

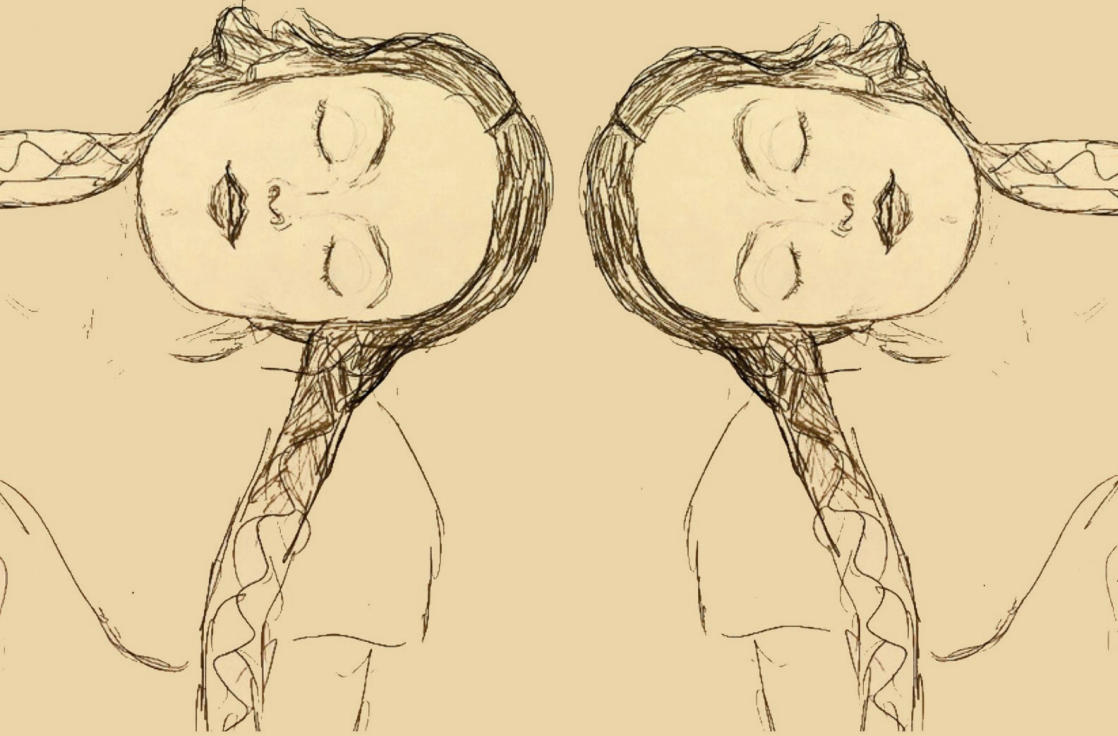
Leeds Arts Centre presents

THE MAIDS

by Jean Genet

translated by Bernard Frechtman

a play about power, revenge and dark fantasies



PROGRAMME

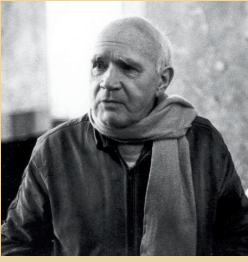
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*This amateur production of "The Maids (Frechtman translation)" is presented by arrangement with
Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk*



Jean Genet was a French playwright, novelist, poet, and political activist known for his interactions with notable figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, and Hans Köchler. His work, which spanned various forms, was both inspiring and provocative, showcasing a style that was distinctly his own.

His work often explored themes of existentialism, identity, and the margins of society, delving into the lives of outcasts and rebels. Genet's writing was marked by its lyrical intensity and bold examination of taboo subjects, earning him both acclaim and controversy.

Among his most notable works are *The Thief's Journal*, which presents a semi-autobiographical account of his experiences with crime and punishment, and *The Balcony*, a play that satirizes power and authority.

Despite his turbulent past, including time spent in prison, Genet's unique voice and perspective left an indelible mark on literature and philosophy.

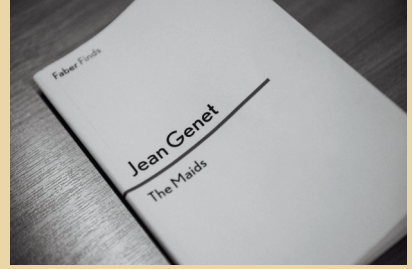
His friendships with intellectuals like Sartre and Foucault were not merely social; they were a meeting of minds, each influencing the other's thoughts and works. Genet's activism, particularly in the realms of LGBTQ rights and anti-colonialism, further demonstrated his commitment to challenging the status quo and advocating for the disenfranchised.

His legacy remains vibrant, inspiring new generations of writers and thinkers to question and redefine the boundaries of art and society.

The Maids represents a perfect encapsulation of his powerful prose, his interests in power and ritual, and his vitriolic fire.

A note from the director

When I first came across *The Maids* I had been reading a lot of plays that tried to be incredibly realistic in their dialogue but in a way that always felt false. And if you couldn't relate to those exact characters (usually middle class Londoners) you were left with nothing.



A lot of theatre and acting seems to be about trying to be as 'real' as possible. But we know that when we are watching a play those are not real people but actors. This is what Genet plays with, by bringing this theatricality to the fore. We have actors who are playing actors who are playing actors. And each, both cast member and character, is complicit.

"When slaves love one another, it's not love."

Genet always viewed himself as on the margins of society, even when he was celebrated by France's most prominent figures – Jean Cocteau, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Satre, Pablo Picasso. Growing up as an orphan who was wrongly accused of theft, he decided to embrace criminality. He wrote two autofictional novels about his time as a vagabond and sex worker.

