

THE MORNING LINE

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The New York Times

Arts Beat

The Culture at Large

JULY 6, 2012, 9:21 AM

Take That, Tyson: 'Raging Bull' LaMotta Brings 'Lady and the Champ' Back to the Stage

By *DAVE ITZKOFF*

It might not be advisable for Jake LaMotta to take on Mike Tyson in the ring, but he can still go head-to-head with him in the arena of New York theater. Just before Iron Mike [arrives on Broadway](#) with his one-man show, Mr. LaMotta, a former middleweight champion whose life inspired the film "Raging Bull," is bringing back his show "Lady and the Champ" for a two-week run at the [Richmond Shepard Theater](#) in Manhattan, press representatives for the production said.

Mr. LaMotta, who turns 91 on Tuesday, will star in "Lady and the Champ" with Denise Baker, who wrote the show with Bonnie Lee Sander and directed it for the stage. A news release describes the production (which has previously run at the Triad Theatre and Feinstein's at the Loews Regency) as "an evening of stories, videos, and song and dance" in which Mr. LaMotta recounts "in ribald detail" his boxing career and the years that followed, during which he ran various bars, worked as a stand-up comic and was married numerous times. (The news release says Mr. LaMotta "affectionately refers" to Ms. Baker "as his future seventh wife, 'Lucky #7.' ")

Mr. LaMotta is also the author of the memoir "Raging Bull," which was adapted into Martin Scorsese's Academy Award-winning film starring Robert De Niro. (MGM, which produced the movie, [filed suit earlier this week](#) to stop a film called "Raging Bull II," which is adapted from a later memoir by Mr. LaMotta but which does not involve Mr. Scorsese or Mr. De Niro.)

To be a contender to see "Lady and the Champ," you can visit the Richmond Shepard Theater during its run from July 19 through 29. (Mr. Tyson enters the theatrical ring on July 31 when his Broadway show, "[Undisputed Truth](#)," begins performances at the Longacre Theater.)

The New York Times

Arts Beat

The Culture at Large

JULY 4, 2012, 5:32 PM

DeLillo Play on Global Warming to Receive Premiere in London

By *JENNIFER SCHUESSLER*

Don DeLillo has long been known for the chilliness of his vision and the icy precision of his prose. Now he's bringing a coolly minimalist literary take on climate change to the London stage with the European premiere of his unpublished one-act play "The Word for Snow," [The Guardian](#) has reported.

The play, which will be staged by the [Future Ruins](#) theater company from July 10 through 12 as part of the [London Literature Festival](#), describes an encounter between a modern-day pilgrim and a self-exiled scholar on an earth where the physical world has disintegrated and been replaced with words describing what once was there. "Are you saying children will build a snowman with the word for snow?" one character asks.

Mr. DeLillo has written a half-dozen plays, including "[The Day Room](#)," which ran in New York in 1987 to some less than admiring reviews. (Frank Rich, writing in *The New York Times*, [called it](#) " 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' as it might be rewritten by a pretentious undergraduate who has just completed the midterm, if not all the required reading, for a survey course in the works of Pirandello, Beckett and Stoppard.")

The new play was originally commissioned by the Steppenwolf Theater Company, which performed a staged reading at the 2007 Chicago Humanities festival along with [five other plays on global warming](#).

Jack McNamara, who is directing the play in London, told *The Guardian* that this version of "The Word for Snow" came "straight from DeLillo's typewriter" and that he had to convince the famously publicity-shy author "that this strange and beautiful piece was something people had to see."

July 8, 2012

THEATER REVIEW

Murderer, King and Scot, All Rolled Into One Madman

By CHARLES ISHERWOOD

The title character's divided nature, torn between ambition and honor, blood lust and guilt, has been shattered into splinters in the new production of "Macbeth" at the Rose Theater. The charismatic Scottish actor [Alan Cumming](#) portrays not only the murderous general, but also every other major role in a reimaging of this classic tragedy as the frenzied outpourings of a diseased, disintegrating mind.

