

Notes from the director's chair

I first heard about *Death and the Maiden* from a friend who gave me a scant summary of the play. When I came to read it for myself it wasn't at all as I had imagined it would be and I found the play intriguing. It had so many aspects to it – the political, the humanitarian, the factual historical – and although any one of these could be of interest alone, the real real truth is I found the relationships between the characters most intriguing. It is easy to portray one character as all bad and one as all good but life isn't like that, we all have some good aspects and some bad and the same is true of all the characters in the play, including the doctor. How easy it is to judge another person from a distance, but until we have walked in their shoes for a while none of us can really know what another person has gone through and how it has affected the person they are today. There but for the grace of God . . .

I wanted to examine the characters, because after all everything in life is about people – politics, nationalism, sexism, racism etc. is about people. I wanted the politics to be played through the lives of these three people so that they could be from any country in the world. We have a multiracial cast who don't try and pretend that they are Chilean but deliberately use their own accents. This is because I want the audience to feel that this is a global issue and could happen anywhere at any time. The varying accents, the minimalist set and all the national influences and aspects that will be heard in the prelude serve to only accentuate this.

Although the play is based in Chile in the aftermath of the military coup led by General Pinochet, wider parallels can be drawn to South Africa, Rwanda, war-time Germany, Franco's Spain, Bosnia and many more . . . the point being that what happens in this play could happen anywhere, any time, and until we are placed in that position none of us know how we would react. Dorfman says that he believes that the guilty owe it to their victims to confess, only that way can a civilised society move on after something as terrible as torture and killings on a massive scale. Maybe plays like this will make us think a little more about our life and our responsibility to each other.

This is the second time that I have directed, both times with the AATG. My directing debut was with *Love Letters* by AR Gurney, that was done in a small theatre for one night only. My life often seems to go from the sublime to the ridiculous and this run is no exception. This play will be performed in three major cities in two countries for a total of 11 performances. However it has been made so much easier thanks to the cast being so talented and amenable to all my suggestions and all the helpers behind the scenes being friendly, creative and supportive not least of all my stage manager Helen. I don't know what I will have to dream up to top this! I hope it's going to be a quiet and peaceful Christmas.

Kathy

Cast

Paulina	Deborah Farber Sonnenberg
Gerardo	Steve Searcy
Roberto	Fintan McDonagh
<i>Director</i>	Kathy Searcy

Production team

<i>Stage manager</i>	Helen Bannatyne
<i>Lighting</i>	John Newsome, Jane Easton, Patrick Donnelly, Hubert Wellenstein
<i>Sound</i>	Vivienne Price, Victor Vergeer
<i>Set concept</i>	Jeremy Bentham
<i>Set design</i>	Kathy Searcy, Dave Middleton, Steve Young, Helen Bannatyne
<i>Props</i>	Julie Domaille, Jacqui Cheshire
<i>Make-up / hair</i>	Jacqui Cheshire, Joelle Adam, Yvonne Needham, Sabrina Luthjens, Julie Domaille
<i>Construction manager</i>	Steve Young
<i>Set construction / painting</i>	Steve Young, Edward Crothers, Dave Middleton, Hans van Bemmelen, Victor van der Ham, John Kearey, Yvonne Needham
<i>Costumes / set dressing</i>	Susan Arteaga
<i>Publicity</i>	Gabriele de Koning, Carol and Paul Abel, Chris Bearne
<i>Business</i>	Dirk Marks
<i>Poster / programme</i>	Stephen Lambley
<i>Advertising</i>	Gill Fifield
<i>Publicity photography</i>	Trevor Gale
<i>Production coordinator</i>	Steph Bourne
<i>Rehearsal prompt</i>	Helen Jeffares
<i>Stage crew</i>	Donna Turner, John Brigg, Gavan Guilfoyle
<i>Front of house</i>	Dirk Marks, Chris Wilson and team

Special thanks to John Brigg, Carol Abel and the New World Theatre Company

Chile under Pinochet

June 1973 There is an aborted coup attempt against the Popular Unity government of President Salvador Allende.

