PROGRAMME

DANTON'S DEATH

by GEORG BUECHNER
translated and adapted by JAMES MAXWELL

LYRIC OPERA HOUSE
HAMMERSMITH - W

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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 Desmoulins JAMES MAXWELL
Herault-Schellet JOHN TURNER
Lacroix FULTON MACKAY
Pitteaux DONALD BRADLEY
Legendre LEE FOX

Members of the Committee of Public Safety

Robespierre PATRICK MCGOOHAN
St. Just PETER SALLIS
Barere ROBERT BERNAL
Collot d'Herbois ROBERT POINTON
Billaud-Varennes MARC SHELDON
Fouquier-Tinville LEE FOX
Tom Paine (an English philosopher) PETER SALLIS
Simon (a theoretical politician) MAXWELL SHAW
A Deputy from Lyons HARALD JENSEN
A Young Gentleman DILYS HAMLETT
Julie (Danton's wife) AVRIL ELGAR
Lucre (Camille's wife) 

Prostitutes

Marie PENELOPE HORN
Rosine ANITA GIORGI
Aurora 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
Simon's Wife
In the Bread Queue

PETER SALLIS
AVRIL ELGAR
ROY SPENCE
ROBERT BERNAL
ANITA GIORGI
ROBERT JACKSON
DILYS HAMLETT
LEE FOX
PENELOPE HORNER

Scene 2: A Room in Danton's House
Danton
Julie
Hersault
Former Countess
Former Marchioness
Lacroix
Camille
Philippeau

PATRICK WYMARK
DILYS HAMLETT
JOHN TURNER
JUNE BAILEY
HELEN MONTAGUE
FULTON MacKAY
JAMES MAXWELL
DONALD BRADLEY

Scene 3: The Jacobin Club
Robespierre
St. Just
Collot
Billaud
Lacroix
Hersault
Legendre
Deputy from Lyons
Citizens

HAROLD LANG
PATRICK McGOOGHAN
ROBERT BERNAL
ROBERT POINTON
FULTON MacKAY
JOHN TURNER
LEE FOX
MAXWELL SHAW

Scene 4: A Room in the Palais Royal
Danton
Marion
Lacroix
Hersault
Rosalie
Anita Giorgi
Aurore
JUNE BAILEY

Scene 5: A Room in Robespierre's Lodgings
Danton
Robespierre
Lacroix
Hersault
St. Just

PATRICK WYMARK
HAROLD LANG
FULTON MacKAY
JOHN TURNER
PATRICK McGOOGHAN

Scene 6: Danton's Dressing Room
Danton
Lacroix
Camille
Hersault
Philippeau

PATRICK WYMARK
FULTON MacKAY
JAMES MAXWELL
JOHN TURNER
DONALD BRADLEY

Scene 7: A Street
Danton
Camille
Simon
Waiter
Legendre
Young Woman
Marion
Rosalie
1st Soldier
2nd Soldier
Mother
Eugenie
A Young Gentleman
1st Gentleman
2nd Gentleman
Ballad Singer

PATRICK WYMARK
JAMES MAXWELL
PETER SALLIS
ROBERT POINCTON
LEE FOX
HELEN MONTAGUE
PENELOPE HORNER
ANITA GIORGI
ROY SPENCE
DILYS HAMLETT
JUNE BAILEY
HAROLD JENSEN
MARC SHELTON
ROBERT BERNAL
MAXWELL SHAW

PART ONE—Contd.
PART ONE—Contd.

Scene 8: A Room in Camille's House
Danton PATRICK WYMARK
Camille JAMES MAXWELL
Lucille AVRIL ELGAR
Hерault 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 McGOOHAH
Simon PETER SALLIS
Soldiers DONALD BRADLEY
ROBERT JACKSON
ROY SPENCE

Scene 12: The National Convention
President HARALD JENSEN
Robespierre HAROLD LANG
St. Just PATRICK McGOOHAH
Colot 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
Hерault JOHN TURNER
Philippeau DONALD BRADLEY
Tom Paine LEE FOX
Chaumette ROBERT BERNAL
Prisoners PETER SALLIS
ROY POINTON

Scene 14: The Revolutionary Tribunal
Judge HARALD JENSEN
Fouquier-Tinville MARC SHELDON
St. Just PATRICK McGOOHAH
Danton PATRICK WYMARK
Lacroix FULTON MacKAY
Camille JAMES MAXWELL
Hерault JOHN TURNER
Philippeau DONALD BRADLEY
Citizens and Soldiers

Scene 15: The Offices of the Committee of Public Safety
St. Just PATRICK McGOOHAH
Barere PETER SALLIS
Colot ROBERT BERNAL
Billaud ROBERT POINTON
Fouquier-Tinville MARC SHELDON
Lafayette MAXWELL SHAW
Orderly ROY SPENCE
Scene 16: The Revolutionary Tribunal
Judge HARALD JENSEN
Fouquier-Tinville MARC SHELDON
St. Just PATRICK McGOOHAN
Danton PATRICK WYMARK
Camille JAMES MAXWELL
Hercule 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
Hercule 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
Hercule JOHN TURNER
Lucille AVRIL ELGAR
First Executioner LEE FOX
Second Executioner PATRICK McGOOHAN
Third Executioner MAXWELL SHAW
Soldiers and Citizens

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Secretary DOROTHY CARR
Directors' Assistant and Press KENNETH CAVANDER (GER 4236)
Assistant to the Producer JULIET BARKSBY
Stage Manager NATASHA RHEELE
Assistant Stage Managers ROBERT JACKSON
HELEN MONTAGUE
ROY SPENCE
Wardrobe MARTIN TUCKER

Photographs of this Production by Ivor Sharp

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The Management reserve the right to make alterations to the cast without warning.
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 excelled 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 Jaeggi, 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 most accidents, the strength of a genius a puppet play, a child's struggle against an iron law; the greatest of us can only recognize 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 gulder 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 lecturing..."
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 a 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".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEIGHT</td>
<td>6 ft. 2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAIR</td>
<td>blond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROW</td>
<td>very protruding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYEBROWS</td>
<td>blond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYES</td>
<td>gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOSE</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUTH</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEARD</td>
<td>blond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIN</td>
<td>round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACE</td>
<td>oval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLOURING</td>
<td>healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATURE</td>
<td>strong and slim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIAL FEATURES</td>
<td>shortsighted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, Hérault 34, Philippeau 36, and Lacroux 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.
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 Michael 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.

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.

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 50 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’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".

Alexandre Roussel in a commune: "... Revenge is the only source of freedom. To this goddess alone may we sacrifice".

Deputy Javouhey 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".

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.

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.

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 Molière, 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 Pazan, and devised and designed by Disley Jones, with Stanley Myers as Musical Director.

The Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, is within one minute of the Piccadilly Tube, the District Railway, the Metropolitan Station, and can be reached by omnibus and trolley "bus from all parts.

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(2) All passages, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for use shall be kept clear and free from obstruction, whether permanent or temporary.
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