



PANGEA

WORLD THEATER

presents

From: October 25, 2024

To: November 2, 2024

CLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Death** [REDACTED] **and** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **the Maiden** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] written [REDACTED] by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Ariel Dorfman** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] directed by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Ismail Khalidi** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Pangea World Theater Studio

711 West Lake Street

Minneapolis, MN 55408

pangeaworldtheater.org

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Welcome to Pangea World Theater

Theater Etiquette

- At Pangea World Theater, you can pick any seat in the house! So go ahead and pick a seat. The ushers may guide you through the space as well so take a second to listen for any specific instructions.
- No need to wear fancy clothing. We welcome you as you are.
- Be kind towards fellow audience members and staff. If you need to leave the space for any reason, find a moment when it feels most appropriate and step away as quietly and discreetly as possible.
- Unlike a film, in theater the actors on stage can hear and often see you. So give them your full attention and, of course, react as you feel it in the moment. There might be moments that surprise you, make you laugh, make you cry. Your reactions help the actors know that they're reaching you in their performance. So go ahead and react!
- Last but not least, please turn your cell phones off or to silent mode, photography is not allowed during the performance, and unwrap any candy wrappers before the show starts.
- Enjoy the show!

Content Guidance

- Use of prop gun on stage
- One instance of gunshot sound
- References to sexual, physical, psychological abuse and assault

About the Play

Synopsis

Death and the Maiden tells the story of Paulina Salas, her husband Gerardo Escobar, and Dr. Roberto Miranda, all citizens in an unnamed country recovering from the after-effects of a violent dictatorship. When Gerardo's car breaks down one night, a kindly stranger named Roberto Miranda offers to drive Gerardo back to his beach house.

A grateful Gerardo offers Roberto a room for the night, but after hearing Roberto's voice, Gerardo's wife Paulina becomes convinced that their houseguest is the doctor who raped and tortured her after she was abducted by the secret police fifteen years earlier. Determined to mete out her own brand of justice, Paulina puts Roberto on trial for the crimes she believes he has committed.

Gerardo, however, has recently been appointed to an Investigating Commission that the country's new democracy has set up to examine crimes of the dictatorship, and tries to convince her to let Roberto go.

Setting

A beach house in a country undergoing transition from military dictatorship to democracy; "probably Chile"

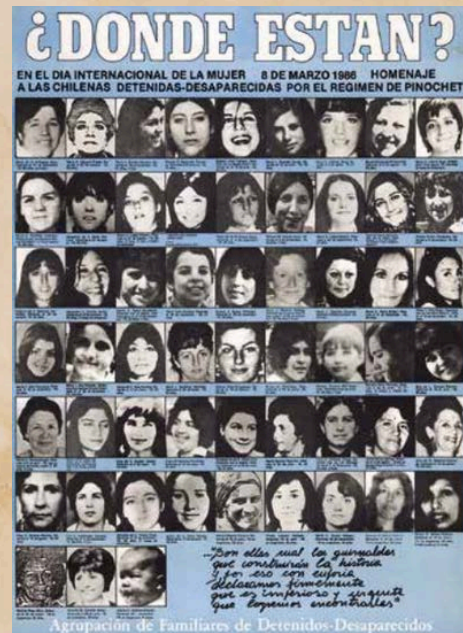
Characters

Paulina Salas: Paulina is a housewife who was tortured as a political prisoner during the dictatorial era. She is

somewhat paranoid and generally amicable, but when pushed can be very dangerous.

Gerardo Escobar: Paulina's husband, a high-ranking government official. He has been put on a committee to investigate crimes committed during the dictatorial era.

Roberto Miranda: A stranger who assisted Gerardo with a flat tire on his way home. He is a doctor and is outwardly very friendly and helpful. However Paulina suspects he is one of the men who tortured her during her imprisonment.



¿Dónde están?, A tribute to 57 detained women who disappeared until 1986, made for the Group of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, 1986 via the Human Rights Research and Promotion Center Fund

The Commissions

There were two Investigating Commissions in Chile: “The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation” (also known as “Rettig-Commission”) and “The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture” (also known as “Valech Commission”). The first was founded by Patricio Aylwin on April 25, 1990. Aylwin was the first elected president of Chile after Pinochet. The commission investigated the disappearances and deaths caused by the Pinochet regime. The head of the commission was Raúl Rettig, who the “Rettig Report” issued in February 1991 is named after. The report stated that 1,068 people were killed, 957 people disappeared after their arrest, and 90 were killed by politically motivated private citizens during Pinochet’s regime.

Many people criticized the report claiming that it only covered the dead and disappeared victims but not other human rights violations. As a result, “The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture” was founded and convened in 2003. The report stated 27,255 victims of human rights violations. However, this number likely does not cover the full number of violations since there was limited time for individuals to provide a testimonial.

Schubert’s “Death and the Maiden”

The String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D 810, known as “Death and the Maiden,” is a piece by Franz Schubert. It has been called “one of the pillars of the chamber music repertoire.” It was composed in 1824, after the composer suffered from a serious illness and realized that he was dying.



Arpilleras- small, rectangular textiles, largely retell a story of death under General Augusto Pinochet’s repressive reign. Weaving that history together, Chilean women made arpilleras in the sanctity of Catholic churches during the dictatorship. Photo by Gabriel San Roman.