Although it is low on actors — Mr. Cumming shares the stage with only two performers, who mostly remain silent — this innovative production, directed by John Tiffany ("[Black Watch](#)," "[Once](#)") and Andrew Goldberg as part of [the Lincoln Center Festival](#), is plenty high on concept. Originally seen at the National Theater of Scotland, this stripped-down version of the play is set in a mental hospital, a drama of ambition and retribution becoming a feverish nightmare replayed, presumably forever, by a madman lost in a maze of language. The play's first line of dialogue — the witch's query "When shall we three meet again?" — is in this version also its last, as the limp, exhausted man onstage begins his elaborate ritual of self-torment anew.

In a wordless preamble Mr. Cumming shuffles onstage in the company of two actors clad as hospital attendants (Ali Craig and Myra McFadyen, who later speak some of the doctor's and the gentlewoman's lines from Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene). Looking disoriented and confused, Mr. Cumming stares vacantly around him — at the shining mint-green walls, the industrial-looking bath and sink — as he is stripped of bloodstained clothing that is carefully placed in evidence bags. Having collected forensic evidence of some unspecified violent crime from under his fingernails (a grisly, effective touch) and redressed him in formless hospital garb, these silent minders then march out of the room, to return only at occasional intervals to calm his hysterics with an injection, more often monitoring his behavior from a room looking down on the ward.

Many small roles have been excised, and the text has been trimmed to focus on the key points in the plot and the famous soliloquies — and to avoid too much back and forth between characters that might turn Mr. Cumming's performance into a gaudy split-personality turn. But the play's contours remain strongly enough defined that we can follow Mr. Cumming's shifts from role to role with little confusion. Or perhaps I should say little more confusion than is intended: being in the presence of a lunatic — even one so eloquently blessed with the gift of language — is surely meant to induce at least a little disorientation in the observer.

Three video screens above the stage also help clarify transitions in the dialogue. When Macbeth and Banquo first encounter the witches, for example, Mr. Cumming turns away from the audience and slides into a wide-legged crouch to deliver the witches' lines, while his face can be seen twisted into sly grimaces on the screens above. To distinguish his jaunty Banquo from Macbeth, Mr. Cumming fondles a red apple.

But mostly Mr. Cumming employs merely his voice and his nimble, sinewy body to transform himself from a preening, pompous King Duncan (a reading that rather departs from [Shakespeare's](#) noble figure); to an unusually neurotic, soft-spoken, hand-wringing Macbeth; to a lusty Lady Macbeth, first seen luxuriating in a

bath as she reads of her husband's strange encounter with the witches and his sudden ascension to the title of Thane of Cawdor.

A few hoary gothic touches notwithstanding — the creepy-looking doll occasionally used to represent Duncan's son Malcolm — the production is marvelously designed. The set by Merle Hensel has a soul-deadening, antiseptic air that might drive even the sanest of us just a little bonkers; the lighting, by Natasha Chivers, moves from harsh and clinical to flickery and shadow-strewn as the tragedy gains momentum and the central figures enter more deeply into its horrors; the complex video design by Ian William Galloway plays its own eerie tricks; and the music, by [Max Richter](#), is haunting and propulsive.

Of course the most audience-pleasing special effects all come courtesy of Mr. Cumming (a Tony winner for "Cabaret" in 1998). The scenes in which Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are at loggerheads — when he quails before the killing the king, only to be lashed into commitment by his wife's hissing contempt, or the banquet scene, in which she nervously tries to cover for his hysteria at the vision of Banquo's ghost — are natural tour-de-force moments that Mr. Cumming pulls off with juicy aplomb. He virtually makes love to himself during one of these fraught encounters, flipping between the lord and his lady with almost comical finesse.

Despite these and other flourishes, Mr. Cumming never does too much huffing and puffing to show how hard he's working. The performance has a smooth virtuosity that plays down the gimmickry and illuminates how Macbeth's mind is a tangled nest of both noble and evil impulses.

