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## **Intense Drama in an Intimate Setting**

Award winning drama *Death and the Maiden* launches SJTC in house production series

SAINT JOHN - Saint John Theatre Company is preparing for another successful in house Studio Performance Series this year. The edgy line-up will feature two award winning productions that will make their regional premieres as part of this year's series: *Death and the Maiden* (February 9-11) and *The Drowning Girls* (April 5-7).

*Death and the Maiden* is a Pulitzer Prize winning moral thriller that examines the psychological impact of human rights abuse. The story follows the life of a woman who believes that a stranger who comes to her home is the doctor who, under a military dictatorship, tortured and raped her years earlier. The title of the play is taken from a piece of music by Franz Schubert. Paulina, the main character, loved the piece but grew to detest it when it was played repeatedly during her torture sessions.

The award winning production was written by Ariel Dorfman in the mid 1980s. At the time he was in exile from Chile. It was not until Chile's return to democracy in 1990 that Dorfman returned to the play and "understood ... how the story had to be told." In 1991 a workshop production of *Death and the Maiden* was staged in Chile. The play was well received and premiered in London where it received an award for best play of the year. After moving to Broadway a film adaptation was made in 1994.

*"This is an unsettling play with no easy or definite answers,"* adds Director Dean Turner. *"In the smaller space of the Studio Theatre, the audience will be drawn to the intense interplay between three characters. The audience will have to make up their own minds about whether the man accused of torture is actually guilty."*

The Studio Series was a hit last season offering audiences non-traditional productions featured in our intimate production facility in the heart of downtown Saint John. Audiences enjoyed the ambiance of our rustic rehearsal hall and cabaret style setting complete with a bar and post show question & answer session with the cast. Over 400 people attended the two Studio productions. The goal is to exceed this number with this season's exceptional line-up.

*The Drowning Girls* is the second Studio production this season. Directed by Kizzy Kaye, this production is a recollection of the events leading up to a murder as told by the victims, all wives of the same man. *"It was one of the first times that similarities in connected crimes were used to prove pre-meditation – a sort of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century "Criminal Minds",* notes Kaye. *"It is the fact that the victims themselves are retelling the story of their seduction, marriage, and subsequent murder by George Joseph Smith that makes this play so gripping!"* *The Drowning Girls* will run from April 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> at the SJTC production facility.

Tickets for *Death and the Maiden* are on sale now by calling 506-652-7582 or visit [www.ticketpro.ca](http://www.ticketpro.ca). Package discounts available if you purchase tickets to both *Death and the Maiden* and *The Drowning Girls*.

For more information please contact:

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