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All In The Timing: Fourteen Plays



Synopsis

The world according to David Ives is a very odd place, and his plays constitute a virtual stress test of the English language -- and of the audience's capacity for disorientation and delight. Ives's characters plunge into black holes called "Philadelphias," where the simplest desires are hilariously thwarted. Chimps named Milton, Swift, and Kafka are locked in a room and made to re-create Hamlet. And a con man peddles courses in a dubious language in which "hello" translates as "velcro" and "fraud" comes out as "freud." At once enchanting and perplexing, incisively intelligent and side-splittingly funny, this original paperback edition of Ives's plays includes "Sure Thing," "Words, Words, Words," "The Universal Language," "Variations on the Death of Trotsky," "The Philadelphia," "Long Ago and Far Away," "Foreplay, or The Art of the Fugue," "Seven Menus," "Mere Mortals," "English Made Simple," "A Singular Kinda Guy," "Speed-the-Play," "Ancient History," and "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread."

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Customer Reviews

So what if Christopher Durang, Dorothy Parker and David Sedaris combined DNA? You just might get David Ives. Witty and cerebral, Ives comments on relationships, language and mortality in some of the cleverest one-acts to ever find their way into print. All the works have a Tom Stoppardian-esque command of the English language. Especially in "Foreplay, Or The Art of the Fugue" and "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread" is his impeccable command of ordering words into almost symphonic patterns best displayed. (Hey, it also helps to know a little about Philip Glass, who was a postmodern musical innovator and it is his musical phrasing Ives mimics in "...Buys A

Loaf...")Some of these plays deal with modern relationships. "Sure Thing" continually backtracks the forming of its 2 characters' relationship with each other by allowing them unlimited "re-dos" when they make a social or relational faux pas, until the "perfect" pattern for falling in love is found."Ancient History" is perhaps my favorite out of all the plays. It has two very real, very funny, very sympathetic romantic characters that will constantly remind you of yourself. Jack and Ruth argue, banter and raise issues we're all familiar with in a way that makes you laugh until you realize how sad it really is.Ives has no trouble taking fellow playwrights down a peg or two as well. "Speed-The-Play" requires an elementary knowledge of David Mamet to really appreciate how hilarious (and accurate) it is.All of the other pieces are wonderful and hilarious. "English Made Simple" and "Variations on the Death of Trotsky" were probably meant to be read anyway.

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