



from the director

I chose "The Sandbox" early on in the year as part of a thematic exploration of absurdity with my theater students. We were working with movement and characterization contrasted with minimalist props. Albee, one of the world's best known writers of theater of the absurd, crafted this short play in memory of his grandma. Ironically, after having chosen the play I too lost a grandma. It was unexpected and very difficult for me as she was such a dear friend as well as a special grandma. My initial reaction was to ditch the play as it deals with the death of a grandmother in a humorous way. Am I allowed to laugh, I kept asking myself? I pictured myself at the cemetery, watching my dad with the box of my gram's ashes in his hand, and hearing his voice, "I'm putting my mom to rest now, next to my dad." Tears. That's all that seemed appropriate for the moment. But then, back at the house, after many more tears, we began to talk about my gram—about her unforgettable laugh, her desire to have fun, and bright personality. We laughed about the time she went berry picking and cut her legs up so bad she looked like she had been attacked by a wild animal. We laughed about the time she didn't want to hurt a neighbor's feelings who was the worst cook in the world, and so she slipped the disgusting pancakes off the plate and into her old shoes under the table. We laughed about her losing her Christmas tree out the back of the car on the main road of the city. And about her smile, and about her love, and about her life, we laughed. And do you know what? It was ok. That's what Albee reminds us of in this play. The absurdity of life is that when you step back, all we know is that we will all one day end up dying, end up at "the beach" of life, end up in "the sandbox." And we will, as society has trained us, send flowers and cards, wear mourning colors, cry, and do "our duty," or whatever it is we are supposed to do. But then we will continue to live because we must. And we will share our grandmothers' spirit, memories, and laughs because we should. We will keep her alive with us forever because we love her. So, I dedicate this evening of laughter to my Grandma Snow. I'll smile and laugh, Grams, till the day I can be up there with you, and we can laugh face to face.