About the Playwright



Born in Buenos Aires on May 6, 1942, Ariel Dorfman is an Argentine-Chilean-American novelist, playwright, essayist, academic, and human rights activist. He is the author of numerous works of fiction, plays, operas, musicals, poems, journalism and essays in both Spanish and English. Ariel Dorfman spent ten years as a child in New York, until his family was forced out of the United States by the anti-communist frenzy stirred by Joe McCarthy. The Dorfmans ended up in Chile, where Ariel spent his adolescence and youth, living through the Allende revolution and the subsequent resistance inside Chile and abroad after the dictatorship that overthrew Allende in 1973. Accompanied by his wife Angélica, he wandered the globe as an exile, finally settling down in the United States, where he is now Walter Hines Emeritus Professor of Literature at Duke University. Dorfman's acclaimed work, which includes the play and film *Death and the Maiden* (written in 1990) and the classic text about cultural imperialism, *How to Read Donald Duck*, covers almost every genre available (plays, novels, poetry, short stories, fiction, essays, journalism, opinion pieces, memoirs, screenplays). His books have been published in over fifty languages and his plays performed in more than a hundred countries. His most recent books are the novels *Darwin's Ghosts* and *Cautivos*, as well as the children's story, *The Rabbits' Rebellion*. He contributes regularly to major newspapers and magazines around the world and is active in the defense of human rights.

On Death and the Maiden

by Ariel Dorfman

Eight or nine years ago, when General Augusto Pinochet was still the dictator of Chile and I was still in exile, I began tentatively exploring in my mind a dramatic situation that was someday to become the core of *Death and the Maiden*. A man whose car breaks down on the highway is given a lift home by a friendly stranger. The man's wife, believing she recognizes in the stranger the voice of the torturer who raped her some years before, kidnaps him and decides to put him on trial. On several occasions I sat down to scribble what I then imagined would be a novel. A few hours and a couple of unsatisfactory pages later, I would give up in frustration. Something essential was missing. I could not figure out, for instance, who the woman's husband was, how he would react to her violence, if he would believe her. Nor were the historical circumstances under which the story developed clear to me, the symbolic and secret connections to the larger life of the country itself, the world beyond the narrow, claustrophobic boundaries of that woman's home. The use of a forceps may be necessary to insure the birth of a child that needs help out of the womb, but I had by then blessedly learned that when characters do not want to be born, forceps may scar them and twist their lives irreparably. My trio would, unfortunately, have to wait.

They were forced to wait a long time. It was not until Chile returned to democracy in 1990 and I myself therefore returned to resettle there with my family after seventeen years of exile, that I finally understood how the story had to be told.

My country was at the time (and still is now as I write this) living an uneasy transition to democracy, with Pinochet no longer the president but still in command of the armed forces, still able to threaten another coup if people became unruly or, more specifically, if attempts were made to punish the human rights violations of the outgoing regime. 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, our democratically elected president, Patricio Aylwin, responded to this quandary by naming a Commission called the Rettig Commission, after the eighty-year-old lawyer who headed it that would investigate the crimes of the dictatorship that had ended in death or its presumption, but which would neither name the perpetrators nor judge them.

This was an important step toward healing a sick country: the truth of the terror unleashed upon us that we had always known in a private and fragmented fashion would finally receive public recognition, established forever as official history, recreating a community fractured by divisions and hatred that we wished to leave behind. On the other hand, justice would not be done and the traumatic experience of hundreds of thousands of other victims, those who had survived, would not even be addressed. Aylwin was steering a prudent but valiant course between those who wanted past terror totally buried and those who wanted it totally revealed.

As I watched with fascination how the Commission carried out its difficult task, it slowly dawned on me that here might be the key to the unresolved story that had been buzzing inside my head for so many years: that fictitious kidnapping and trial should occur, not in a nation under the boot of a dictator, but in one that was in transition to democracy, where so many Chileans were grappling with the hidden traumas of what had been done to them while other Chileans wondered if their crimes would now be revealed. It also became clear that the way to make the husband of the tortured woman have a tremendous stake in the outcome of that kidnapping was to make him a member of a commission similar to the one headed by Rettig. And it did not take me long to conclude that, rather than a novel, what needed to be written was a play.

It was a risky idea. I knew from experience that distance is often the best ally of an author and that when we deal, with events that are being enacted and multiplied in immediate history, a danger always exists of succumbing to a "documentary" or overly realistic approach, losing universality and creative freedom, trying to adjust the characters to the events unfolding around us rather than letting them emerge on their own, letting them surprise and disturb us. I also knew that I would be savagely criticized by some in my own country for "rocking the boat" by reminding everyone about the long-term effects of terror and violence on people precisely at a time when we were being asked to be notably cautious. I felt, however, that if as a citizen I had to be responsible and reasonable, as an artist I had to answer the wild mating call of my characters and break the silence which was weighing upon so many of my self-censored compatriots, fearful of creating "trouble" for the new democracy. It was then and is now more than ever my belief that a fragile democracy is strengthened by expressing for all to see the deep dramas and sorrows and hopes that underlie its existence and that it is not by hiding the damage we have inflicted on ourselves that we will avoid its repetition. As I began to write I found the characters trying to figure out the sort of questions that so many Chileans were asking themselves privately, but that hardly anyone seemed interested in posing in public. How can those who tortured and those who were tortured coexist in the same land?