September 1973 Led by Army Commander-in-Chief General Augusto Pinochet, armed forces overthrow Allende, who dies during the military attack on the presidential palace La Moneda. Red Cross International estimates some 7,000 prisoners were held in temporary prison camp at National Stadium. The Junta dissolves the National Congress, through Decree Law No. 27, stating that its functionaries should leave their posts immediately. Folk singer Victor Jara is killed at the Chile Stadium. Spanish priest Joan Alsina, head of personnel at the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Santiago at the time of the coup, is arrested on the hospital grounds. His body is later found on the banks of the Mapocho River with ten bullet wounds in the back.

October 1973 The Comite para la Paz, an ecumenical committee, is created to defend human rights.

June 1974 The regime declares all executive powers to lie in the president of the Junta, General Augusto Pinochet.

January 1976 The Vicaria de la Solidaridad (Vicaria) is formally created. The church-run organisation is dedicated to defending human rights under the dictatorship.

December 1977 The United Nations condemns the Chilean regime for “the continued and inadmissible violation of human rights.”

April 1978 An Amnesty Law is declared. The Decree Law drafted by Justice Minister Mónica Madariaga, pardons all individuals who committed crimes between September 1973 and March 1978, that is, throughout the state of emergency period.

September 1978 The Vicaria announces the existence of 613 proven cases of disappearances after arrest by security forces.

November 1978 The remains of 15 disappeared are discovered in Lonquén.

December 1978 Human remains belonging to disappeared people are found in Cuesta Barriga.

August 1980 The regime announces a plebiscite for 11 September to approve a new constitution drafted by Pinochet's collaborators. The constitution proposes that Pinochet's mandate be prolonged for another eight years followed by presidential elections, to be carried out according to the procedure set out in the constitution.

September 1980 The constitutional plebiscite results in 67% in favour and 30% against the new constitution.

May 1983 The first National Protest takes place, the result of a long process of growing resistance against the regime. More than 300 people arrested.



October 1985 The Antofagasta martial court grants amnesty to General Sergio Arellano Stark, Marcel Moren Brito, and Armando Fernandez Larios. The three Army members had been involved in the deaths of at least 72 persons in October 1973, in what came to be known as the “Caravan of Death.”

September 1986 Pinochet narrowly escapes an assassination attempt. As he is returning to Santiago from his El Melocoton property, a mobile home blocks the entourage on the road near La Obra and FPMR commandos open fire. Pinochet's chauffeur manages to manoeuvre the armed vehicle out of range, but five bodyguards die and ten more are seriously injured. Four opponents of the military regime are killed in reprisal for the death of the five presidential bodyguards hours before. A state of emergency is declared.

April 1987 Pope John Paul II visits Chile. During the two previous years, the Catholic church had focused its efforts on ensuring that the Pope's future visit would not be used by the regime for political ends. At O'Higgins Park, where the Pope celebrates an outdoor mass, Carabineros police release tear gas upon the crowd of 600,000 but the Pope insists on continuing with the mass.

October 1988 Pinochet loses a national plebiscite, with nearly 55% of Chilean voters rejecting his plan to remain eight more years in power. Within weeks, the opposition forces choose Patricio Aylwin as their candidate for the coming year's presidential elections.

December 1989 Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin is elected president in the first free elections in 16 years of military rule.

April 1990 The National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, known as the Rettig Commission for its president, attorney Raul Rettig, is created with a nine-month mandate to document what the Justice Ministry's decree terms “the most serious human rights violations” committed by agents of the State of Chile during the period of military rule.

September 1990 Former president Salvador Allende accorded state funeral in Santiago's General Cemetery. The memorial to the disappeared and executed is inaugurated at the same cemetery.

March 1991 Carlos Perez Castro, a doctor accused of having participated in torture sessions, is shot dead alongside his wife in the city of Rancagua. The National Truth and Reconciliation Commission formally presents its findings. The three-volume, 2,000-page report concludes that at least 2,025 persons suffered serious human rights violations resulting in death or disappearance at the hands of agents of the state during the period of military rule.



