

WAITING FOR WAITING FOR GODOT
for Santa Fe Playhouse Benchwarmers 2017
by Mark Friedman
Director and co-writer: Ron Bloomberg

Production Script 4a - FINAL
Run time approx. 15 minutes

THE BENCH is slightly Upstage Center
Two men enter. MERCATOR is older
than DONDE. Mercator is tall and thin
and formally dressed (black suit, white
shirt, dark tie, white handkerchief in
pocket). Donde is short, a little plump,
and dressed informally. Mercator enters
Up Left. Donde follows. They walk
straight Down Left and then turn
sideways toward the bench facing front
like they are moving down a row of seats
in a theater.

MERCATOR

This is a good row.

(turning to Donde)

Remember, Donde, in a theater, you don't want to be up too close and you don't
want to be too far back.

They move down the row.

MERCATOR

Let's sit here.

They sit on the bench not too close
together and stare at their programs.

MERCATOR

Hmmm...

They sit in silence, looking at their
programs, shifting in their seats. Donde
fiddles with his program and looks
around. He's never been in a theater
before. Adjust the length of the pause
here. Not too much, but just enough to
make the audience conscious of itself
waiting.

DONDE

When do you think it will start?

MERCATOR

It's supposed to start soon.

OK.

DONDE
(short pause)
Mercator, what's the play about?

Waiting.

MERCATOR

Waiting?

DONDE

MERCATOR
(sharply)
Yes, waiting. Waiting for Godot. That's the name of the play. What do you think it's about?

DONDE
I don't know. I guess I should have known that. Waiting, huh....
(Short pause)

DONDE
If they're waiting for Godot, what happens when he gets there?

MERCATOR
He never does.

DONDE
He never gets there?

MERCATOR
Right.

DONDE
So what happens in the play?

MERCATOR
Nothing.

DONDE
Nothing?

MERCATOR
They all wait around for Godot and he never comes. That's the play.

DONDE
We're going to watch a play where people wait around and nothing happens?

MERCATOR
Yes, that's right. It's existential.

Exi-what? DONDE

Existential. (to himself) MERCATOR

Exi-dental. DONDE

Idiot. Right. It's supposed to make you uncomfortable. Make you realize how meaningless your life is. MERCATOR

Do we have to watch it? DONDE

Yes, it's good for you. MERCATOR

Good for me? DONDE

Yes, it will make you a better person. MERCATOR

How? DONDE

It will help you see how bad your life really is. The reality of life is not obvious, you know. MERCATOR

No, I guess not. DONDE

You have to study it, Donde. MERCATOR
(fatherly)

OK. DONDE

People are always waiting. People's lives are always meaningless. Look at us. We're waiting. We're not happy about it. But we're waiting. That's what the play is about. MERCATOR

DONDE
(pause while Donde thinks.)

Mercator, I've always wanted to ask you something? What kind of name is Mercator?

MERCATOR

Mercator was a famous map maker. It's geography. My mother wanted me to know exactly where I was at all times. (to himself) It's a good thing Google Maps wasn't around. She would have called me Google.

(laughs then catches himself, pause)

How did you end up with a name like Donde?

DONDE

My mother was real sick when she had me. When she woke up after I was born the first thing she said was, "Where am I?" The nurses started calling me Donde.

(pause)

Do you realize that there's no one else here.

MERCATOR

Yes, we seem to be the only ones.

DONDE

It's supposed to start by now, right?

MERCATOR

Yes.

DONDE

Why isn't anyone else here?

MERCATOR

Maybe they're waiting for more people before they start.

DONDE

Oh.

MERCATOR

You can't have a play with just two people in the audience, now could you?

DONDE

No, I guess not.

MERCATOR

Well that's right. So we'll have to wait for more people to come. Then they'll start.

DONDE

OK.

(pause while Donde thinks)

So what do you want to talk about?

MERCATOR

(sharp)

Oh relax.

(pause while Donde thinks)

DONDE

I don't think my life is meaningless. I like my job. And I had a date with Ramona last week.

MERCATOR

You had a date?

DONDE

Yes, it was a good date too. We went to a movie and actually held hands. I think I love her, Mercator.

MERCATOR

What movie did you see?

DONDE

Wonder Woman.

MERCATOR

Well, there you go.

DONDE

What?

MERCATOR

It's dark. You're sitting next to her. Holding hands. Subconsciously you're projecting the Wonder Woman images on the screen onto Ramona. So in reality you didn't fall in love with Ramona. You fell in love with Wonder Woman.

DONDE

Gee. I'm glad we didn't see Planet of the Apes.

There is a noise Off Stage Right like someone dropping a prop or a broom falling over.

Did you hear that noise?

MERCATOR

Yes.

DONDE

Maybe they're getting ready to start.