And yet the formidable dramatic power of this Shakespeare tragedy never emerges very strongly. Inevitably the conflicts that fuel the play — between Macbeth and his foes, Macbeth and his wife, Macbeth and the brutal fate his actions have brought about — feel muted by the one-man, many-voices concept. (As it happens, this is not the first solo "Macbeth" I've seen. I caught the British actor Stephen Dillane's simpler, more cerebral version in Los Angeles in 2004.)

More significant, Mr. Cumming never establishes the gravity and ferocity that Macbeth, Shakespeare's heroic villain, ultimately achieves. As the equivocal Macbeth of the early scenes, still susceptible to the dictates of honor, he is perfectly convincing. But the dead-hearted figure of the play's later scenes lacks the horrific majesty — or majestic horror — that gives the character such awful stature.

Mr. Cumming delivers the verse with lucidity and intelligence, and it is undeniably pleasing to hear the Scottish play performed with an authentic Scottish accent. But his rendering of Macbeth's culminating burst of pure nihilism — the "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" soliloquy — comes across more as a petulant screed than the brutal philosophy of a heart drained of every last drop of humanity.

The production holds our focus with its clever use of macabre devices to animate the drama: Mr. Cumming pulls from an evidence bag a small boy's sweater that is used piteously to symbolize the murder of Macduff's young son; and when he consults the witches to clarify their prophecies, he slowly disembowels a dead raven. And yet for all the sometimes grotesque imagery, and Mr. Cumming's visceral performance, on an emotional level this "Macbeth" never truly draws blood.

Macbeth

By William Shakespeare; directed by John Tiffany and Andrew Goldberg; sets and costumes by Merle Hensel; lighting by Natasha Chivers; sound by Fergus O'Hare; music by Max Richter; voice by Ros Steen; movement

director, Christine Devaney; video by Ian William Galloway. A National Theater of Scotland production, presented by the Lincoln Center Festival, Nigel Redden, director. At the Rose Theater, Frederick P. Rose Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, 60th Street and Broadway; (212) 721-6500, lincolncenterfestival.org. Through Saturday. Running time: 1 hour 45 minutes.

WITH: Alan Cumming, Ali Craig and Myra McFadyen.

The New York Times

July 8, 2012

Ernest Borgnine, Oscar-Winning Actor, Dies at 95

By ANITA GATES

Ernest Borgnine, the rough-hewn actor who seemed destined for tough-guy characters but won an Academy Award for embodying the gentlest of souls, a lonely Bronx butcher, in the 1955 film *“Marty,”* died on Sunday in Los Angeles. He was 95.

His death, at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, was announced by Harry Flynn, his longtime spokesman.

Mr. Borgnine, who later starred on *“McHale’s Navy”* on television, made his first memorable impression in films at age 37, appearing in *“From Here to Eternity”* (1953) as Fatso Judson, the sadistic stockade sergeant who beats Frank Sinatra’s character, Private Maggio, to death. But Paddy Chayefsky, who wrote *“Marty”* as a television play, and Delbert Mann, who directed it (it starred Rod Steiger), saw something beyond brutality in Mr. Borgnine and offered him the title role when it was made into a feature film.

The 1950s had emerged as the decade of the common man, with Willy Loman of *“Death of a Salesman”* on Broadway and the likes of the bus driver Ralph Kramden (*“The Honeymooners”*) and the factory worker Chester Riley (*“The Life of Riley”*) on television. Mr. Borgnine’s Marty Pilletti, a 34-year-old blue-collar bachelor who still lives with his mother, fit right in, showing the tender side of the average, unglamorous guy next door.

Marty’s awakening, as he unexpectedly falls in love, was described by Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times* as “a beautiful blend of the crude and the strangely gentle and sensitive in a monosyllabic man.”