The maids fantasise of criminality too, because for them anything is more desirable than being a maid. They long to convert themselves into a role at the margins of society as opposed to the bottom rung of it. They have internalised the hatred that they are treated with for being in this societal position. As a result, the maids and their mistress are trapped in a cycle of hate-love, needing each other, but not able to truly love one another.

"I wanted to make up for the poverty of my grief by the splendor of my crime."

It would not have been possible to stage such an ambitious piece of work without an incredibly talented and hardworking cast and crew. I thank them for their openness and commitment. They were a true pleasure to work with.

Actor Profiles

Lucia Boulenz is Claire

Lucia is a new member of Leeds Arts Centre (LAC). She studied drama in Rome before moving to Leeds. This is her first main role in a play in the UK. When she is not running lines with Becca and Nicole she loves dancing, backpacking in the most uncomfortable ways and writing.



Becca Millard is Solange

Becca has been a member of LAC since 2023, taking part in various productions such as *The Moonstone* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In her free time she likes falling in love, petting cows at Meanwood Farm and tennis.



Nicole Smith is The Madame

Nicole has been a member of LAC since 2022, regularly helping backstage and appearing onstage in *Overtones*, *The Moonstone*, *Two* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In her spare time she enjoys taking ballet classes and spending time with her pet parrot, Ronald.



Production Images



A huge thanks to Mark Hillyer at True North Studio for his amazing photos. If you are looking for headshots or event photography you won't find better than True North!

For more information visit:
truenorthuk.com

TRUENORTH

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

First established in 1945, Leeds Arts Centre (LAC) originally comprised Fine Arts, Musical, Literary, Film and Children's Theatre groups based at the Civic Theatre, (now Leeds City Museum). They moved to their new home at the Carriageworks in 2005.

A thriving community group, LAC encourages engagement and interest in the arts, both onstage, backstage, socially and creatively, with new writers. Presenting four productions a year at the Carriageworks, LAC seeks to maintain a high standard of production with a wide range of ways to get involved. Holding regular socials and play readings in Leeds, new members are always welcome.

LAC is a registered charity and nonprofit making organization. Our members range in age from 18 to 80+. If you are interested in joining please speak to a member of the team or visit www.leedsartscentre.org.uk for more information.

LEEDS COMMUNITY ARTS NETWORK

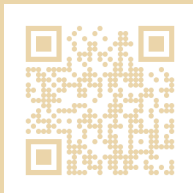
LAC is a proud member of Leeds Community Arts Network (Leeds CAN). Leeds CAN comprises theatre, musical theatre, youth theatre and other arts societies working closely with Leeds City Council and the Carriageworks, (where most performances take place), to produce a varied programme.

For more information visit: leedsan.org.uk

COSTUME HIRE

If you liked the costumes you saw in **THE MAIDS**, Leeds Arts Centre's costume is available for hire.

For more information visit: leedsartscentre.org.uk/costume-hire



Scan for More Info
about Leeds Arts Centre

Maids Crew & Acknowledgements

***Director** Francesca Butler*

***Production Manager** Maria Kwater*

***Stage Management** Barry Blatt & Louise Redfearn*

***Set Design** Ben Hopwood*

***Set and Properties** Ben Hopwood, Pam Wilson, Hanna Kovács, Aida Knight, Adam Churchman, Sophie Clements, Maria Kwater*

***Costume** Zoë Freedman, Jo Scott, Margaret Savage, Poppy Moore, Maria Kwater*

***Sound** Steve Fryatt, Aida Knight*

***Front of House** Shirley Broadbent and LAC members*

***Rehearsal Photography** Mark Hillyer*

***Publicity** Spike Marshall & Camilla Asher*

***Programme Design** Spike Marshall*

***Programme Printing** Rich Francis*

***Rehearsal prompts** Barry Blatt, Simon Henson, Rachel Vernelle*

With Special Thanks to;

Chapel FM for their radio interview, **Phil Dodgson & Partners** for preparing LAC Accounts, **The Fox and Newt** and **Slung Low** for hosting rehearsals, **Lewis Francis Blackburn Bray Solicitors** for Programme Printing



The sound effects used in this production contain the following samples from Freesound.org:

"CarArriveAndStop" by jmdh, "Twin Bell Alarm Clock Continuous Ringing" by cryptidcat, "Bell System Ringer Model 687A (8-70)" by FreqMan and "Doorbell Pull with pull Store Bell 06" by maisonsonique.

Upcoming Shows



**Friday 30 May to
Friday 6 June**

*Main Auditorium, Carriageworks Theatre
Presented by Leeds Gilbert & Sullivan
Society*

It's the Cold War in the early 1980's. Step into the world of Chess, where political tensions, intrigue and personal ambition collide.

Written by ABBA's Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, with lyrics by Tim Rice, Chess tells the story of a complex love triangle between two grandmasters—one American, one Russian—and a woman who manages one and falls in love with the other.

Chess features well known songs such as "One Night in Bangkok," "I Know Him So Well," and "Anthem" and combines a stunning score with a story where the protagonists find themselves pawns in a larger game of political manoeuvring and personal gain.

SCAN for More Info and to book tickets



**Wednesday 25 to
Saturday 28 June**

*The Studio, Carriageworks
Presented by Leeds Arts Centre*

Daisy Pulls It Off follows the journey of scholarship girl Daisy Meredith as she strives to find acceptance within the snobby confines of Grangewood School for Girls. Our plucky heroine faces numerous tribulations, but by remaining honourable and true in all things, everything falls into place. Daisy saves the lives of her arch-enemies, discovers the Grangewood treasure, scores the winning hockey goal, and even finds a long-lost relative.

Fast-paced and full of fun, Daisy Pulls It Off is a delightful pastiche of classic girls' school stories of old. With splendid scrapes, midnight feasts, and plenty of jolly hockey sticks, it transports audiences to a nostalgic bygone era.

SCAN for More Info and to book tickets

