

# Death and the Maiden

## Director's Note

I opted to direct *Death and the Maiden* because it is a play that *grips*. It grabs the audience from curtain up and does not let go, apart from two welcome breathing spaces, until curtain down.

The play engages on several levels: freedom of speech and freedom of action; revenge and tolerance; love and endurance; no man is an island; love thy neighbour? It does not let up or down.

It takes us into unknown territory the totalitarian state that staggers into democracy. We, in England, are lucky. We have never lived under tyranny of a Fascist regime. We do not know the ominous knock on our door, the savage abduction of families, their incarceration and death. We do not know the stagnation of hopelessness, the abyss of indifference. We do not know there is no future.

This existence is explored, on a very personal level, through the lives of three people. There is Gerado, a lawyer; his wife, Paulina, a victim; and Dr. Roberto Miranda, a visitor. Their lives become meshed together in a deeply moving and gripping experience.

**Geoff Bennett**  
Director



[www.criteriontheatre.co.uk](http://www.criteriontheatre.co.uk)

Criterion Theatre  
Our next production  
MOONLIGHT  
and  
Magnolias



by Ron Hutchinson  
27th March to 3rd April 2010

**ORF** BOX OFFICE (Direct)  
**ER** 024 7667 5175  
**ION** This is a notice to members

A sassy comedy set in Hollywood, 1939: semi-independent mogul David O. Selznick has just shut down production on the most eagerly anticipated movie in history his mega-budget version of Margaret Mitchell's bestselling novel *Gone With The Wind*. He has scrapped the original script and sacked the director in the process. Determined to produce a rewrite in just five days, he engages the services of an ace script doctor (who has not read the novel) and the movie's new director, poached straight from the set of *Wizard of Oz*. His reputation on the line, and with nothing but a stockpile of peanuts and bananas to sustain them, Selznick locks himself in his office with his two collaborators, and a marathon creative session begins.....

*"Hutchinson's script displays the smart, old-fashioned wit of a 1940s screwball comedy. At its best, it celebrates the romance and creativity of the movies and the pain of making them."*  
GUARDIAN

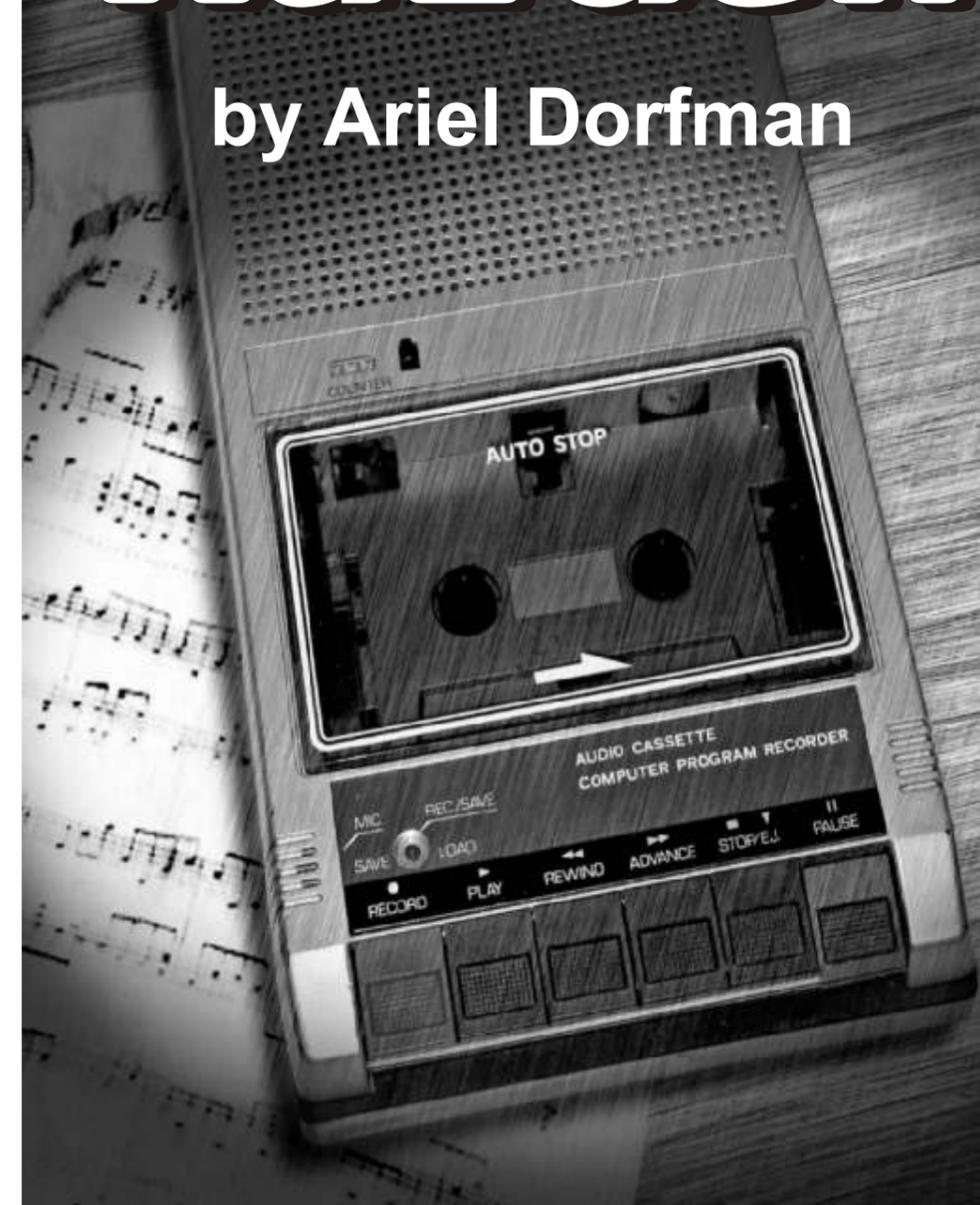
*"Rarely, in over three decades of theatre watching, has this reviewer been so helpless with laughter."* THE STAGE

