

PROGRAMME

DANTON'S DEATH

by
GEORG BUECHNER
translated and adapted by
JAMES MAXWELL

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59 THEATRE COMPANY

under the direction of

JAMES H. LAWRIE and CASPER WREDE

presents

DANTON'S DEATH

by **GEORG BUECHNER**

translated and adapted by **JAMES MAXWELL**

Directed by **CASPER WREDE**

Designed by **MALCOLM PRIDE**

Lighting by **RICHARD PILBROW**

First performance at this theatre Tuesday, January 27th, 1959

CHARACTERS:

Deputies of The National Convention

Danton	PATRICK WYMARK
Camille Desmoulin (a poet)	JAMES MAXWELL
Herault-Sechelles	JOHN TURNER
Lacroix	FULTON MacKAY
Philippeau	DONALD BRADLEY
Legendre	LEE FOX

Members of the Committee of Public Safety

Robespierre	HAROLD LANG
St. Just	PATRICK McGOOHAN
Barere	PETER SALLIS
Collot d'Herbois	ROBERT BERNAL
Billaud-Varennes	ROBERT POINTON
Fouquier-Tinville (the Public Prosecutor)	MARC SHELDON
Tom Paine (an English philosopher)	LEE FOX
Simon (a theatrical prompter)	PETER SALLIS
A Deputy from Lyons	MAXWELL SHAW
A Young Gentleman	HAROLD JENSEN
Julie (Danton's wife)	DILYS HAMLETT
Lucille (Camille's wife)	AVRIL ELGAR

Prostitutes

Marion	PENELOPE HORNER
Rosalie	ANITA GIORGI
Aurore	JUNE BAILEY

The Action of the Play, which is in two parts with one interval of fifteen minutes, takes place in Paris during March and April 1794.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

PART ONE

Scene 1: A Street

Simon	PETER SALLIS
Simon's Wife	AVRIL ELGAR
In the Bread Queue	ROY SPENCE
	ROBERT BERNAL
	ANITA GIORGI
	ROBERT JACKSON
	DILYS HAMLETT
	MARC SHELDON
	LEE FOX
	PENELOPE HORNER
Robespierre	HAROLD LANG
Billaud	ROBERT POINTON
A Young Gentleman	HARALD JENSEN

Scene 2: A Room in Danton's House

Danton	PATRICK WYMARK
Julie	DILYS HAMLETT
Herault	JOHN TURNER
Former Countess	JUNE BAILEY
Former Marchioness	HELEN MONTAGUE
Lacroix	FULTON MacKAY
Camille	JAMES MAXWELL
Philippeau	DONALD BRADLEY

Scene 3: The Jacobin Club

Robespierre	HAROLD LANG
St. Just	PATRICK McGOOHAN
Collot	ROBERT BERNAL
Billaud	ROBERT POINTON
Lacroix	FULTON MacKAY
Herault	JOHN TURNER
Legendre	LEE FOX
Deputy from Lyons	MAXWELL SHAW
Citizens	

PART ONE—Contd.

Scene 4: A Room in the Palais Royal

Danton	PATRICK WYMARK
Marion	PENELOPE HORNER
Lacroix	FULTON MacKAY
Herault	JOHN TURNER
Rosalie	ANITA GIORGI
Aurore	JUNE BAILEY

Scene 5: A Room in Robespierre's Lodgings

Danton	PATRICK WYMARK
Robespierre	HAROLD LANG
Lacroix	FULTON MacKAY
Herault	JOHN TURNER
St. Just	PATRICK McGOOHAN

Scene 6: Danton's Dressing Room

Danton	PATRICK WYMARK
Lacroix	FULTON MacKAY
Camille	JAMES MAXWELL
Herault	JOHN TURNER
Philippeau	DONALD BRADLEY

Scene 7: A Street

Danton	PATRICK WYMARK
Camille	JAMES MAXWELL
Simon	PETER SALLIS
Waiter	ROBERT POINTON
Legendre	LEE FOX
Young Woman	HELEN MONTAGUE
Marion	PENELOPE HORNER
Rosalie	ANITA GIORGI
1st Soldier	ROBERT JACKSON
2nd Soldier	ROY SPENCE
Mother	DILYS HAMLETT
Eugenie	JUNE BAILEY
A Young Gentleman	HARALD JENSEN
1st Gentleman	MARC SHELDON
2nd Gentleman	ROBERT BERNAL
Ballad Singer	MAXWELL SHAW

PART ONE—Contd.