How to heal a country that has been traumatized by repression if the fear to speak out is still omnipresent everywhere? And how do you reach the truth if lying has become a habit? How do we keep the past alive without becoming its prisoner? How do we forget it without risking its repetition in the future? Is it legitimate to sacrifice the truth to insure peace? And what are the consequences of suppressing that past and the truth it is whispering or howling to us? Are people free to search for justice and equality if the threat of a military intervention haunts them? And given these circumstances, can violence be avoided? And how guilty are we all of what happened to those who suffered most? And perhaps the greatest dilemma of them all: how to confront these issues without destroying the national consensus, which creates democratic stability?

Three weeks later, *Death and the Maiden* was ready.

If the play revealed many of the hidden conflicts that were just under the surface of the nation, and therefore posed a clear threat to people's psychological security, it could also be an instrument through which we explored our identity and the contradictory options available to us in the years to come.

A multitude of messages of the contemporary imagination, specifically those that are channeled through the mass entertainment media, assure us, over and over, that there is an easy, even facile, comforting, answer to most of our problems. Such an aesthetic strategy seems to me not only to falsify and disdain human experience but in the case of Chile or of any country that is coming out of a period of enormous conflict and pain, it turns out to be counterproductive for the community, freezing its maturity and growth. I felt that *Death and the Maiden* 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.

Which is a way of stating that this piece of fiction, as so much of what I had written previously in my novels, stories, poems, and other plays, was not merely Chilean in scope but addressed problems that could be found all over the world, all over the twentieth century, all over the face of humanity through the ages. It was not only about a country that is afraid and simultaneously needful of understanding its fear and its scars, not only about the long-term effects of torture and violence on human beings and the beautiful body of their land, but about other themes that have always obsessed me: what happens when women take power. How can you tell the truth if the mask you have adopted ends up being identical to your face?

How does memory beguile and save and guide us? How can we keep our innocence once we have tasted evil? How to forgive those who have hurt us irreparably? How do we find a language that is political but not pamphletary? How to tell stories that are both popular and ambiguous, stories that can be understood by large audiences and yet contain stylistic experimentation, that are mythical and also about immediate human beings?

Death and the Maiden appears in English at a moment when humanity is undergoing extraordinary changes, when there is great hope for the future and great confusion about what that future may bring. In the current debate, little is being heard from that submerged zone of our species who live far from the centers of power but are often near the quick center of suffering where ethical choices determine the immediate shape of things to come and things to be postponed. In times such as these, when the more miserable and distant lands seem to disappear from the horizon, it may help us a bit, perhaps a teensy-weensy bit, I would hope, to think of the Paulinas, the Gerardos, the Robertos, of the world to figure out for ourselves which of these three we most resemble, how much of our secluded lives are expressed in each of these characters and in all of them. Until finally, I would also hope, we would realize that what we feel when we watch and whisper and ache with these faraway people from faraway Chile could well be that strange trembling state of humanity we call recognition, a bridge across our divided globe.

Ariel Dorfman September 11, 1991



With a sign that reads in Spanish "I have faith in Chile and her destiny," supporters of Chile's late President Salvador Allende gather at an event marking Allende's 1970 electoral victory outside La Moneda presidential palace in Santiago, Chile, Monday, Sept. 4, 2023.

About the Director



Born in Beirut to Palestinian parents, Ismail Khalidi is a playwright, screenwriter and director. Khalidi's own plays include *Truth Serum Blues* (Pangea World Theater 2005), *Tennis in Nablus* (Alliance Theatre 2010), *Foot* (Teatro Amal 2016), *Sabra Falling* (Pangea 2017), and *Dead Are My People* (Noor Theatre 2018). He also co-adapted two novels for the stage with Naomi Wallace; Ghassan Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (Finborough Theatre 2018; Pangea 2023) and Sinan Antoon's *The Corpse Washer* (Actors Theatre of Louisville 2019). Khalidi's directorial debut was the Chilean premiere of *Foot*, which was produced in Valparaiso and then Santiago in 2016-17. He co-edited *Inside/Outside: Six Plays from Palestine and the Diaspora* (TCG 2015) and his plays have been published in numerous anthologies, including the upcoming collection, *Until I Return: The Selected Works of Ismail Khalidi* (Bloomsbury, 2025). His writing has been featured in *American Theatre Magazine*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Nation*, *Mizna*, *Guernica*, *Al-Jazeera*, *The Dramatist* and *ReMezcla*. Khalidi was the 2023 Artist-in Residence at Boston University's Center on Forced Displacement and is a Directing Fellow at Pangea World Theater. He holds an MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

A Note from the Director

Our world is on fire in more ways than one. Fascism lurks much closer to home than many would like to admit, and not only in the form of the most obvious and buffoonish (albeit dangerous) proponents of hate and intolerance amongst us. Our country, under both parties, has for decades supported not only the rise of the racist carceral state at home, but endless war, occupation and right wing dictatorship abroad. The torture and disappearances rampant in the dungeons and back-alleys of Latin America's U.S.-backed regimes in the second half of the 20th century have never really closed, but rather migrated to other detention centers and black sites run by other similarly undemocratic regimes elsewhere - all of them backed by bipartisan consensus in D.C..

