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## Reviews

# *The Bald Soprano*

Reviewed By: [Chris Kompanek](#) · Sep 26, 2011 · New York

Eugene Ionesco's masterful absurdist play, [\*The Bald Soprano\*](#) is as fresh as ever in Hal Brooks' spot-on production for the Pearl Theater Company, currently playing at City Center's Stage II.

As the play opens, we meet the Smiths (Bradford Cover and Rachel Botchan) who have just finished dinner and are relaxing in their living room. They speak to each other like strangers, recounting banal details and pausing awkwardly. This is also true of their friends the Martins (Brad Heberlee and Jolly Abraham) who arrive shortly afterwards.



Bradford Cover and Rachel Botchan  
in *The Bald Soprano*  
(© Jacob J. Goldberg)

While they wait for their hosts to greet them, the couple realize that despite looking very familiar, neither can remember who the other is. Through a series of questions, they discover that they do, in fact, share the same apartment and even the same bed.

Much of the dialogue appears completely illogical on the surface and needs a skilled director to tease out the humanity that abounds in the subtext, and Brooks pays close attention to the rhythm of the language which drives the play.

The work could even be divided into acts based on rhythmic structures: the fast and slow contrasts of cadence in the Smiths' opening exchange, the pitter-patter exchange of questions between the Martins, the Socratic inquiries regarding a mysterious doorbell, and finally, the climax of cascading non-sequiturs that floods the play's climax.

The piece is brought to life by the Pearl's wonderfully talented company of actors, who -- in addition to the four leading players -- includes founding member Robin Leslie Brown who plays Mary, the Smiths maid who has grown delirious through years of servitude,

and veteran member Dan Daily as the fire chief who's lost without his fires.

Harry Feiner's set echoes this discord with an austere and realistic living room that could be plucked right out of Norman Rockwell, except for the back wall, which appears to be more or less upside down. It's the perfect metaphor for this delightfully offbeat work.

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