

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I first encountered *Death and the Maiden* when a programme for it landed on my desk at the Arts Council. Reproduced in that programme was Ariel Dorfman's 'Afterword' to the play and it was this that sent me rushing for a copy of the script.

Both the 'Afterword' and the play itself wrestle with a number of questions:

How can the tortured and their torturers come to co-exist in the same land?

How can the truth be discovered if lying has become a habit?

How do we keep the past alive without becoming its prisoner, and how do we forget it without risking its repetition in the future?

Is it legitimate to sacrifice the truth to ensure peace?

How do we confront these issues without destroying the national consensus which creates democratic stability?

The huge point of interest in producing this play has been the exploration of the universal nature of these questions with the cast. We would, however, have been unable to dig so deep if we had not had the interest and support shown by Amnesty International and the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

Ariel Dorfman dedicated *Death and the Maiden* to Harold Pinter. My first directorial work for Moot House Players over ten years ago was Pinter's one-act play *One for the Road* - a not dissimilar drama, which focuses more on actual torture itself rather than on its aftermath and consequences. I have been fortunate in being able to bring together the same cast members who worked with me on that play and who now find themselves playing similar roles in *Death and the Maiden*.

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

July 9-10-11

UNCLE VANYA

by Anton Chekov

Our regular patrons already appreciate the reputation we have gained over the years for our Chekov productions. Their success has always been based on the close team-playing of experienced actors. Despite the fact that this year the country seems to be awash with Uncle Vanyas, we unashamedly offer our 12th Chekov production and our third Vanya. Not to be missed - either by our regulars or our first-time patrons.

Directed by Jack Mitchley

**MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE
THE SUPPORT WHICH THEY RECEIVE FROM THEIR
PARENT-BODY, THE MARK HALL AND NETTESWELL C A.**

DEATH and



the MAIDEN

1998

MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS
present

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

by Ariel Dorfman

Characters in order of appearance:

PAULINA SALAS Rose Wayper
GERARDO ESCOBAR, *her husband* Geoff Leeds
ROBERTO MIRANDA, *a doctor* David Schacht

The play directed by Ian Beckett

The play is set in the present, in a country which has only recently returned to democracy after a long period of dictatorship

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: After midnight
Scene 2: One hour later
Scene 3: A short time later
Scene 4: Before dawn

ACT II

Scene 1: Midday the following day
Scene 2: Lunch

ACT III

Scene 1: Just before evening
Scene 2: A concert hall, some months later

There will be one major interval between Act II Scenes 1 and 2, during which refreshments will be available in the foyer and the bar. The Bar has a club licence, and members of the audience with a ticket for tonight's performance are entitled to use its facilities.

Setting created by Tony Edwards and members of the company
Lighting and sound designed by Christopher Driver;
operated by Simon Brewer
Costumes by Laws and members of the company
Properties by the Community Association and members of the cast
Stage Management by Jennifer Southwell,
Joe Bonaccorso, Danny Gleeson and Jim Thompson

*The members of the company wish to express their thanks for the enormous help they have received from
Mike Jackson of Amnesty International
Helen Bamber of the
Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture*

NOTES ON THE AUTHOR AND HIS PLAY

Ariel Dorfman (1942 -) was born in Argentina and is a Chilean citizen. He became a supporter of Salvador Allende, the Marxist President of Chile, but when Allende was killed and his administration overthrown by the army of General Pinochet in 1973, Dorfman was forced to flee his country. He remained in exile for the 17 years of the Pinochet regime and it was during that time that he conceived the idea of *Death and the Maiden*. Dorfman has written numerous books which have been translated into over twenty languages and several plays, including *Widows*, *Kaliban* and *Reader*. He is Research Professor of Literature and Latin American Studies at Duke University, North Carolina, where he lives with his wife and two sons.

Ariel Dorfman's constant obsession is with memory; he supports the fight against those who wish to obliterate the past. '*The problem,*' he says, '*is people want to forget what was done to us. Forget the repression and the violence.*' The stories of victims of torture and violence, nevertheless, come out and, while Dorfman does not claim to be their voice, he says, '*I make a space for those voices, a bridge.*'

He does not write as a human rights activist; nor does he think that a person who tortures is going to stop because he has seen *Death and the Maiden*. He accepts that there are many, including some who were themselves victims, who are prepared to forget the past in the belief that stirring up old memories is likely to destroy a transition to democracy. He insists that you can submerge mental conflicts but you cannot erase them. What he seeks is justice based on the truth and the true repentance of the torturers and murderers for, without that repentance, there can be no real peace or reconciliation.