January 1992 The National Corporation for Reparations and Reconciliation is created to continue the work begun by the Rettig Commission. Its mandate is to determine if agents of the state were to blame for reported cases of human rights violations. The Commission is also charged with determining reparation payments to family members of the victims.

December 1993 Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle is elected president, carrying 58% of the vote in the second presidential elections of the past 20 years.

July 1996 The Audiencia Nacional, Spain's highest court, accepts a suit filed by the Union of Progressive Attorneys (Union Progresista de Fiscales) for the disappearance and death of Spanish citizens during the military regime. The legal action charges Augusto Pinochet, and former Junta members Jose Toribio Merino, Gustavo Leigh, Cesar Mendoza, Fernando Matthei, and Rodolfo Stange. The Chilean government rejects the jurisdictional competency of the Spanish court and of Judge Manuel Garcia Castellon to hear the case.

January 1998 Pinochet faces criminal charges as Court of Appeals Judge Juan Guzman Tapia accepts a criminal complaint of genocide against the Army commander-in-chief by the Communist Party (PC). It is the first time a court has accepted direct charges against Pinochet for human rights violations committed during his regime.

March 1998 Relatives of 1,198 people believed to have been abducted and killed during the Chilean dictatorship of 1973-1990 file a lawsuit against General Pinochet, accusing him of kidnap, torture and homicide. Pinochet steps down as Army commander-in-chief, at the age of 82, after 25 years as head of the institution, and 17 years as head of the military regime that ruled from 1973 to 1990. He is replaced by General Ricardo Izurieta Caffarena. Pinochet assumes lifetime seat in Senate. The retired general is sworn in at a strife-ridden ceremony, while thousands of protesters demonstrate their opposition to Pinochet outside Congress. Over 500 people are arrested and 34 wounded, including 12 police officers, during demonstrations against the former dictator in several Chilean cities.

May 1998 Forensic scientists in Chile uncover four bodies from what is believed to be a mass grave next to a former torture and detention centre used against Left-wing dissidents by Pinochet's regime.

October 1998 Pinochet arrested at London hospital on suspicion of murder. He is detained under a Metropolitan Police armed guard in the London Clinic, where he is recovering from back surgery.

Death and the Maiden in art

The Death and the Maiden theme is rooted in mythology. In the Greek tradition, Persephone's abduction by Hades prefigures the clash between Eros and Thanatos. The young goddess was gathering flowers in the company of nymphs when she saw a pretty narcissus. As she plucked it, the ground opened and Hades came out of the underworld and abducted her.

This old vision took a new form at the end of the 15th century, culminating in Germany at the Renaissance. Although there was as yet no trace of eroticism, people discovered a dark bond between sexuality and death. The sensual intercourse became more erotic as time went by. Although having no verse to explain it, this form of art gained a kind of intimacy, but with a moralistic goal – it pointed out that life is as short as the proud beauty of a woman.

This work (right) of Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, painted in 1517, shows the transition between the Dance of Death and the theme of Death and the Maiden. Here Death is a rotting corpse which does not caress the girl but grasps her by the neck and kisses her and puts its hands between her legs. The girl doesn't seem to resist the dreadful lover.



In 1517, Hans Baldung Grien produced this painting (left) in which Death seizes a girl by the hair and forces her down into the tomb dug at her feet. Again, the girl, completely naked, does not try to resist. Her mouth is plaintive, her eyes are red and tears run down her cheeks; she understands that this is the end.

Edvard Munch completed this engraving (right) in 1894, one year after the original oil painting. Here, Death is a skeleton; no flesh covers it any more. In this work, Munch does not conform to traditional representations. At the beginning of the Renaissance, Death was often represented in a sexually aggressive way.

In this engraving, Munch suggests a victory of Love over Death: the girl is not dominated by Death, but embraces it passionately.



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