Written by Nobel Laureate Albert Camus in 1944, ‘Cross Purpose’ (Le Malentendu) follows the story of a man (Jan) returning to his childhood home in order to bring good fortune to his mother and sister (Martha). After an absence of twenty years, Jan is racked with doubts and fears of their reaction to his return, keeping his identity a secret despite the protestations of his wife (Maria). Unbeknownst to him, his mother and Martha murder the wealthy guests of their hotel, dumping them in a nearby river in order to finance Martha’s dream of moving to the sea. Darkly absurd and tragic consequences ensue, watched over by the mysterious Manservant.

Written in Nazi occupied Paris by the young philosopher, the piece explores the Absurdist theories as pioneered by Camus in his essay ‘The Myth Of Sisyphus’ published two years previously. The comedy is black and gallows humour is prevalent throughout reflecting the situation of many Parisians at the time.

Albert Camus was a French pied-noir author, journalist, and philosopher. His views contributed to the rise of the philosophy known as ‘Absurdism’ and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957 “for his important literary production, which with clear-sighted earnestness illuminates the problems of the human conscience in our times”.

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director: Stephen Whitson
Set Designer: Jenny Gamble
Costume Designer: Ilona Russell
LX Design: Phil Spencer Hunter
Sound Design: Tim Adnitt

CAST:

Mother – Paddy Navin
Martha – Jamie Birkett
Jan – David Lomax
Maria – Kemi-Bo Jacobs
Manservant – Leonard Fenton
What the press have said about CROSS PURPOSE:

★★★★★
Camus Society

★★★★
West End Frame

★★★★
One Stop Arts

★★★★
Playstosee.com

★★★★
What's Hecuba to Him?

★★★★
The Upcoming

★★★★
BackstagePass.biz

★★★★
The Public Reviews

★★★★
Theatre Girl

“A carefully calibrated chamber piece... it can only crawl into life with a great central performance and a strong sense of atmosphere - both of which Stephen Whitson’s production is blessed with.”
- Jonathan Lovett, The Stage

“Stephen Whitson's valiant revival.”
- Paul Taylor, The Independent

“Stephen Whitson’s direction is fluid and faultless throughout.”
- Steve Barfield, The Public Reviews

“expert direction by Stephen Whitson... an absurdly beautiful and horrifying piece of theatre.”
- Joe Crystal, One Stop Arts

“Director Stephen Whitson has created an atmospheric production which boasts eccentric and thrilling acting from his team. What I most admired is the way he provoked exciting European performances from British actors. Whitson gets the tone of Camus’ absurdism right.”
- Julia Pascal, Londongrin.co.uk

“An existentialist delight... director Stephen Whitson knows how revive this play - milking it fully for its brilliant dark humour...this production is a real thrill to watch.”
- Francis Grin, Reviews Gate

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