Ariel Dorfman's award-winning play is startling and trenchant in its re-imagining of the personal and public aftermaths of the unimaginable violence (especially against women) of one such regime. And while the country in question remains unnamed in the play, it is clearly in reference to Dorfman's Chile and the atrocities committed by the CIA-backed Pinochet regime that ruled the country from 1973-1990. That said, the play could just as easily take place in almost any country in Latin America, or elsewhere for that matter. It is an elegant but difficult piece of theater. And it is unmistakably a play born from the rage and sorrow of an exile's pen. It is a story which reminds us that in the face of unspeakable crimes against humanity - whether in Chile, Argentina, the Congo, Palestine, Sudan, South Africa or elsewhere - any process of truth and reconciliation is bound to fail without justice for the most silenced and vulnerable victims of empire and real accountability for even its most 'respectable' handmaidens.

Ismail Khalidi

An interview with the Director

1. How did you first come across this play and what about the script called you to direct it?

I read this play in high school and then university over 20 years ago. I've long admired Ariel Dorfman's work. Furthermore, I've lived in Chile for the last 10 years. And although it's not explicitly stated - it's purposefully kind of left unsaid, or unspecified - but for all intents and purposes, the play is about Chile, which is where Ariel Dorfman lived for a long time and was exiled from at the time of the dictatorship. So, of course, the play could be about other places too but it's about Chile. So for me, it was about a confluence of factors. I love the play. I think it's really a difficult, timely, timeless piece of theater. It also has this really intense, intimate setting, and three person cast. And so even though this play is about the crimes against dissidence, against leftists, against activists, and specifically against women under US-backed dictatorships, it's also about how the US as an imperial power affects the lives of millions of people around the world. Even the most intimate corners of their lives are affected by these policies that are decided in Washington, and we see that unfolding today in Palestine where (U.S. backed torture camps are part of the ongoing genocidal war), and we see it unfolding in other parts of the world. So, to me, it's a really timely play even though it's also of its moment (the 1990s after the return to democracy in Chile) and also very universal and timeless. So it's a really exciting project for me to take up as my first directing project with Pangea.

2. How did your vision for the play influence your casting choices?

For me it was really important to get performers that I thought could bring the right intensity and kind of rigor to the roles. And so I think we have a great cast in that respect. I think we have three really smart, fearless actors. And so I have faith that they will be able to do justice to the text, to the politics, and to the very difficult themes that are born of doing this work. It's not an easy play. The themes are not easy. We wanted actors who could really handle that, excavate it all, and bring something fresh and ferocious and vulnerable to it.

3. Do you have a ritual for rehearsals and/or for shows?

I think any craft should be an evolving craft and I'm certainly still evolving my craft as a director and still learning. I do feel that with every group, every play, every ensemble, every historical moment, every 'present' that we find ourselves in requires a certain flexibility, and adaptation of one's rituals and style to the moment. For all those reasons, my approach is not totally set in stone. But I do definitely have some constants, and I draw from a lot of Pangea's rituals that I have picked up over two plus decades of collaboration. I also bring in rituals and resources from NIDEC - the National Institute of Directing and Ensemble Creation. And I bring in my own rituals and aesthetics and politics that make me who I am, that I've picked up as a performer and writer over the years. I also like to incorporate those other things that feel important to the people in the room, that way it's not just me creating the atmosphere but that it's also a communal, consensual, collaborative environment, and that is the spirit and ethic that reigns in the room. So I like to bring in all of those elements: those I bring from Pangea, those I've picked up, and those the moment calls for. For example, we are living through a genocide and a mass torture campaign while doing a play that's about torture. We want our process to contextualize and honor, in a sensitive way, that horror and difficulty and the injustice of those connections over space and time. But also, what are the actors bringing into the room? What does the design team bring into the room? What are those things that folks want to have in the space with us as we journey towards sharing?

4. Do you know about the film "Death and the Maiden"? And is it different to work with a play that was made into a movie?

I've seen that film. Long ago. And I'm hesitant to watch it again even though I remember it being a good film with brilliant actors. I love film. Film adaptations are really great. The danger is letting the media of film take over our imaginations and kind of coloring how we might create theater. So, for now, I'm not rewatching it. But that's not to say it's not a valuable adaptation. Film is a different language than theater. So I think for us, it's about what powerful magic can we create in that space with the bodies in the room.

5. Who is this production for? Who should come see the show?

I guess I would recommend it for folks 17 and older just because it does deal with some challenging themes and imagery. But other than that, you know, I really think that this play speaks to a wide cross section of audiences, to many constituencies and communities.. I think this play is, as I've said before, focused on Latin American history, and politics. So the show is for folks that are interested in American policy.

Folks that are interested in the politics and the ethics of torture, of human rights, of feminism, of patriarchy, and also for folks who are interested in foreign policy, and the way that torture and violence is carried out not only abroad but also within our own institutions, and in our own carceral state here in the US.

So that's on the broader political level but I also think anybody that's interested in a really well crafted play about memory, about accountability, about love and honesty in a partnership, about how trauma affects us – how trauma, impunity, and memory circulate in our everyday lives from the most intimate to the most public and societal levels. It is a really taut, psychological thriller in the dramatic sense. But politically, historically, and ethically, it raises all of these really big questions as well. So I think it should appeal to a lot of folks, folks interested in how to create accountability and justice in a messed up world.

