

Ives, David "The Universal
Languages" in All in the Timing 0098-1

The Universal Language received its premiere at Primary Stages (Casey Childs, artistic director) in New York City in December 1993. It was directed by Jason McConnell Buzas; the set design was by Bruce Goodrich; costume design was by Sharon Lynch; lighting design was by Deborah Constantine. The cast was as follows:

DAWN Wendy Lawless
DON Robert Stanton
YOUNG MAN Ted Neustadt

~~A small rented office set up as a classroom. There is a door to the outside at right, another door at left. In the room are a battered desk; a row of three old chairs; and a blackboard on which is written, in large letters, "HE, SHE, IT" and below that, "ARF." Around the top of the walls is a set of numerals, one to eight, but instead of being identified in English ("ONE, TWO, THREE," etc.) we read "WEN, YÜ, FRE, FAL, FYND, IFF, HEVEN, WAITZ."~~

~~At lights up, no one is onstage. We hear a quiet knock at the door right, and it opens to reveal DAWN, late twenties, plainly dressed, with a stutter.~~

~~DAWN: H-h-h-h-hello . . . ? (She steps in quietly.) Hello? Is any-
b-b-body here? (No response. She sees the blackboard, reads.)
"He. She. X. Arf." (She notices the numbers around the
walls, and reads.) "Wen—yü—fre—fal—fynd—iff—seven
—waitz." (Noticing the empty chairs, she practices her
greeting, as if there were people sitting in them.) Hello, my name
is Dawn. It's very nice to meet you. How do you do, my
name is Dawn. A pleasure to meet you. Hello. My name is
Dawn.~~

~~(The door at left opens and DON appears, about thirty, in lab coat and
glasses.)~~

~~DON: Velcro! [Welcome!]~~

~~DAWN: Excuse me?~~

~~DON: Velcro! Bell jar, Froyling! Harvardyu? [Welcome. Good
day, Miss. How are you?]~~

~~DAWN: H-h-h-how do you d-d-d-do, my n-n-name is—
(Breaks off.) I'm sorry. (She turns to go.)~~

~~DON: Oop, oop, oop! Varta, Froyling! Varta! Varta! [No, no, no!
Wait, Miss! Wait!]~~

DAWN: I'm v-very sorry to b-b-bother you.

DON: Mock—*klahtoo boddami niktō! Ventrica! Ventrica, ventrica. Police!* [But—you're not bothering me at all! Enter! Please.]

DAWN: Really—I think I have the wrong place.

DON: Da rrrroongplatz? Oop da-doll! Du doppa da rekplatz! Da-meetcha playzeer. Comintern. Police. Plop da chah. [The wrong place? Not at all! You have the right place. Pleased to meet you. Come in. Please. Have a seat.]

DAWN: Well, J-just for a second.

DON (*cleaning up papers on the floor*): Squeegie la mezza. [Excuse the mess.] (*He points to a chair.*) Zitz?

DAWN: No thank you. (*She sits.*)

DON: Argo. [So.] Bell jar, Froyling. Harvardyu?

DAWN: "Bell jar"?

DON: Bell jar. Bell. Jar. Belljar!

DAWN: Is that "good day"?

DON: Ding! [Yes.] "Bell jar" arf "good day." Epp— [And.] Harvardyu?

DAWN: Harvard University?

DON: Oop! [No.] Harvardyu?

DAWN: Howard Hughes?

DON: Oop. Harvardyu?

DAWN: Oh! "How are you."

DON: Bleeeny, bleeeny! Bonanza bleeeny! [Good, good, very good.]

DAWN: Is this Thirty East Seventh?

DON: Thirty oyster heventh. Ding. [Thirty East Seventh. Yes.]

DAWN: Suite 662?

DON: If-iff-yü. Anchor ding. [Six-six-two. Right again.]

DAWN: Room B?

DON: Rambeau.

DAWN: The School of Unamunda?

DON: Hets aff dada Unamunda Kaku-daymee. [This is the School of Unamunda.] Epp vot kennedy doopferyu? [And what can I do for you?]

DAWN: Excuse me . . . ?

DON: Vot. Kennedy. Doopferyu?

DAWN: Well, I s-saw an ad in the n-newspaper.

DON: Video da klip enda peeper? Epp? Knish?

DAWN: Well it says— (*She takes a newspaper clipping out of her purse. Reads.*) "Learn Unamunda, the universal language."

DON: "Lick Unamunda, da linkwa looniversahl!" (*A banner unfurls which says just that. Accent on "sahl," by the way.*)

DAWN: "The language that will unite all humankind."

DON: "Da linkwa het barf oonidevairsify alla da peepholes enda vooold!" (*DAWN raises her hand.*) Quisling?