Mr. Borgnine received the Oscar for best actor for *“Marty.”* For the same performance he also received a Golden Globe and awards from the New York Film Critics Circle, the National Board of Review and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

Mr. Borgnine won even wider fame as the star of the ABC sitcom *“McHale’s Navy”* (1962-66), originating the role of an irreverent con man of a PT boat skipper. (The cast also included a young Tim Conway.) He wrote in his autobiography, *“Ernie”* (Citadel Press, 2008), that he had turned down the role because he refused to do a television series but changed his mind when a boy came to his door selling candy and said, although he knew who James Arness of *“Gunsmoke”* and Richard Boone of *“Have Gun, Will Travel”* were, he had never heard of Ernest Borgnine.

Over a career that lasted more than six decades the burly, big-voiced Mr. Borgnine was never able to escape typecasting completely, at least in films. Although he did another Chayefsky screenplay, starring with Bette Davis as a working-class father of the bride in *“The Catered Affair”* (1956), and even appeared in a musical, *“The Best Things in Life Are Free”* (1956), playing a Broadway showman, the vast majority of the characters he played were villains.

Military roles continued to beckon. One of his best known was as Lee Marvin’s commanding officer in *“The Dirty Dozen”* (1967), about hardened prisoners on a World War II commando mission. He also starred in three television-movie sequels.

But he worked in virtually every genre. Filmmakers cast him as a gangster, even in satirical movies like *“Spike of Bensonhurst”* (1988). He was in westerns like Sam Peckinpah’s blood-soaked classic *“The Wild Bunch”* (1969)

and crime dramas like [“Bad Day at Black Rock”](#) (1955).

He played gruff police officers, like his character in the disaster blockbuster [“The Poseidon Adventure”](#) (1972), and bosses from hell, as in the horror movie [“Willard”](#) (1971). Twice he played a manager of gladiators, in [“Demetrius and the Gladiators”](#) (1954) and in the 1984 mini-series [“The Last Days of Pompeii.”](#)

Mr. Borgnine’s menacing features seemed to disappear when he flashed his trademark gapped-toothed smile, and later in life he began to find good-guy roles, like the helpful taxi driver in [“Escape From New York”](#) (1981) and the title role in [“A Grandpa for Christmas,”](#) a 2007 television movie.

“McHale’s Navy” and the 1964 film inspired by it were his most notable forays into comedy, but in 1999 he began doing the voice of a recurring character, the elderly ex-superhero Mermaidman, in the animated series [“SpongeBob SquarePants.”](#) He continued to play that role until last year.

He began his career on the stage but unlike many actors who had done the same, Mr. Borgnine professed to have no burning desire to return there. “Once you create a character for the stage, you become like a machine,” he told [The Washington Post](#) in 1969. In films, he said, “you’re always creating something new.”

Ernes Efron Borgnino was born on Jan. 24, 1917, in Hamden, Conn., near New Haven. His father was a railroad brakeman. His mother was said to be the daughter of a count, Paolo Boselli, an adviser to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

The boy spent several years of his childhood in Italy, where his mother returned during a long separation from her husband. But they returned to Connecticut, and he graduated from high school there.

He joined the Navy at 18 and served for 10 years. During World War II he was a gunner’s mate. After the war he considered factory jobs, but his mother suggested that he try acting. Her reasoning, he reported, was, “You’ve always liked making a damned fool of yourself.”

He studied at the Randall School of Drama in Hartford, then moved to Virginia, where he became a member of the Barter Theater in Abingdon and worked his way up from painting scenery to playing the Gentleman Caller in [“The Glass Menagerie.”](#)

In the late 1940s he headed for New York, where by 1952 he was appearing on Broadway as a bodyguard in the comic fantasy [“Mrs. McThing,”](#) starring Helen Hayes. He had already made his movie debut playing a Chinese shopkeeper in the 1951 adventure [“China Corsair.”](#)

Mr. Borgnine never retired from acting. In the 1980s he starred in another television series, the adventure drama [“Airwolf,”](#) playing a helicopter pilot. He took a supporting role as a bubbly doorman in the 1990s sitcom [“The Single Guy.”](#) His last film appearance was in [“The Man Who Shook the Hand of Vicente Fernandez,”](#) not yet released, in which he plays an elderly man who becomes a celebrity to Latino employees at the nursing home where he lives. On television, he was in the series finale of [“ER”](#) in 2009 and appeared in a cable film, [“Love’s Christmas Journey,”](#) last year.