6. If you could make one person watch the show, who would it be?

That's a good question. I mean, I'd certainly dig Henry Kissinger out of his grave and make him watch it. I think anybody who defends or justifies torture, or dictatorship, or apartheid, or even just US-foreign policy, or violence against women should definitely be forced to watch this show.

(Henry Alfred Kissinger was United States Secretary of State from 1973 to 1977 and National Security Advisor from 1969 to 1975, so he served a high political position in the US- government during the time of the coup d'etat in Chile.)

7. What does it mean for you as a director to direct this play in an intimate black box studio rather than a larger theater that seats 200 or more?

One of the reasons I picked this play was because I wanted to work in the black box, and one of the reasons I wanted to work in the black box was to do this play. I am a fan of intimate spaces for theater. I also love epic theater in big spaces but, especially for a play like this, I'm excited to be in a relatively small space of 50 or so people in attendance, and really be able to see how people react. And to really have them close up on what's happening, in the action, and to have that kind of complicity that comes with it. This play also deals with the idea of complicity. Here, as audience members, you can't look away, and you can see each other, witnessing. So what are you going to do? There's no escaping what's going on on stage. There's no taking your distance from it.

8. In addition to that question of space, if you could pick any place in the world where you could direct this piece, where would it be?

I would love to do it in a site-specific place. I mean, I live near the Pacific Ocean in Chile and this play takes place in a beach house, presumably on the pacific coast of Chile. One of the characters in this play is actually, to me, the location, this isolated location on the ocean. So I think site-specific would be really interesting for a play like this.

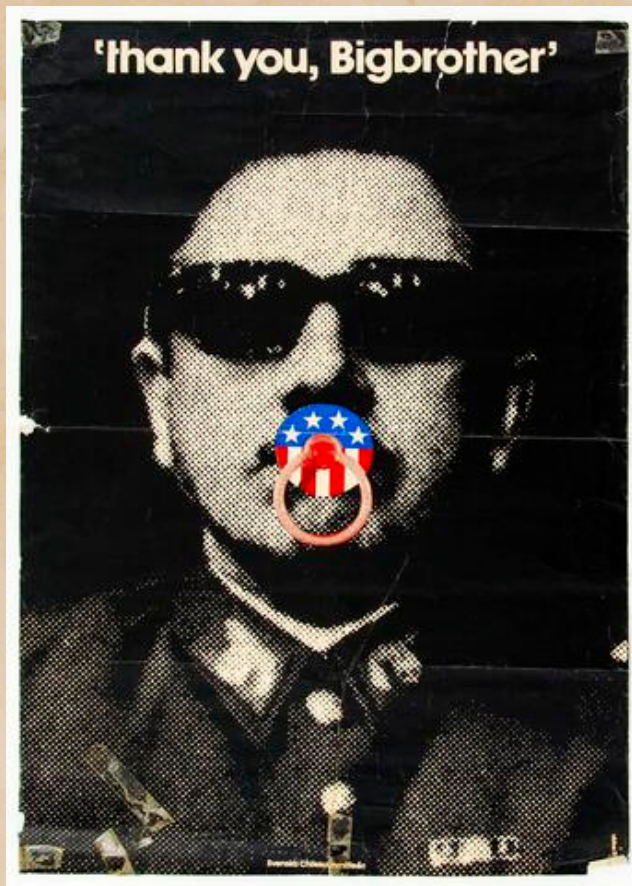
(Site-specific theater is a form of theater where the artwork is shown in a place that resembles the themes it deals with or even the exact same location where it is set. For example, if you have a show about the upcoming presidential election, you could perform it in an voting office.)

9. You started out in theater as a playwright and are currently living in Chile. How have your personal experience and expertise influenced your approach to this production?

I'm not an expert on Chile but I do think I bring a little bit of everything. I've worked professionally in theater for about 20 years. First as a performer. I've worked for decades as a playwright. I have a lot of experience working with Pangea as well, with Dipankar Mukherjee and Meena Natrajan. I have been directed by some amazing people over the years, I have studied with and sat at the table (as a playwright) with brilliant directors over the years and soaked in their craft. And I've also directed myself, in Chile and internationally. So I'm constantly learning. I also think that having some of the Chilean context from which this play was born is crucial. But additionally, my politics as a Palestinian, as an abolitionist, as an anti-imperialist, inform how I approach my work, which is from a viewpoint of who has power and who doesn't and of restorative justice. I am constantly trying to be attuned to who is silenced and who is writing the narrative and history in the official discourse on things. Whether we are talking about Chile or Palestine, about the reservations in the U.S. or anywhere really in the global South or formerly/currently colonized world: There is a power dynamic at work and that affects whose stories get told, how they're told, who's listening to the stories and who gets silenced. And this play is also about silence, it's about complicity, it's about memory and the way accountability becomes a selective process often orchestrated by the very people who are guilty or complicit or profited from those crimes. So yeah, those are things that have always interested me as a person, as a Palestinian, as an artist, and certainly as a director.

