

Directing *Godot Has Come*

K. Kiyama, Director

Minoru Betsuyaku, stimulated by Beckett's work in the 1960s, has written more than 130 plays up until now. He is the leading Japanese playwright who established the Theatre of Absurd in Japan and had a great influence on writers and directors following him.

When his *Godot Has Come* was premiered in 2007 in Tokyo, it had an extraordinary impact on Japanese theatre world. Who could imagine that Godot would appear in person? The play, hinted by Beckett's masterpiece *Waiting for Godot* and set in the climate of Japan, reveals the present condition of Japan. In the presence of Godot, nobody cares and people just act as if they were not waiting for him. They are not surprised to see him and don't even acknowledge him. What we see here is a chilling sight of recent Japan where many people are isolated with little consideration for other people. Betsuyaku does not express hope or dream much but a heartrending romanticism is hidden in the depth of his work. His poetic lyricism gradually rises up before us.

I as a director imbued the play with an ambiguous Japanese atmosphere that spares judgment on black and white, cherishing Betsuyaku's artful, inimitable, dry language. The aim of my mise-en-scene is to make clear the distance between each isolated character in the play, arranging ten independent characters in the right place on the Zen-like stage with minimum set -- a telephone pole, a desk, a bus stop, and a bench. As the play is filled with comic scenes like contes, I wonder how people in Europe will receive his sense of humor cultivated in our culture. The play's success owes much to the audience's response. My hope is that my work will arouse their sympathy with Betsuyaku's characters who go on their lives even in desperate circumstances, and that the audience themselves will find a strong will to live in any difficult situation....

I will make efforts to create arhythmical and beautiful stage performance. I hope everyone watching my work will have a wonderful time, feeling relaxed.