Scene 8: A Room in Camille Desmoulin's House

Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Camille **JAMES MAXWELL**
Lucille **AVRIL ELGAR**
Herault **JOHN TURNER**

Scene 9: A Field

Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**

Scene 10: A Room in Danton's House

Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Julie **DILYS HAMLETT**

Scene 11: A Street

St. Just **PATRICK McGOOHAN**
Simon **PETER SALLIS**
Soldiers **DONALD BRADLEY**
ROBERT JACKSON
ROY SPENCE

Scene 12: The National Convention

President **HARALD JENSEN**
Robespierre **HAROLD LANG**
St. Just **PATRICK McGOOHAN**
Collot **ROBERT BERNAL**
Billaud **ROBERT POINTON**
Legendre **LEE FOX**
First Moderate Deputy **MARC SHELDON**
Second Moderate Deputy **MAXWELL SHAW**
Soldiers and Deputies

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

PART TWO

Scene 13: The Luxembourg Prison

Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Lacroix **FULTON MacKAY**
Camille **JAMES MAXWELL**
Herault **JOHN TURNER**
Philippeau **DONALD BRADLEY**
Tom Paine **LEE FOX**
Chaumette **ROBERT BERNAL**
Prisoners **PETER SALLIS**
ROBERT POINTON

Scene 14: The Revolutionary Tribunal

Judge **HARALD JENSEN**
Fouquier-Tinville **MARC SHELDON**
St. Just **PATRICK McGOOHAN**
Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Lacroix **FULTON MacKAY**
Camille **JAMES MAXWELL**
Herault **JOHN TURNER**
Philippeau **DONALD BRADLEY**
Citizens and Soldiers

Scene 15: The Offices of the Committee of Public Safety

St. Just **PATRICK McGOOHAN**
Barere **PETER SALLIS**
Collot **ROBERT BERNAL**
Billaud **ROBERT POINTON**
Fouquier-Tinville **MARC SHELDON**
Lafotte **MAXWELL SHAW**
Orderly **ROY SPENCE**

PART TWO—Contd.

Scene 16: The Revolutionary Tribunal

Judge **HARALD JENSEN**
Fouquier-Tinville **MARC SHELDON**
St. Just **PATRICK McGOOHAN**
Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Camille **JAMES MAXWELL**
Herault **JOHN TURNER**
Philippeau **DONALD BRADLEY**
Citizens and Soldiers

Scene 17: A room in Danton's House

Julie **DILYS HAMLETT**
Boy **ROBERT JACKSON**

Scene 18: The Conciergerie

Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Lacroix **FULTON MacKAY**
Camille **JAMES MAXWELL**
Herault **JOHN TURNER**
Philippeau **DONALD BRADLEY**
Lucille **AVRIL ELGAR**

Scene 19: A Room in Danton's House

Julie **DILYS HAMLETT**

Scene 20: Place de la Revolution

Danton **PATRICK WYMARK**
Lacroix **FULTON MacKAY**
Camille **JAMES MAXWELL**
Herault **JOHN TURNER**
Lucille **AVRIL ELGAR**
First Executioner **LEE FOX**
Second Executioner **PATRICK McGOOHAN**
Third Executioner **MAXWELL SHAW**
Soldiers and Citizens

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GEORG BUECHNER Author

Born in 1813, near Darmstadt, Georg Buechner was the son of a doctor who had worked his way up from the rank of army surgeon in Napoleon's forces to a post in the Residenz of the Grand Duke Ludwig of Hesse Darmstadt. He was sent to the Gymnasium at Darmstadt, where he chafed at his lessons and once scrawled in one of his exercise books, in the middle of a page that should have contained lines of dictation, "Something that lives! What good is all this dead lumber?"