His other films included [“The Vikings”](#) (1958); [“Ice Station Zebra”](#) (1968); [“Hoover”](#) (2000), in which he played J. Edgar Hoover; and [“Gattaca”](#) (1997).

Mr. Borgnine, who lived in Beverly Hills, was married five times. In 1949 he married Rhoda Kemins, whom he had met when they were both in the Navy. They had a daughter but divorced in 1958. On [New Year’s Eve](#) 1959 he

and the Mexican-born actress Katy Jurado were married; they divorced in 1962.

His third marriage was his most notorious because of its brevity. He and the Broadway musical star Ethel Merman married in late June 1964 but split up in early August. Mr. Borgnine later contended that Ms. Merman left because she was upset that on an international honeymoon trip he was recognized and she wasn't.

In 1965 he married Donna Rancourt; they had two children before divorcing in 1972. In 1973 he married for the fifth and last time, to Tova Traesnaes, who under the name Tova Borgnine became a cosmetics entrepreneur.

She survives him, as do his children, Christofer, Nancee and Sharon Borgnine; a stepson, David Johnson; six grandchildren; and his sister, Evelyn Verlardi.

Asked about his acting methods in 1973, Mr. Borgnine told The New York Times: "No Stanislavsky. I don't chart out the life histories of the people I play. If I did, I'd be in trouble. I work with my heart and my head, and naturally emotions follow."

Sometimes he prayed, he said, or just reflected on character-appropriate thoughts. "If none of that works," he added, "I think to myself of the money I'm making."

DAILY NEWS

July 9, 2012

NEW YORK TODAY

ON THE 'BROADWAY BEAT.' A memorial celebration will be held for Bradshaw Smith, cabaret singer and producer/videographer of the TV cable series "Broadway Beat." Among those speaking or performing will be Mario Cantone, Jamie deRoy, Karen Mason, Sidney Myer and Richard Ridge. 4 p.m. Free. Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. *Michael Menna*

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BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

SHOW DOGS

Their owners might be Broadway stars but these pooches take center stage

BY BARBARA HOFFMAN

THEY'VE been barking up the right alley for years. We speak of Broadway Barks!, the star-studded adopt-a-thon that fills Shubert Alley each summer with bright-eyed, frisky hopefuls — and the dogs and cats are cute, too! This year's edition meets July 14, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., with actors from nearly every show on Broadway coming out to introduce the animals; details at BroadwayBarks.com.

Every animal lover has a story. Here are four.

JOEL GREY (and Miguelito)



"I had had cats for about 20 years, and then, on a trip to Hal Prince's place in Europe, I met someone who had a long-haired Chihuahua. I'd always thought they were yappy, but this little guy was delightful!

"I went every week to these pet stores on Lexington Avenue and finally saw this little 2-month-old pup and thought, 'This is the one!' The owner said, 'Don't take him. He's not good enough for you — you should have a champion dog.' I said, 'Do me a favor. Let me out of here with this dog!'

"He was named after my father, Mickey Katz, who worked in an LA nightclub called Slapsie Maxie, where the performers got dressed in the kitchen. All the waiters were Spanish and called him Miguelito Katz!

"He's not the kind of dog you dress up. He's just a wonderful spirit. One morning when he was about 3 months old, he looked up at me and went 'Rolf!' I said, 'What was that?' He's never barked since. He's funny, he's sweet and stubborn — he has to smell every flower in the city and put his name on it. People say we look alike. I don't mind looking like him!"

