

20TH ANNIVERSARY: ANNUAL FRENCH PLAY AT WHITTIER COLLEGE

On October 28, 2016, about 315 Francophiles of all ages came to Whittier College (CA) to see one of the most celebrated and studied existentialist plays, *Huis Clos* by Jean-Paul Sartre, performed by Compagnie Caravague in celebration of National French Week 2016. The event marked the 20th anniversary of this annual gathering of Francophiles from the greater Los Angeles at Whittier College!

Huis Clos was beautifully executed by a talented cast: André Nerman, who also directed the play with the assistance of Stéphanie Laurent, played the role of Garcin alongside Raphaëlle Cambray as Inès, and Charlotte Baglan as Estelle. Pascal Germain interpreted the Garçon with a recording of his voice. The audience was mainly composed of high school and college students. It was clear that many teachers had spent time in their classes to prepare their students for the show. Students in our elementary French classes did oral presentations, answering sets of questions meant to ease their understanding of the play and to foster their appreciation of its philosophical underpinning. I shared these sets of questions with colleagues whose students were coming to the play.

This existentialist one-act play was broadly advertised by the office of French Cultural Service in Los Angeles., on the Southern California AATF Chapter website, the Whittier College website, as well as my own. I also reached out to many colleagues in the Los Angeles area. Sponsors helped keep the cost of the play accessible to students: the AATF and the Chapter, the Dept. of Modern Languages & Literatures, and the Ruth B. Center for the Performing Arts at Whittier College. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the groups mentioned above for their enthusiasm and support for this event. Finally, un immense merci to the audience that attended this Francophile gathering and celebration!

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