During Buechner's schooldays liberal ideals and the principles established by the French Revolution were being preached fervently all over Germany. The Universities were the centre of discontent, and the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris against Charles X, the last of the Bourbons, sparked off explosive demonstrations, secret societies were formed, and the German authorities replied with censorship and harsh repression. Buechner was exhilarated by the excitement of the times and when he reached Strasbourg University in 1832 to study zoology and anatomy, his parents wrote him nervous letters, warning him against becoming involved in the liberal movement.

For that year Buechner avoided politics, and in 1833 he left Strasbourg for Giessen, where he was to finish his course of studies and become a doctor. He was in love with Minna Jaegli, the daughter of a Darmstadt citizen, and he found Giessen stifling and provincial. He began to study the French Revolution, and he wrote in his diary: "I find a horrible sameness in human nature, a relentless power in men's relationships. Individuals are so much surf on a wave, greatness the merest accident, the strength of a genius a puppet play, a child's struggle against an iron law; the greatest of us can only recognise it, to control it is impossible".

It was at Giessen that Buechner met Weidig, a schoolmaster who had bound the Giessen students into a league against reaction and tyranny. He wrote a pamphlet (*The Hessian Peasants' Messenger*)

which was printed on an illegal press and distributed secretly amongst the people. This pamphlet led to a series of arrests, but Buechner himself was not among the victims and managed to warn Weidig of the danger; but he was now under suspicion and, although no positive charges had been brought against him, his father decided it would be tactful to recall him to Darmstadt.

He received a chilly welcome and, under protest, he was shut up in the laboratory which his father had built in the cellar, and instructed to study there. But Buechner provided himself with volumes of history and set his small brother to keep watch while he read about the French Revolution. Meanwhile he founded a secret society in Darmstadt itself—"League for the Rights of Man"—whose enrolment oath was: "If I ever turn traitor let my only right be death", and which drilled with bayonet and pistol in a disused barn. But Buechner was desperate with the tension at home, and at last made up his mind to escape. He had no money, he dared not ask his father, and so he decided to write a play . . . "Danton's Death".

The first draft was completed in five weeks and during the revision the arrests in Giessen and Darmstadt multiplied. Buechner's brother made a rope ladder with which Georg could let himself down from the back window if the police came to the front door. At last the manuscript was posted to a Frankfurt publisher, but before a reply could come there was a summons from the Court of Enquiry to the Darmstadt arrest house.

While his brother went to the police to impersonate him, Buechner himself collected two louis d'or his father had given him for books, added some money from his mother, and slipped away to the French frontier. A few days later a letter came from the publisher, enclosing 100 guilder for the play.

Buechner now returned to Strasbourg and continued his studies of natural science and philosophy, in the hopes of being elected to a teaching post . . . "In the meantime I am occupying myself letting

a few people marry and slay each other on paper, and I pray the Good Lord God to send me a simple publisher and a large public with as little taste as possible . . ."

The play was "Leonce and Lena", and was returned to him unopened. On the strength of his thesis "Sur le système Nerveux du Barbeau", Buechner was elected to the faculty of anatomy at Zurich, where he went in October 1836. For a few months he lectured and did research, writing a play which remained unfinished and unrevised—"Wozzeck". But early in 1837 he contracted typhus, the illness became serious, and by the 11th of February, delirium had set in. In his fever Buechner thought the Darmstadt police had come to arrest him, and on February 21st, 1837, aged twenty-three, he died.

Description of Georg Buechner from the warrant for his arrest by the Darmstadt police for "subversive activities against the government".

AGE	21
HEIGHT	6 ft. 2 in.
HAIR	blond
BROW	very protruding
EYEBROWS	blond
EYES	grey
NOSE	strong
MOUTH	small
BEARD	blond
CHIN	round
FACE	oval
COLOURING	healthy
STATURE	strong and slim
SPECIAL FEATURES	shortsighted

A BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY

By September 1792, the French Revolution had destroyed all possibility of compromise with the Royalists. The King had been deposed and a new ministry appointed by the Assembly. Danton was Minister of Justice, and said "the Revolution is between two fires—the enemy at the frontier and the enemy at home. In order to survive it is necessary to frighten the enemy".

