

EDINBURGH GRADUATE THEATRE GROUP.

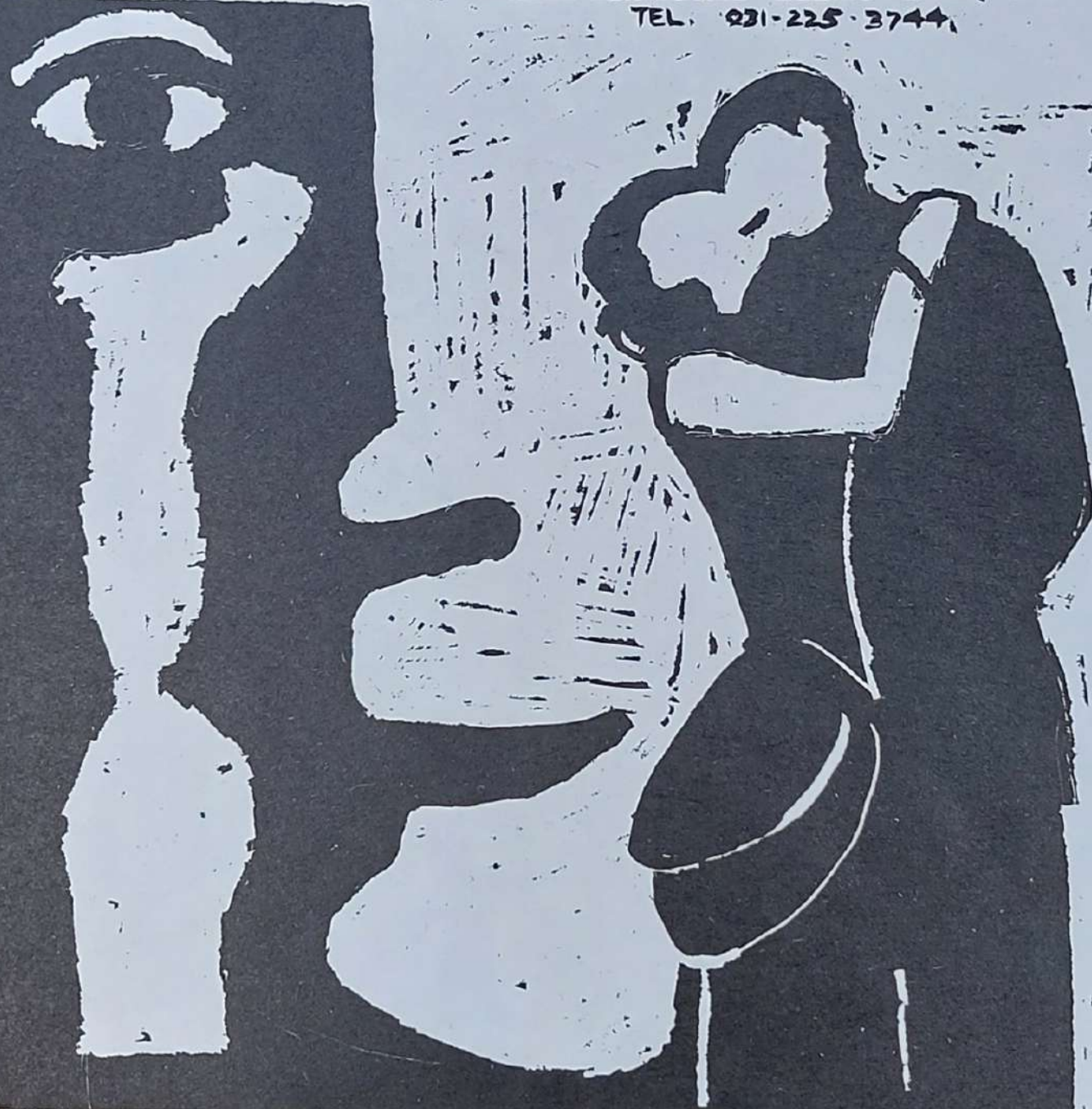
# PLAY STRINDBERG

A BLACK COMEDY BY

## FRIEDRICH DURRENMATT.

PRODUCED BY FRANK BECHHOEER.  
ADAM HOUSE THEATRE - CHAMBERS ST.  
AUGUST 28<sup>th</sup> - SEPTEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> 7.30.

