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Vessel and Nation: Company SJ's Beckett in the City, The Women Speak

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Abstract:
Vessel and Nation:
Company SJ's *Beckett in the City, The Women Speak*

In her 2015 production *Beckett in the City: The Women Speak*, Sarah Jane Scaife forced a reconciliation between the abstracted spaces of Beckett's later drama and the specifically Irish site she chose for this performance. This multiple billing of Beckett's *Not I*, *Footfalls*, *Rockaby* and *Come and Go* showed how performance can reveal traces and remnants of a cultural past, dim echoes, in particular in this case of the ways in which feminine identity and the female body have been imagined – and obscured – in Ireland. Utilising feminist critiques of the ways in which female embodiment has been imagined in relation to space and place and important recent scholarship on Ireland's 'architectures of containment' (Smith 2007), this article argues that Scaife's production highlights the often unsettled relationship the women of these plays have with the space around them, something that the audience for these pieces cannot help but share, and demands that we 'hear' through Beckett's texts the voices of the silenced women of Ireland's past.