On September 2nd the massacre of all those suspected of being enemies of the Revolution began, the invading armies from Brunswick and Prussia were turned back, and the Monarchy was declared to be abolished. In January 1793, the King was guillotined; the National Convention took charge—a Republic had been established. But threats from foreign powers continued, the Royalists were organizing rebellion in The Vendée, and in March the Convention appointed the Revolutionary Tribunal, which was given special powers to deal with anyone accused of opposition to the government. The next month the Committee of Public Safety, with members drawn from the chief Jacobins, was constituted with supreme executive power in the state. Danton was, for three months, its most influential member, but in July, 1793, he ceased to serve on the Committee and retired to his home, where he lived quietly with his second wife Julie. Robespierre, aided by St. Just and other members of the Committee, began the Reign of Terror and Danton's friends soon rose in protest against his methods. By the early months of 1794 Robespierre had decided that he must crush this opposition, although it contained his old friends Danton and Camille Desmoulins. The play opens in March, 1794, when Robespierre is ready to strike.

The leading figures in the Reign of Terror were extremely young. Danton at the time of his execution was only 35; his friends not much more—Camille Desmoulins 33, Collot d'Herbois 44, Herault 34, Philippeau 36, and Lacroix 40. Their enemies Robespierre and St. Just survived them only about three months, and went to the guillotine at the ages of 34 and 27.



Photo by IVOR SHARP

CASPER WREDE Director

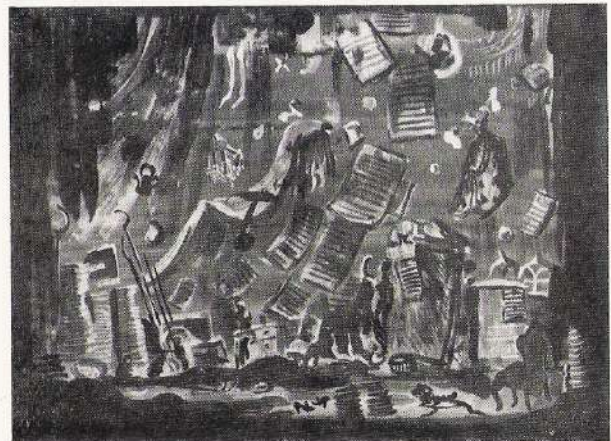
is twenty-nine, and was born in Finland. He came to this country to work in the Production Course at the Old Vic School under Michel St. Denis. He has twice visited the Edinburgh Festival, with productions of *MISS JULIE* and *EDWARD II*, and was invited by OUDS to produce their hundredth major production *HIPPOLYTUS* at Oxford in 1955. He has twice visited Sweden to produce Shakespeare and work in films; in this country he has directed regularly for stage and television, including a musical and a production of Graham Greene's *THE POTTING SHED* for the New Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool. In 1957 he joined Michael Elliott in the first of five productions they have done for B.B.C. Television—*UNCLE VANYA*. Since then they have collaborated on *THE SURVIVORS*, *TWELFTH NIGHT*, *WOMEN OF TROY*, and *THE LADY FROM THE SEA*. Last November he was commissioned by A.T.V. to produce the first television appearance of Sir Laurence Olivier, in Ibsen's *JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN*.

PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS OF "DANTON'S DEATH"

Although "Danton's Death" was planned by Group Theatre as part of their 1938-9 season, with music by Benjamin Britten and sets by John Piper, the war seems to have intervened before it reached the stage, and this production by 59 Theatre Company is, as far as we can discover, the first professional performance of the play in this country. "Danton's Death" has been presented many times abroad—by Reinhardt in Berlin in 1916 and 1927, by Orson Welles in New York in 1938, and by Vilar in Avignon in 1948. Other productions since the war have included those at Vienna (1947), Zurich (1952), Frankfurt (1954) and, a few weeks ago, at Amsterdam.