TICKETS £1 AVAILABLE FROM:  
THE FRINGE BOX OFFICE, HIGH STREET,  
THE EDINBURGH BOOK SHOP, GEORGE STREET,  
THE THEATRE BOX OFFICE FROM 6-30,  
TEL. 031-225 3744.



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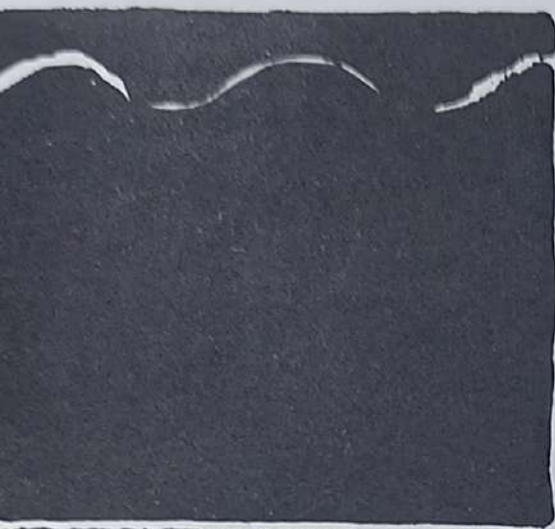
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AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 8, 7:30.



P L A Y     S T R I N D B E R G

By Friedrich Durrenmatt  
Translated by James Kirkup

C A S T

Alice .....Christelle Steele  
Edgar .....Donald Craig  
Kurt .....Richard Love

Directed by Frank Bechhofer  
Designed by Malcolm Morse

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There is no interval  
Refreshments are available in the foyer  
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A N O T E   O N   T H E   P L A Y

Play Strindberg brings together in a brilliant black comedy two theatrical giants: August Strindberg and Friedrich Durrenmatt. Strindberg was described by Eugene O'Neill as "the precursor of all modernity in our present theatre". He marks both the end of that epoch of bourgeois tragedy personified by Ibsen and the start of the modern drama. His plays remain part of the theatre of illusion, his

his characters bound up in their domestic tragedy, their fate and individual psychology presented to us in our role as voyeurs. And yet he brings that era to a close by reblending comedy with tragedy. His plays have a grim humour both in themselves and in their view of tragedy.

The Dance of Death is no exception. At one level it is a bourgeois tragedy; marriage is seen as hell and the battle of the sexes rages with self-destructive passion while beneath the veneer of civilisation we glimpse primeval hatreds. But there is an ironic scepticism in the play, and Strindberg's dramatic vision belongs as much to the naked power, violence and uncertainty of the twentieth century as to the respectable facade of the nineteenth.

Friedrich Durrenmatt was born in 1921 and Play Strindberg received its world premiere in 1969. Durrenmatt wrote of The Dance of Death that he "found the dramatic idea interesting but disliked its literariness (plush to the nth degree)". He takes Strindberg's bourgeois marital tragedy and transforms it into a comedy about bourgeois marital tragedies. He realises clearly what Strindberg arguably sensed and perceived darkly. Viewed from the late twentieth century we can see in The Dance of Death the absurdity of Ionesco, the bleak vision of Beckett's Endgame. Durrenmatt insists that given the state of the modern world, comedy is the only form drama can take. Man is confronted by a chaotic and uncontrollable world which is "a monstrosity, a problem we must learn to live with but to which we must on no account capitulate". Comedy is necessary because tragedy is impossible. His plays develop a dramatic idea, in this case that of The Dance of Death, into a story played out according to the rules by characters in a sealed theatrical world. There is no moral, the spectator takes from the play his own problems and imposes his own moral solutions. As the characters play out their game, dance their grotesque ballet with icy precision, we laugh; Play Strindberg is outrageously funny and enjoyable, and we should laugh even as we recognise our own moral dilemmas and games which we play ourselves.

F.B.