*"...a comedy of panache that's certainly worth giving a damn about."* DAILY TELEGRAPH

The Criterion is a non-smoking theatre.

# Death and the Maiden

by Ariel Dorfman



## Programme

This play contains strong and offensive language

Produced in association with Samuel French Limited

# Death and the Maiden

## Note on Chile and Dorfman

Twenty years ago Chile, home of author Ariel Dorfman, returned to democracy after a period of enormous conflict and pain. After seventeen years in exile Dorfman and his family returned. The country was living an uneasy transition and in order to avoid chaos and constant confrontation the new government had to find a way of not alienating Pinochet supporters who continued occupying significant areas of power, in the judiciary, the senate, the town councils and particularly the economy.

In the area of human rights the democratically elected president, Patricio Aylwin, responded to the quandary by naming a Commission that would investigate the crimes of the dictatorship that had ended in death or its presumption, but would not name the perpetrators nor judge them. (In his play, Dorfman makes Gerardo a lawyer and a member of the Commission.) Aylwin was steering a prudent but valiant course between those who wanted past terror totally buried and those who wanted it revealed.

Dorfman wrote: "The play touched upon a tragedy in an almost Aristotelian sense, a work of art that might help a collective to purge itself, through pity and terror, in other words, to force the spectators to confront those predicaments that, if not brought into the light of day, could lead to their ruin."

## Cast

**The Lawyer:** Gerado Escobar     *Andrew Bayliss*  
**His Wife:** Paulina Escobar     *Libby McKay*  
**The Visitor:** Roberto Miranda     *John Fenner*

## Where

A country which has been under Fascist rule and is now a democracy but not yet a fully thriving one.

## Setting

Gerado Escobar's house on the coast (scenes 1- 7)  
A concert hall (scene 8)

## When 1990

The play is in 8 scenes. There will be an interval of 15 minutes.

## Crew

**Director** Geoff Bennett  
**Stage Manager** Clair Henrywood  
**Set Design** Simon Sharpe  
**Set Construction** Simon Sharpe (i/c)  
Pete Bagley, Frances Dixon  
Dave Holmes, Mike Tooley  
Joe Sharpe, Kevin Woods  
**Set Painters** Paul Wilkins, Judy Talbot  
Martin Roddis  
**Properties** Annie Woodward (i/c)  
Kat Cooper, Tony Cuttiford  
Sharon Evans, Mike Hammond  
Simon Heer, Chris Jones  
Pete Jones, Andy Stamper  
Les Rahilly  
**Lighting Design** Ian Knight  
**Lighting Technician** Joe Fallowell  
**Sound Design/Technician** Dave Cornish  
**Wardrobe** Wendy Anderson  
**Prompt** Wendy Anderson



## Andrew Bayliss (Gerado)

Andrew's third appearance at the Criterion could not be more different from his recent appearance as Montgomery Moneybags in The Talisman's pantomime production of *Robinson Crusoe*. *Death and the Maiden* may be described as a dark thriller; therefore it is more in keeping with his day-job working as an actor in the dungeon at Warwick Castle.



## Libby McKay (Paulina)

Libby began acting aged 8 and is now employed as an actor in the dungeon at Warwick Castle. She is thrilled to be back at the Criterion this year, having previously played Evelyn in *The Shape of Things*, Veronique and the Beast's Maid in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Vera Claythorne in *And Then There Were None*.



## John Fenner (Roberto)

As well as being an active member of the Loft and Talisman Theatres, John is making his third appearance at the Criterion in 12 months. He was seen here last year in the contrasting roles of Sir Lawrence Wargrave in *And Then There Were None* and as Magwitch in *Great Expectations*. Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, he will be returning to the Talisman in July to play Captain Peacock in *Are You Being Served?*