10. Is there anything you want to tell the audience?

I think just to hold two truths at one time. To remember that there's a reason why Ariel Dorfman didn't specifically name where the play takes place because I think it's very easy for us, especially as folks in the United States, to think that "it's over there, it's far" but actually not only do similar things happen here, but also the things that happen there are very often directly or indirectly stem from our foreign policy, and are carried out with our tax dollars, and by our politicians. And so I just think it's really important to have a historical, global context for what we're watching but also to understand that these things are not so far away. They are not so different from us and actually so much of what happens in the world not only affects us, but is affected by us, and often we are complicit in it as Americans. And also to remember that, despite that context, this is a human story about a couple, about love, and about how trauma leaves ripple effects in our lives that are destructive and unpredictable but not necessarily cause for hopelessness and defeat.



"Thank you, Bigbrother - Gracias hermano grande" by Chilekomiteen

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Historical Context

Before the play's text begins in earnest, Dorfman specifies that the action takes place in a country that is "probably Chile" and is certainly undergoing a painful transition from military dictatorship to democracy. The play is a response to the overthrow of Salvador Allende's socialist government by General Pinochet's brutal military dictatorship in 1973. The United States, who disapproved of Allende's government, is alleged to have supported and even aided Pinochet's actions in the takeover. Not long after that coup, Argentina too underwent similar turmoil—both countries saw widespread civil repression, "disappearances," torture, and murder. *Death and the Maiden* is less about life under an authoritarian dictatorship, however, and more fundamentally concerned with what happens after—that is, how a country both practically and emotionally recovers from pain, what its people need to do to properly move on, and whether a nation can ever truly put the past behind it.

Timeline of Events

- 1960s | Left-winged parties rise in Chile with hopes of nationalizing certain industries especially copper. This worries US-owned companies in the country.
- 1961 | "The Alliance for Progress" is signed by John F. Kennedy, loaning more than \$20 billion to Latin American countries in hopes of 'promoting democracy.' This funding is also given to US-favored political parties, such as the Partido Demócrata Cristiano, or Christian Democratic Party (PDC).
- Sept. 1964 | Eduardo Frei (PDC) is elected President of Chile while being monetarily backed by the US. With a focus on making amendments with the US companies on the nationalization of copper mines, this becomes a popular discussion in both Chilean society and the PDC itself, remaining a huge focus during the 1970 elections.
- 1970 | Salvador Allende (Unidad Popular/ UP, a leftist party) and Jorge Alessandri (National Party/ PD) ties in the Presidential election.

The US government financially supports the election against Allende.

Oct. 24,
1970

A majority of the Chilean Congress elects Salvador Allende as President of Chile, the first democratically elected socialist president in the world. On the day of his inauguration, President Nixon declares that the relation between the US and Chile will continue, but that financial aid will be cut short for fear of a communist Chile arising out of Allende's presidency.

"I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people"
-Henry Kissinger



Salvador Allende during his inaugural parade, November 3, 1970;

Naul Ojeda

Jul.
16,
1971

Allende passes a law to nationalize the copper mining industry resulting in a heavy cut in US profits. Another law nationalizes the US-owned phone industry, worsening US-Chile relations.

The first months of Allende's career see a rise in Chilean business profits and increased worker wages. However, eventually, Chile begins to import more foreign goods in response to an increase in consumerism and funding difficulties -- a result of the decrease in financial support from foreign nations.

1971-
1973

Strikes against Chile's economic situation and financial reliability of other countries become more common and gradually violent.

Aug.
22,
1973

The Chamber of Deputies accuse Allende of breaking the constitution. He denies this.

Sept.
11,
1973

The military enacts a coup against Allende.

9:10 AM: Allende gives his last speech as president. He tells the Chileans that he will not back down. He gathers his supporters by saying:

"Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers!"

Allende then helps with defending the president's palace. Once it is clear he has no chance against the rebels, he tells his supporters to back off and allegedly commits suicide.



Chilean Army troops firing on the La Moneda Palace in Santiago on Sept. 11, 1973, during a coup led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet against President Salvador Allende. (photo credit: Agence France-Presse, Getty Images)

Sept.
13,
1973

Augusto Pinochet is named President of Chile.

He dissolves the Congress, prohibits leftist parties, and imprisons his opponents and Allende supporters in Estadio Nacional (the national soccer stadium of Chile) as a makeshift prison camp. The recorded number of people imprisoned vary, but within the first eight weeks 41 people were executed.

Jun.
1975

Pinochet declares that there will be no further elections in Chile.

The US worries about the violation of human rights under the Pinochet government.

1975

A commission is assigned to look in to the involvement of the US government in Chile from the 1960s to the 1970s.

They discovered that the US financially supported the prevention of Allende's electoral win, and had plans for a military coup against him. But there was insufficient evidence to prove that the US was actively involved in the Pinochet coup.

1975

Pinochet sets up a secret force, the “Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional” (DINA), that stalked, imprisoned, tortured and murdered a huge number of political enemies as well as those who opposed him.

Pinochet also censors Chilean media.

Around 125, 000 people flee to other countries. In the early years of the dictatorship, the economic problems of Chile decrease, businesses are privatized, and custom duties are eliminated. Yet, many Chileans are without employment and social injustice increases.



*“Let those who want to turn back the clock of history and ignore the will of the majority of the people realize that even though I am not inclined to being a martyr, I will not retreat”
- Salvador Allende*

Augusto Pinochet’s soldiers burn Marxist books and the silkscreen print America Awakens, 28 September 1973.
(photo credit: Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Act, Weekly Review via Wikimedia Commons)

1980 — The Pinochet government pass a new constitution that allows Pinochet to remain dictator for another eight years.

