David Cale/MATRIX 98
January 17, 1988

David Cale in The Redthroats, 1986
Photo: Paula Court

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The Redthroats
(1986)
Written and performed by David Cale

Sunday, January 17, 1988
Two performances, 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Avery Theater
Wadsworth Atheneum

Prologue: The Redthroats

Part I: The Weirds  Steven age 11
Part II: Swagger  Steven at age 16
Part III: Welcome to America  Steven at age 20

There will be no intermission.

Acknowledgements

"GET HAPPY" (Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler), Courtesy of Warner Brothers Music; "SWANEE" (G. Gershwin/I. Caesar), Courtesy of Warner Brothers Music; "THE TROLLEY SONG" (Hugh Martin/Ralph Blane), Courtesy of Robbins Music; "HERE COME COWBOYS" (Richard Butler/Tim Butler), Courtesy of Blackwood Music Inc.; "DAS SANGTE" (Roedelius/Uittenbogaard), Courtesy of E. G. Music Ltd.; "THE RETURN" (Ennio Morricone), Courtesy of Famous Music Corporation

Lighting Design  Production Manager
Carol McDowell  Sabrina Hamilton

Presented by special arrangement with World of Culture, Ltd.
Mark Hall Amitin, Executive Director

The Redthroats was originally presented at Performance Space 122 in New York City, May 1986.

These performances are co-sponsored by the Wadsworth Atheneum's Membership Department, under the direction of Anne Mayo. Special thanks for assistance with the stage production to Paul Bartlett, Tom Walker, Jill McNulty and Sabrina Hamilton.
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In his four-part monologue, The Redthroats, David Cale introduces the audience to the aspirations and disappointments of the Weird family. The name suggests that the family was conceived by Cale in cartoon style. They do live up to their name. The suppressed and compliant Mr. Weird's only joy is his collection of "sparkling wines of the world." He also plods through pornographic magazines behind closed doors. Mrs. Weird laments, "Other people's families aren't like this family. Why can't I have a family like other people? Why can't I have a lovely home like other people?"

Meanwhile, young Steven, their son, retreats to his room to dream of becoming a "legend" like Judy Garland, and his two male canaries "Judy" and "Liza" add birdseed litter to his mother's list of woes.

David Cale presents himself as a storyteller, wearing street clothes, no props, sitting on a single chair on a bare stage. Cale draws his various characters so astutely that The Redthroats joins an important body of post-war literature in which British playwrights, novelists and comedians have explored the pain and distress (laced often with comic relief) of life in England's industrial North. The Weird family co-habit a conspiracy of mutual disheartenment, each member lonely, isolated and frightened.

Cale's text is selective and sparse, combining social satire with an unusual tenderness and a keen sense of the absurd. Says Cale, "I've been very excited by Luis Buñuel's movies, in which it is often unclear what is a dream and what isn't. In my monologues I often use my own dreams, but since I feel I'm not interesting enough, I tamper with them."
The Redthroats is the tale of a young man's coming of age in which the motto is, "Reality is something you rise above."
David Cale in *The Redthroats*, 1986
Photo: Paula Court

It is Cale's achievement that we are fully engaged in the complex drama of the Weird family even as we simultaneously marvel at the remarkable performance of Cale himself, his timing, his quick transitions, his many voices, his many faces. Says Cale, "I've never stopped working on my own delivery. . . . Now I'm trying more and more to explore the range of my voice by pitching it at different registers, and as I do I'm finding that there are little characters in there."

David Cale was born in Luton, England (near London), worked backstage with the children who performed in *Annie* and prepared for his flight to the United States, when he was twenty, by seeing Woody Allen's *Manhattan* three days in a row. *The Redthroats* is not, strictly speaking, an autobiographical piece. The critical issue of Steven's survival, however, finds an eerie but heart-warming affirmation in the genius and vigor of Cale's own self-assured performance.

Andrea Miller-Keller
*Curator of Contemporary Art*
David Cale began his career as a singer with various rock bands in England and singing solo in pubs. In 1979 he moved from London to New York. He then started writing his own songs, subsequently performing the words of the songs as monologues. Between 1983 and 1986 he performed his monologues extensively in New York at venues including Franklin Furnace, The Bottom Line, Cooper Union and the Bandshell in Central Park. During this period he received several awards including a 1986 Artist-in-Residence grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. His first full length solo show, The Redthroats, was presented in 1986 at Performance Space 122. For The Redthroats he received a Bessie Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement.

His second show, Smooch Music, written in collaboration with composer Roy Nathanson, and performed with a three piece jazz band, was presented in the spring of 1987 at The Kitchen and then in Boston at The Institute of Contemporary Art. A portion of Smooch Music has been recorded for the LP, The Uproar Tapes on Island Records.

In the summer of 1987, The Redthroats re-opened Off Broadway for a six week run at The Second State. David Cale made his film debut in Woody Allen's Radio Days and will be seen in the forthcoming Moon over Parador directed by Paul Mazursky. The texts of both The Redthroats and Smooch Music are to be published in the fall of 1988 by Random House, and in February 1988 The Redthroats will be presented in Los Angeles by the Mark Taper Forum.

Most recently, Cale completed the filming of his solo, Welcome to America for an HBO Special with Bette Midler.

Carol McDowell (Lighting Design) Carol McDowell's lighting credits include David Cale's The Redthroats and Smooch Music, lighting for Richard Elovich, Karen Finley, Fred Holland, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Hugo Largo, Yvonne Meier and Pooh Kaye's Eccentric Motions. She has designed for numerous theaters in New York, Europe, Israel and Japan. In 1985, Carol received a Bessie Award for her lighting design of John Berends Be Good to Me. Her own dance/performance works have been presented by P.S. 122, BACA, St. Mark's Church and the Dance Theatre Workshop. She has just returned from a European Tour.
Sabrina Hamilton (Production Manager) Sabrina Hamilton has worked extensively with Mabou Mines as lighting designer, set designer, assistant director, and production manager. Other credits include work with Meredith Monk, Ping Chong, Joseph Chaikin, Playwrights Horizons, the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Performing Garage, Theatre for the New City, the Baltimore and San Francisco International Theatre Festivals and six years as Route Lighting Designer for New York's Village Halloween Parade. Her international credits include work in Bologna, Florence, Milan, Granada, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Most recently she has been in Boston directing Saturday Night Special, in London lighting The Dead and Strokes of Genius, and in Hartford lighting Seascape for Lincoln Theater.

Mark Hall Amitin (Manager) is Executive Director of World of Culture, Ltd., which, in addition to Mr. Cale, represents such artists as Eszter Balint, Steve Buscemi, Judith Malina, Shirley Stoler, Evanly Shin, Jean-Claude van Italie, and Tony and Emmy Award winning designer Franne Lee, among others. He has previously managed and produced Edward Albee, the late Julian Beck, Joseph Chaikin, John Lahr, Andre Gregory, Spalding Gray, theatre and dance companies such as Pilobolus, Squat Theatre, Mabou Mines, The Living Theatre and the Open Theatre. He holds a Ph.D. in theatre from the Université Paris (Sorbonne), where he was a guest lecturer from 1975-1977. Amitin has lectured on theatre at over 150 universities, including Yale, Brown, Columbia, and the Drama Institute of Shanghai and Beijing. His archives are housed at the University of California.
Selected Bibliography about Cale:


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David Cale in The Redthroats, 1986
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