

## Maids of Horror

ON FEBRUARY 2 1933, in the French provincial town of Le Mans, two housemaids brutally slaughtered their mistress and her daughter. The Judiciary handling of this <cause célèbre>, which stressed the sordid gory details of the murder and presented all the evidence in favour of the establishment, aroused the indignation of the left wing intellectuals [Simone de Beauvoir among them] who sympathised with the maids as exploited members of the proletariat.

"I had been away on business all day, and was due to meet my wife and daughter for dinner at the home of a friend. They were not there. After waiting for a while, I tried to telephone my home, there was no answer. I excused myself and went to the house. The front door was locked from the inside and the house was in darkness except for a faint glow from the upstairs room occupied by the two maids, Christine and Lea Papin. I was unable to get in so I called the police" — M. Lancelin.

"The corpses of Madame and Mademoiselle Lancelin were lying stretched out on the first floor landing and were frightfully mutilated. The walls and doors were covered with splashes of blood to a height of more than seven feet. On the floor we found fragments of bone and teeth, one eye, hairpins, a handbag, a key ring, an untied parcel, a kitchen knife covered with blood, a damaged pewter pot and a blood-stained hammer."—The police inspector who answered M. Lancelin's call and forced his way into the house

The two maids were discovered naked and huddled together on a single bed. Christine, the elder, immediately confessed to the crime. "I have no regrets or, rather, I can't tell you whether I have any or not. I'd rather have the skin of my mistresses than they should have had mine or my sister's. I did not plan my crime and I didn't feel any hatred towards them, but I don't put up with the sort of gesture that Madame Lancelin was making at me that evening" — Christine Papin.

THE  
STUDIO

THE  
MAIDS  
JEAN GENET



# GENET 1910-1986

*(sometime burglar, self-confessed homosexual, tramp, convict,  
misanthropist and seer, poet, playwright and moralist)*

When he was a child other children spat in his face; "Yet, a trifle would have sufficed for that ghastly game to be transformed into a courtly game and for me to be covered with roses instead of spit. For as the gestures were the same, it would not have been hard for destiny to change everything: the game is being organised... the youngsters make the gesture of tossing... it would cost no more for happiness... I awaited the roses. I prayed God to alter his intention ever so little, to make a wrong movement so that the children ceasing to hate me, would love me... I was then invested with a higher gravity. I was no longer the adulterous woman being stoned. I was an object in the service of an amorous rite"

# THE MAIDS

by  
Jean Genet

*first performance of this production Saturday 14 May 1994*

## CAST

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Claire	John Dobson
Solange	David Hovatter
Madame	Ian Harris

*There will be no interval*

*The performance will last approximately*

*1 hour and 30 minutes*

## PRODUCTION

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Director	John Horwood
Designers	John Horwood Geoff Moore
Costume Designer	Clare Duberley
Lighting Designer	Trish Fox
Stage Managers	Roz Palmer Maureen Fleming
Deputy Stage Manager	Kate Smith
Assistant Stage Managers	Sarah Fink Roxanne Lupsom
Lighting Operator	Katy Gallantry
Sound Operator	Geraldine Parkins
Properties	Bernadette Dunne
Construction	Jan Webster

*With thanks to: Bentalls, Jim Caithness,*

*Katy Gallantry, Martin Sapsed, Nigel Worsley*