1988 — The majority of Chileans vote against Pinochet.

1989 — Patricio Aylwin is elected President of Chile.

1990 — Pinochet is officially no longer President, but calls himself “Senator for Life,” making it impossible to sentence him nationally. Before he is cut from his position, he passes laws that protect him and his government from future legal proceedings.

Aylwin assigns the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation (known as “The Rettig Commission”) to investigate the crimes against human rights committed under the Pinochet regime.

Note: Every right-conservative politician running in the election after democracy was restored had a role within the dictatorship that was, for the most part, not investigated.

1998 — Pinochet is no longer leader of the Chilean army, but remains “Senator for Life.”



Caesar Augusto: Pinochet reviews troops inside the presidential palace in Santiago. Martin Thomas / Courtesy Reuters

Oct. 16, 1998 — With legal proceedings from Spain on Augusto Pinochet for human rights violations, authorities are finally able to arrest him at a London hospital after he receiving a minor surgery. He is 82 years old.

“Venceremos, venceremos, mil cadenas habrá que romper venceremos, venceremos la miseria sabemos vencer”
- Quilapayún (Chilean folk group)

*“We will win, we will win, a thousand chains
will have to be broken, we will win, we will
win over misery, we will know how to win”*
-Quilapayún (English Translation)

Mar. 2000 — Jack Straw, Britain’s home secretary, allows Pinochet to go back to Chile for health concerns.

Pinochet leaves London in a wheelchair, but immediately stands up and greets his supporters upon arrival in Chile.

Dec. 10, 2006 — Augusto Pinochet dies at 91, never serving never a day in prison and with over 300 charges of human rights violations unconvicted.

Other military officials guilty of committing similar crimes are either never convicted or serve their penalties in prisons with private rooms, a tennis court and access to a barbarque.

*“It is possible
they will
smash us, but
tomorrow
belongs to the
people!”*
- Salvador
Allende



People remembering their lost or killed family members.
(photo credit: Martin Berneti/AFP via Getty Images)

2023 — In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the military coup, Chile’s current President, Gabriel Boric, meets with the former still living Presidents of Chile to sign a document declaring a condemnation of Pinochet’s dictatorship. Boric endures backlash from some right-conservative politicians and a percentage of Pinochet supporters who still revere him as a hero.

Mar. 2023 — Boric announces a National Search Plan to search for those lost during Pinochet’s dictatorship, acknowledging for the first time that the government had done nothing prior to help the lost.

To this day, Chile does not have a national archive about the time or a law protecting the memory sites (e.g. the places where the victim’s bodies were found or where they were tortured), but a plan on doing so was announced.

The Role of the US

- The US was in the Cold War with Russia during the time of the military coup.
- They feared a communist revolution since other countries apart from Chile also had communist uprisings.
- There is evidence to support that the US invested about 8 million dollars between 1970 until the end of the military coup to destabilize the socialist government, and to fund US-American interests
- Initially, the US was pleased that Allende was no longer in power. Once the human rights violations became public, they condemned the crimes but did not take any action to stop it.
- It is still unclear whether or not the US financially supported Pinochet's military coup.

International Responses



A. Argentina:

- Argentina had multiple military coups around the same time as Chile, where the military also fought to take down the president democratically elected.
- The military junta also established a dictatorship similar to Chile.
- Argentina helped Pinochet by revealing the locations of Chilean refugees in Argentina.
- Argentina and Chile fought for land until 1984.

B. Bolivia:

- Bolivia had similar struggles with military coups in that period of time

C. Dominican Republic:

- The Dominican Republic also had a dictatorship from 1930 to 1961, but the president did not start a military coup.
- The dictator arrested, tortured and assassinated many political opponents, as did Pinochet.

International Responses

(cont.)



D. German Democratic Republic (DDR, by that time East-Germany):

- The German Democratic Republic was run by a socialist government who supported Allende.
- When Allende died and Pinochet started to assassinate political opponents, the German Democratic Republic took in around 2000 Chilean refugees.
- The government successfully smuggled the president of Allende's party out of Chile to rescue him from Pinochet.

E. Federal Republic of Germany (BRD, by that time West-Germany):

- Parts of the secret service supported the Pinochet regime through the provision of weapons.
- A German named Paul Schäfer founded a sect called "Colonia Dignidad" in Chile, that served as a torture and prison center for Pinochet. Germany knew about it but did not do anything to stop it.
- Germany continues to invest money and resources to investigate the country's support of the Pinochet regime. Of all crimes committed in Chile during that time, the cases from "Colonia Dignidad" are the most investigated.

Glossary

Habeas corpus: A writ of habeas corpus is used to bring a prisoner or other detainee before the court to determine if the person's imprisonment or detention is lawful

Amnesty: a general pardon for offenses, especially political offenses, against a government, often granted before any trial or conviction.

Moral sanction: There are two main interpretations of moral sanctions in the contemporary ethics: 'the moral sanction as a public condemnation of a perpetrator' and 'the moral sanction as a self-condemnation of a perpetrator (his/her feeling of guilt, pricks of conscience).

Coup: a sudden decisive exercise of force in politics and especially the violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group

Fascist: far-right form of government in which most of the country's power is held by one ruler or a small group, under a single party.