MERCATOR

Maybe.

They both stare expectantly at the stage for several beats. Donde starts to fidget.

DONDE

This play is never going to start. And even if it does, it doesn't sound like that much fun. Why did we come to see it?

MERCATOR

We had to see it. It's a great play. If you want to understand your life you have to experience art. This play is great art.

DONDE

Like paintings?

MERCATOR

Yes, paintings are art. But theater is art too. And music and sculpture. They're all art. You see, artists are better people than we are because they see life for what it really is. And then they teach us what they learned. That's what art is all about.

DONDE

Why don't they just write it down so we can read it? If they figured out something that's important, why don't they just write it down?

MERCATOR

Well they do. That's why the play is written down.

DONDE

No it's not. You have to sit here and watch it. If you could just read it then people wouldn't have to come to the theater. That would be a waste of time.

MERCATOR

Art is never a waste of time. If you want to be better than other people, you have to pay attention to art. You have to like it.

DONDE

What if I don't like it?

MERCATOR

Well you have to.

(pause)

DONDE

I want to go. This is boring.

MERCATOR

You can't go. They're going to do an important play. We paid for these tickets. You have to stay.

DONDE

But it's boring just sitting here. I don't think they're going to do the play. There aren't enough people. You said so.

MERCATOR

Yes, but they have to do the play. Theater people don't just cancel shows.

DONDE

But it will be embarrassing if we're the only people in the audience. What if we don't like it? We'd be stuck here. We couldn't leave. That would be terrible.

MERCATOR

Oh stop fussing and be quiet. More people will come and it will start any time now.

DONDE

OK.

(pause)

I don't think I like art.

MERCATOR

(practically explodes)

You don't like art! How can you say that?

DONDE

Well some of it's pretty and that's alright. And movies are good. But this kind of art just isn't any fun.

MERCATOR

Oh you have something better to do?

DONDE

Well, we could go to a movie, or we could walk down to the river.

(pause)

We could get some ice cream!

MERCATOR

It's too cold for ice cream.

DONDE

Yes, but we could get some anyway.

MERCATOR

How are you going to enjoy the play if you're thinking about ice cream?

DONDE

I don't know. I guess I can't learn anything if I'm enjoying myself, right?

MERCATOR

Right.

DONDE

Maybe we could get ice cream later.

MERCATOR

We'll see.

After a brief pause, there is the sound of an argument off stage.

OFFSTAGE VOICE 1

You expect me to go out there with just two people in the audience? Two!

OFFSTAGE VOICE 2 (MANAGER)

Look, calm down. Just think about it as another rehearsal.

OFFSTAGE VOICE 1

You're crazy. This is embarrassing. I won't do it.

Sound of door slamming.

**OFFSTAGE VOICE 2 (MANAGER)
(shouting)**

Yes, you will!

DONDE

I think they're ready.

MERCATOR

No they're not. They're arguing.

DONDE

Yes, but maybe that's how actors get ready. They argue.

Mercator just stares at him.

MERCATOR

We'll wait here as long as it takes. We bought tickets. It's a great play and I want to see it. They have to do it.

Donde stands up.

DONDE

Mercator, let's go.

Mercator pulls him back into the seat.

MERCATOR

No I'm staying right here in this seat until they show me the play.

DONDE

I'm tired of waiting.

MERCATOR

Waiting is good for you.

DONDE

Waiting is good for me?

MERCATOR

Yes, waiting, art, suffering. It's all the same. It builds character. If you build enough character, you become a great person. Don't you want to be a great person, Donde?

DONDE
(defeated)

OK

(pause)

I'm going.

Donde stands up again.

MERCATOR

No, you're not. You can't leave me here as the only person. Then they really will cancel the show and it will be all your fault.

DONDE

I don't care. I'm going.

Donde moves down the aisle out of reach of Mercator.

MERCATOR

(loud whisper trying not to shout)

You're not going! Get back here!

DONDE

I'm going to get some ice cream. Do you want to come?

MERCATOR

(in a rage, shouting)

NO! No ICE CREAM!

DONDE

I'll see you later, Mercator.

MERCATOR

(loud whisper again)

Donde, if you don't get back here, I'll....

DONDE

(with some innocence)

You'll what?

MERCATOR

I'll stop being your friend.

DONDE

(hesitates, worried for a second)

No you won't, Mercator. You'll always be my friend. I'm going to get some ice cream. I'll wait for you down by the river.

Donde exits quickly the way they came in.
Mercator calls after him

MERCATOR

(shouting)

Donde!

No response. Mercator looks around, self consciously, and sits down. He looks at the program. He starts to hum absent mindedly. There's another sound backstage. After another pause a man enters from DR holding a ring of keys.

THEATER MANAGER

Boy, you guys have been making a racket out here.