DAWN: Do you speak English?

DON: "English" . . . ?

DAWN: English.

DON: Ah! Johndeese!

DAWN: Yes. Johndeese.

DON: Johndeese. Squeegie, squeegie. Alaska, iago parladoop johndeese. [Sorry. Unfortunately, I don't speak English.]

- DON: Froyling di Vito . . .
- DAWN: I'll pay. Iago pago.
- DON: Froyling, arf mangley, mangley deep-fecountries. [There are many, many difficulties.]
- DAWN: I'll work very hard.
- DON: Deep-fekal, Froyling.
- DAWN: I understand P-p-please?
- DON: Eff/du scoop.
- DAWN: "Scoop" means "want"?
- DON: Ding.
- DAWN: Then I scoop. Moooohko.
- DON: Donutsyev, deedeena vanya. [Don't say I didn't warn you.] Dollripe-chus, Boggle da zitzbells. Arf raddy? [All right. Buckle your/seatbelts. Are you ready?]
- DAWN: Yes. I'm raddy.
- DON: Raza la tabboli. Kotsenitreen. Lax da hoover, lax da hoover. Epp echo mi. [Clear your mind. Concentrate. Relax your mouth. And repeat after me.] *(Picks up a pointer.)* Shtick.
- DAWN: Shuck.
- DON *(pointing to himself)*: Ya.
- DAWN: Ya.
- DON *(points to her)*: Du.
- DAWN: Du.
- DON *(points to "HE" on the blackboard)*: En.
- DAWN: Du.

- DON: Ogh!
- DAWN: I'm sorry. Squeegies.
- DON: Video da probleyma?
- DAWN: Let me begin again, Mr. Finninneganan. You see? I said your name. I must be getting b-b-b-better.
- DON: Okeefenoch-kee. Parla, prentice: Ya.
- DAWN: Ya.
- DON: Du.
- DAWN: Du.
- DON: En.
- DAWN: En.
- DON *(points to "SHE" on the blackboard)*: Dee.
- DAWN: Dee.
- DON *(points to "IT")*: Da.
- DAWN: Da.
- DON *("WE")*: Wop.
- DAWN: Wop.
- DON *("YOU")*: Doobly.
- DAWN: Doobly.
- DON *("THEY")*: Day.
- DAWN: Day.
- DON: Du badabba?
- DAWN: Ya badabba du!
- DON: Testicle. [Test.]
- DAWN: Al dente? [Already?]

DON: Shmal testicle. Epp—alla togandhi. [Small test. And—all together.]

DAWN (as he points to 'I, YOU, WE, HE, YOU, THEY'): Ya du wop en doobly day.

DON AND DAWN (DON points to her, then "IT"): Doo da! Doo da!

DAWN (sings from "Campiour ladies sing this song"): Ya du wop en doobly day—

DON AND DAWN (sing together): Arf da doo-dah day!

DON: Bleeeny, bleeeny, bonanza bleeeny!

DAWN: Riddly-dee?

DON: Indeedly-dee. (DAWN raises her hand.) Quisling?

DAWN: How do you say "how-do-you-say"?

DON: Howardjohnson.

DAWN: Howardjohnson "to have"?

DON: Doppa.

DAWN: So— (Indicating ~~HE, YOU, SHE.~~) En doppa, du doppa, dee doppa.

DON: Ding.

DAWN (*faster*): En doppa, du doppa, dee doppa.

DON: Ding!

DAWN (*faster still, swinging it*): En doppa, du doppa, dee doppa—day! [They.]

DON: Bleeeny con cavyar! Scoop da gwan? [Want to go on?]

DAWN: Ya scoop if du do.

DON: Dopppe scoop! (Points left.) Eedon.

DAWN: Hedon.

DON (pointing right): Ged.

DAWN: Ged.

DON (pointing up): Enro.

DAWN: Enro.

DON (pointing down): Rok.

DAWN: Rok.

DON (right): Ged.

DAWN: Ged.

DON (up): Enro.

DAWN: Enro.

DON (left): Eedon.

DAWN: Eedon.

DON (down): Rok.

DAWN: Rok.

DON: Argo . . .

DON AND DAWN: Ged eedon rok enro, ged eedon rok enro! [Get it on, rock and roll, get it on, rock and roll!]

DON: Krakajak!

DAWN: Veroushka?

DON: Veroushka, baboushka.

DAWN: This is fun!

DON: Dinksdu diss is flan? [You think *this* is fun?]

DAWN: Flantastico!

DON: Ives-ing onda kick. [Icing on the cake.] (He holds out his hand.) Di anda.

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