protector and her nurse, Albert fears for her safety in the rough world of a chambermaid in men's quarters and dresses as a man to gain the higher wages, gentler life and elevated status of a waiter in Morrison's Hotel.

Without burdening a moving story with a weighty message, Benmussa's play raises a number of disturbing questions, particularly at a time when family values and the role of women in the family and in society are so hotly debated. The woman, Albert Nobbs, takes on the role of a male waiter to get a better-paying job, but her male professional self traps her and prevents her from experiencing a fulfilling sexual and emotional life. Her need for economic security forces her emotional self into hiding. Today, when many women have assimilated into once all-male professions, the suppression of emotional needs becomes a serious contemporary problem. As feminist



critic, Sue Ellen Case puts it, "The drag role of Albert Nobbs shows a woman's dispossession of her own body—a woman locked out of her body by her career."

As in a play by Caryl Churchill or a painting by Frida Kahlo, the ground in Benmussa's intimate, chamber music-like interplay of text, movement, light and sound constantly shifts under our feet. Even a long-cherished convention of the theatre—the disguise, especially Shakespeare's favorite disguise of a woman dressed up as a man—is radically reworked by Benmussa's profoundly playful imagination. Instead of leading to revelation, Albert's disguise leads to illusion, fantasy and death. Albert's drag role—the propriety, even snobbery of an obsequious waiter—makes all of the gender roles appear fictitious. Gender becomes a quality of social behavior rather than biological fact. And Benmussa's perspective on these roles foregrounds the coercive effects of George Moore's disembodied voice which through its commentary and interruptions distorts the experience of his female subjects. As our Theatre Forum discussion leader, Professor Jill Dolan sees it, "The spectator knows Albert only as the projection of Moore's gaze. To 'read' her at all requires the spectator to see her through male narrative strategies."

The themes and the theatrical style of Benmussa's plays challenge an audience. It's as if we learn how to see the play as we watch it. The experience is worth the effort, for Benmussa's elegant, nuanced language and theatricalization of defeat offers a feeling of exhilaration at a new way of seeing.

Gary Grant

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director.....	Steven A. Draheim
Assistant Director.....	Nina Knoche
Stage Manager .....	Nicole Cobban
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Amy E. Gallagher, Alex Yastremski
Musical Consultants .....	Mike Lynch, Jim Van Fleet
Literary Adviser .....	John Rickard
Master Electricians .....	Justin Youtz, Andre Fuqua, Eric Youtz
Electrics Crew.....	Jonathan Meyers, Steve Firestone, Brian Vettoso, Peter Conn, Frank Alvarez, David deVity, Cindy Peltier, Kristen Hoffman, Allison Sieradzki, Jodi Eash, David McGraw, Christopher Nichols, Peter Parkin, Gerrit A. Fedele, Tim Steimle, Adam Zonder, Christopher Fronheiser, Mark Farina, David B. Ames
Sound Engineer.....	David B. Ames
Properties .....	Nicole Cobban, Donna Carter, Nina Knoche
Costumer .....	Pam Miller
Costume Construction .....	Sandy Prickett, Amy Sass, Jennifer DeCamp, Mark Minsavage
Set Construction .....	Jon Huff, Dinesa Achina, Amy Dean, Lindsey Dillon, Howard Fetzer, Cathy Jebejian, Mandy Kalish, John Kaminski, Adena Lemkau, Steven O'Hagen, Daniel Richin, Eric Rudder, Russel Bashford, Scott Albright, Randy Sanderson, Gwyn Hoerauf, Andre Fuqua, Lauren McSorley, Casey Hollister, Peter Parkin, Julie Stanford Cindy Peltier, Christopher Nichols, Christopher Williamson, Marlene Brandon
Publicity & Box Office.....	Joshua D. Brinen, Gerrit A. Fedele, Anthony Prokopowicz
Light Board Operator .....	Jill Raleigh
Sound Board Operator .....	Jonathan Meyers, David B. Ames
Running Crew .....	Kristen Bowen
House Manager.....	Katrina Herb
Ushers .....	Provided by Cap & Dagger

Funding for Mr. Kur provided by Bucknell Association for the Arts.

Thank Yous: Nancy Grant, Delia Gavin, Richard Grant, Jean Peterson, Janice Butler, Carol Lee, Bobs Bailey, Sandy Sojka

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS 1992-93

Costume Shop .....	Mark Minsavage (Fall only), Jennifer DeCamp, Sandy Prickett, Amy Sass
Scene Shop.....	Tim Steimle, Mark Farina, Chris Fronheiser, Adam Zonder (Fall only)
Lighting.....	Eric Youtz, Andre Fuqua, Justin Youtz
Sound.....	David Ames,
Publicity .....	Gerrit Fedele, Josh Brinen, Anthony Prokopowicz (Dana Intern)
Props .....	Nina Knoche, Donna Carter (Dana Intern), Nicole Cobban
Dance .....	Megan Blamble, Megan Karakelian

## PATRON LIST 1992-93

Laurie and Maurice Aburdene  
Dotty S. Allen and Joyce Slade  
Owen and Judith Anderson  
Georgia Armstrong  
Dennis and Dorothy Baumwoll  
Ronald L. Beaver  
Judith and William Becker  
William Boswell  
Douglas and Mary Candland  
Shellie Cash-Muller and Alfonse Muller  
Ann deKlerk and Barnard Taylor  
Dr. and Mrs. Donald Douglas  
Steven A. and Deborah Draheim  
David Fass  
Danna and Bob Frangione  
Chris and Gary Fry  
Bob and Iris Gainer  
Harry R. Garvin

Joel and Marsha Scott Gori  
Anthony Gosse  
Gary and Nancy Grant  
Annelies E. Gray  
Tom and Margaret Greaves  
Betty and Jim Hammerlee  
Barbara R. Haylock  
Mary A. Hill  
David M. Himmelreich  
Vance Hudgins and Denny Marcotte  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Karakelian  
Stephen J. Lindenmuth  
Mike Lynch  
Mrs. Jay P. Mathias  
Gordon and Pat Meyer  
David and Jan Pearson  
Cindy Peltier and Rosalyn Richards  
Jean Peterson

Harvey and Betsey Powers  
Chuck and Martha Root  
Charles Sackrey  
Larry and Nancy Shinn  
Lisbe and Manning Smith  
Gary and Sandy Sojka  
Beatrice Spielman  
Douglas and Margie Sturm  
Lois Tilton  
Mary Evelyn Tucker  
John Wheatcroft  
F. Elaine Williams  
Chris and Neal Woodruff  
  
Commercial:  
Beyer & Fortner, Inc.  
The Great Susquehanna Piano Co.  
The Lewisburg Inn