MALCOLM PRIDE Designer

is twenty-eight and like Casper Wrede was trained at the Old Vic School, in theatrical design. After spending a season as resident designer with the West of England Theatre Company, he was invited to design the Stratford production of *VOLPONE* in 1952. Since then he has designed two more plays at Stratford—*TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*, and the Gielgud production of *TWELFTH NIGHT* with Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh in 1955. In the West End he has designed plays, opera and ballet, including the successful comedy by Benn Levy at the Piccadilly, *THE RAPE OF THE BELT*, and in 1956 *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* and *IL TROVATORE* at Sadlers Wells and Menotti's *THE TELEPHONE*. Meanwhile he designed costumes for William Walton's *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA* at Covent Garden, and more recently for the television production of *WOMEN OF TROY*.



Malcolm Pride's design for the setting of "Danton's Death"

THE REIGN OF TERROR

BETWEEN MARCH 1793, AND JULY 1794, 14,000 WERE GUILLOTINED

Robespierre: "The Revolution is the war of freedom against her enemies".

St. Just: "We cannot expect happiness while the last enemy of freedom breathes. We must not only punish the traitors, but also those who are equally guilty—the idle creatures who do nothing for the Revolution".

Alexander Rousselin at a commune: ". . . Revenge is the only source of freedom. To this goddess alone may we sacrifice".

Deputy Javouges at the National Convention: "The only man I recognise as a patriot is the one who will, if necessary, denounce his father, mother, and sister and drink a glass of their blood on the guillotine!"

Danton, just before his trial: "When people go to execution smiling, it is time to break the scythe of death".

In France there were 44,000 Watch Committees, and the Committee of Public Safety had a fund of 50 million francs to pay agents and spies. Poets were called upon to illustrate the achievements of the Revolution in their works, and a new calendar was introduced, with thirty days in every month and Sunday abolished. The Revolutionary Tribunal was permanently in session. Strikes were forbidden. It was announced that anyone who hoarded food, and black marketeers in bread, meat, wine, vegetables, sugar, vinegar, salt, cloth, coal, wood or paper would be punished by death. Food prices and wages were officially controlled, ration cards were introduced and queues formed in front of food shops.

It is decreed that :

Every citizen must always carry an identity card, which will be issued after filling in a questionnaire and after the testimony of the local Jacobin Club has been heard in the presence of the leader of the community.

Former aristocrats are on no account permitted to carry identity cards.

Anyone who neglects his duty as a citizen and does not carry a card, or who has any quarrel with the government, is suspect and may be arrested.

Landlords and caretakers must display in a prominent position a list of all tenants, with their age and employment.

Every citizen has a duty to denounce.

In judicial proceedings cross-examination, hearing of witnesses, depositions and defence are abolished.

The teaching of history contributes to the political training of the young.

In schools the teaching of foreign languages is abolished. English is the language of despotism, German of feudalism, and Spanish is the language of the Inquisition.

Tom Paine, the famous English philosopher who played a prominent part in the American War of Independence, was in Paris at the time. He was arrested and spent his time in prison in writing his book "The Age of Reason".

FUTURE PRODUCTIONS AT THE LYRIC OPERA HOUSE

The second programme in the season of plays presented by the 59 Theatre Company, will consist of a double bill: *THE CHEATS OF SCAPIN*, Otway's version of the comedy by Moliere, directed by Peter Dews, and *CREDITORS*, by Strindberg, which will be directed by Casper Wrede

The third production planned is a new translation of Ibsen's *BRAND* by Michael Meyer, to be produced by Michael Elliott. Except for a production of the fourth act towards the end of the last century, this play seems never to have been performed professionally in London.

The 59 Theatre Company Season will continue until July when a new Lyric Revue will be presented for a season of eight weeks. This Revue, which is already in preparation, will consist of material written by new or little known writers and composers and by some writers not usually associated with this form of entertainment. It will be directed by Eleanor Fazan, and devised and designed by Disley Jones, with Stanley Myer's as Musical Director.

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(i) The public may leave at the end of the performance or exhibition by all doors and such doors must at that time be open.

(ii) All gangways, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction, whether permanent or temporary.

(iii) Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or sit in any of the other gangways. If standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating it shall be limited to the numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.

(iv) The safety curtain must be lowered and raised in the presence of each audience.



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