Timothy White



BERNADETTE PETERS (and Stella)

"I named her Stella after 'A Streetcar Named Desire'—'Stel-la!' She was about 5 months old when my husband found her at a shelter. We'd already gotten our dog Kramer from the ASPCA and we were going to foster [Stella] after she came back from the vet. But when he brought her home I thought, 'I'm not going to give her away again.' So we kept her.

"I didn't know the breed. The American pit bull terrier used to be a family dog — they were called 'the nanny dog' — and Stella loves babies. When I had a party for 'A Little Night Music,' we put Stella in her crate, where she could see everything. Someone brought a baby, and she tried to kiss the baby through the wires! She has the biggest heart and soul, and that's what these dogs are really about. They stay with us during the hard times. They're called companions for a reason."

Carol Fonde

MARY TYLER MOORE (and Spanky)

"My housekeeper and friend, Anna, went looking for a blond cocker spaniel and found a black-and-white pit bull instead. The woman at the shelter said he was named Sparky, but I guess Anna didn't hear her well — she called him Spanky.

"It's been seven years now, and he's a very well-man-



nered dog, and a very good dinner guest. We were invited to a dinner party in Bermuda, and I said, 'We have our dog with us and don't have a sitter,' and they said 'Bring him along.'

Little did I know [he'd] end up sitting on a chair there!

"We have three other dogs, and he's the gentlest. Spanky's like, 'Hi, my name's Spanky. What's your name?' All the dogs are besotted with my husband. He's the one who gets up early in the morning, feeds them and lets them out. But they're fond of me, too!"

Eugene Gologursky/WireImage

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BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

**MICHAEL CERVERIS
(and Gibson)**

"It was 1994 and I went to the ASPCA looking for humane mouse traps. I'd always wanted a dog like the RCA dog, but I didn't think I was ready. I thought, 'Well, while I'm here, I'll take a look.' And there was a tiny version of the dog I imagined! She



Jenny Anderson
from Broadway.com

was 8 weeks old. I named her Gibson, for the guitar.

"They make you go through a whole application process and actually called my references, one of whom was my stage manager. They said, 'He's an actor. Is he financially stable enough?' And she said, 'Well, he's playing the lead

role in "Tommy" on Broadway. So, yes!"

"It was probably the single best decision I ever made. Gibson came to nearly every dressing room I was in. She traveled around the world with me. On my days off, I'd rent a car and drive off to the woods somewhere, to let her run ... She passed away in January, age 16½. I'm not sure I'm ready, but if I don't come home with a dog from Broadway Barks! this year, it will be a miracle."

July 8, 2012

what's **HOT** now!

20 looks, trends, sounds and sips that are steaming up the city this summer



STEAMY SCENE
Actors have been naked and done all kinds of naughty things onstage. But there's an incredibly steamy scene in "Cock," at the Duke on 42nd Street through Oct. 7, that manages to be utterly sexy without nudity and barely any touching. In fact, all the actors do is circle one another and describe what they're doing to one another. The effect is a dazzling turn-on. "Our culture associates sex with images, with nudity, or with looking at people's bodies," says actress Amanda Quaid. "Here the audience has to focus on sex through sound."

Cory Michael Smith and Amanda Quaid in "Cock."

Joan Marcus

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BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

DAILY NEWS

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GATECRASHER **FRANK DIGIACOMO** fdigiaco@nydailynews.com

LAUGHTER may be the best medicine, but it can be hell on prosthetic dentistry. We thought we'd seen it all until we read retired-dentist-turned-theater-critic **Stanley Greenberg's** review of the Off-Broadway hit "Old Jews Telling Jokes" in the Syosset-Jericho Tribune. After seeing the production at the Westside Theatre on June 27, Greenberg wrote that he and his wife saw an "old man looking forlornly under his chair." Asked by the critic what he was searching for, the man replied: "I lost my teeth, my dentures." According to Greenberg, the man had "laughed so hard that his teeth popped out of his mouth." Fortunately, an usher with a flashlight located the catapulted cuspids. A rep for the show confirms the incident.

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