Equanimity: mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation.

Communism: a theory or system of government based on common ownership of all property and the absence of social classes.

Socialism: another theory or system of government that wants to overcome capitalism and free the working class. Their core values are equality, solidarity and emancipation.

Democracy: yet another theory or system of government that works by elections. The majority of the citizens in a democratic country decides about its leaders, laws or other important choices to be made.

Dictatorship: a government in which absolute power is exercised by a dictator (a single person with unrestricted control).

Genocide: the violent, systematic extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group.

Phantasmagoric: having a fantastical appearance, like in a dream or as though created by the imagination

Regime: a ruling or prevailing government

Schizoid: relating to a personality disorder marked by dissociation, passivity, withdrawal, and the inability to form social relationships.

Pre-show Discussion Questions

- This play is set in a place and time right after a dictatorship has ended. While it can be assumed the play is set in Chile, why do you think Dorfman chose to make the time and place vague? What are some images that come to mind when you think of a place and people recovering from a dictatorship?
- Take a moment to take in the space when you enter. What do you hear, see, feel? What are some words to describe the world you just stepped into?
- Notice where you are sitting. How close are you to the stage, the actors, other audience members? Notice how this may influence your experience of the play as you watch it.

Post-show Discussion Questions

- What are your immediate reactions to the end of the play? What are some words, sounds, or feelings that you are experiencing?
- Did Paulina kill Roberto? Is Roberto in the ending scene Paulina's illusion?
- Do you think Roberto is Doctor Miranda? Why or why not?
- Do you identify or sympathize with any of the characters? Identify a moment in the play that resonated with you. What about that moment spoke to you and why?
- Who's story is being told? How does the omission of information affect the characters and narrative? What does this say about the transparency (or lack thereof) of information during and after a dictatorship?
- What are your thoughts on both Paulina's and Gerardo's views on punishment? What does it say about the process of Truth and Reconciliation?
- Why do you think Dorfman decided to use the song "Death and the Maiden" in his play? What layers does this add to the piece?
- How does this play apply to the world that we live in? What are other countries that have overcome dictatorship? What did or does their aftermath look like? How does this play echo or reflect what you see in that country?
- What was it like watching this play in a more intimate setting? How might the experience have been different in a larger theater space?

Resources

Online Videos:

- ["The Other 9/11": Ariel Dorfman on 50th Anniversary of U.S.-Backed Coup in Chile That Ousted Allende.](#) An interview with Ariel Dorfman. (2023)
- [Where does Chile stand 50 years after its military coup? | DW News](#) (2023)
- [Ariel Dorfman speaking about his book *Feeding on Dreams*](#)
- [Dream and Terror: 50 years after the military coup in Chile](#) (Video in German, subtitles in Spanish and English available)
- [Human Rights in Chile: an Interview with María Luisa Ortiz](#)
- [Digital timeline of Chilean History](#)
- Listen to [Schubert's quartet "Death and the Maiden"](#)

Films:

- [*Nostalgia for the Light*](#). Written and directed by Patricio Guzmán (2010)
- [*Chile '76*](#). A film by Manuela Martelli (2023)
- [*No*](#). A film by Gael García Bernal (2013)
- [*Machuca*](#). A film directed by Andres Wood (2004)
- [*The Battle of Chile*](#) (parts 1-3). A film by Patricio Guzmán (1975)
- [*Occupy the Imagination: Tales of Seduction and Resistance*](#). A film by Rodrigo Dorfman (2013)

Books:

- [*Chile: The Other September 11*](#) by Ariel Dorfman. Edited by Pilar Aguilera and Ricardo Fredes (2006)
- [*Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*](#) by Eduardo Galeano (1997)
- [*Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Making of an Imperial Republic \(Updated and Expanded Edition\)*](#) by Greg Grandin
- [*Feeding on Dreams: Confessions of an Unrepentant Exile*](#) by Ariel Dorfman (2012)
- [*The Suicide Museum: A Novel*](#) by Ariel Dorfman (2023)

Articles:

- "I Watched a Democracy Die. I Don't Want To Do It Again" by Ariel Dorfman (2023). The New York Times.
- "Chile's Feminists Are the Memory of the Future" by Bree Busk. Roar Magazine.
- "The Coup Against the Third World: Chile, 1973" by The TriContinental (2023)
- "Their anti-rape performance went viral globally. What next for LASTESIS?" by Naomi Larsson Piñeda (2023)
- "On Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*" - an essay by David Luban (1998). Published in Yale Journal for Law & the Humanities.
- September 11, 1973: Military coup in Chile (article in German that can be Google translated)
- "Chile: 50 years since the coup d'état, exercising historical memory is vital for the country's future" by Amnesty International (2023)
- About "The Rettig Commission" - Chile's National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (2003)
- "Chile marks military coup as divisions continue" by Charis McGowan on the 50th anniversary of the coup (2023). BBC.
- About Pinochets UK arrest by Charis McGowan (2023). The Guardian.
- In Chile's National Stadium, Dark Past Shadows Copa América Matches by David Waldstein (2015). The New York Times.
- The Allende Years and the Pinochet Coup, 1969-1973 - Office of the Historian.
- On the Commission of Inquiry - United States Institute Of Peace (2003).