MERCATOR

Who are you?

MANAGER

I'm the manager. Where'd your friend go?

MERCATOR

I don't know. He went to get ice cream.

OFFSTAGE VOICE 1

(shouting)

Just one person in the audience now!!

MANAGER

(turning to the offstage voice, exasperated, shouting)

Oh, will you shut up already!

(back to Mercator)

Actors!! Look. I don't know what the hell I'm going to do with these people. We have to cancel the show.

MERCATOR

(disbelief)

The show is cancelled?

MANAGER

Yeah, You should have gone to see Cats.

MERCATOR

But I was really looking forward to seeing this show.

MANAGER

You and me both. Maybe you can come another time. But we're not doing the show tonight.

MERCATOR

Well.

(pause)

OK.

(pause)

Is it OK if I sit here for a minute?

MANAGER

OK, just one minute. I have to lock up.

Manager exits DR. (pause)

Mercator is agitated, disappointed and confused. He gets up. He sits down. He sighs loudly, puts his head in his hands. Sits up. Looks at the play program again and slams it down on the bench.

GODOT rushes in. Dressed in casual clothes but wears an outer garment that looks like rags sewn together.

GODOT

OK. I'm here. You wouldn't believe the traffic. Where is everyone? You mean they didn't wait for me? I'll be damned. You are the only one who waited for me?

MERCATOR

(thinks Godot is just a late audience member)

I was waiting for the play but it's been cancelled. You're too late.

GODOT

That's what I always worry about. I'll be too late.

But they were here weren't they? You saw them didn't you? Not the best representation of humanity I admit, but they needed me. That's why they waited. And I never showed up. Well it just shows that their expectations were too high. And I am clearly unreliable.

Next time let them wait for someone else. I'm really sick of this.

MERCATOR

Who are you?

GODOT

Who am I? Are you serious. I'm the one they were waiting for.

MERCATOR
(skeptical)

You're Godot?

GODOT
(puts out his hand)

Gertrude Godot. You can call me Gertie. Pleasure to meet you.

MERCATOR
(still thinks she's just a late audience member)

Well, Gertie whoever you are. I was just leaving. The manager will come and throw you out too.

GODOT

The manager? Hah! You mean the guy with the keys? He works for me. Everyone works for me. Even you work for me. I've suspended time anyway. Gods can take all the time they want.

MERCATOR

What are you talking about? You think you're some kind of god?

GODOT

Yes. God. Godot. God bless. God damn. Godforsaken. Godspell and God-zilla. That's what they were waiting for. The boss, the one in charge, the one who can fix all this crap in your lives. And boy have you all screwed it up. Take you for example.

MERCATOR

Me?

GODOT

Yes, you. Who's going to fix your life?

MERCATOR

My life, madam, requires no fixing.

GODOT

Are you kidding? You're so afraid of being a failure, you act like a pompous twit. Well it's not working. You're uptight. You're not enjoying life. Look. As evidence I present the fact that you came to see this play tonight. Anyone who has nothing better to do than watch this play is in serious trouble. And you're one of them.

MERCATOR

YOU are the one they were waiting for? So you could tell them they're just one big pathetic mess and there's nothing you can do about it. And they have to fix it themselves. I bet they won't be waiting for you again any time soon.

GODOT

**No. No. No. It's not that bad, really. I have some good things to say too,
(quietly)
if I could remember what they are.**

(pause)

Come sit here with me and I'll tell you.

Mercator is somewhat deflated by Godot's dressing down. He is gradually coming under Godot's spell. Godot sits in the middle of the bench. Mercator reluctantly sits as far away as possible.

The problems are simple. The solutions never are. But here's a start. Relax your shoulders. Come on. You can do it.

Mercator tries to let down his shoulders.

Do some stretching. Walk around the block and just look at everything. Without judgment. And don't forget what your mother told you. "Remember where you are at all times."

MERCATOR

You know what my mother told me?

GODOT

I'm a God. It comes with the territory.

MERCATOR

You really are a God!

GODOT

Yes I really am a God.

MERCATOR

Okay Ms. God. I'm having kind of a bad day. I could really use a miracle about now.

GODOT

Alright Mr. Geography. You want the deluxe miracle or the discount one.

MERCATOR

The deluxe one.

GODOT

Come here next to me.

**When Mercator doesn't move,
Godot slides down, puts right arm
around his shoulder and pulls him
tight. Mercator resists slightly but
is also drawn to Godot.**

Alright now, just relax. Here we go. Watch this!

**Godot pulls Mercator close to him
holds up her/his right arm. They
both stare at it. Hold the pose.
Godot snaps her fingers.**

Blackout.

END

Curtain call.

**Donde enters with a (fake) ice
cream cone.**

