

PRESS RELEASE

THE MAIAS

Novel by Eça de Queirós

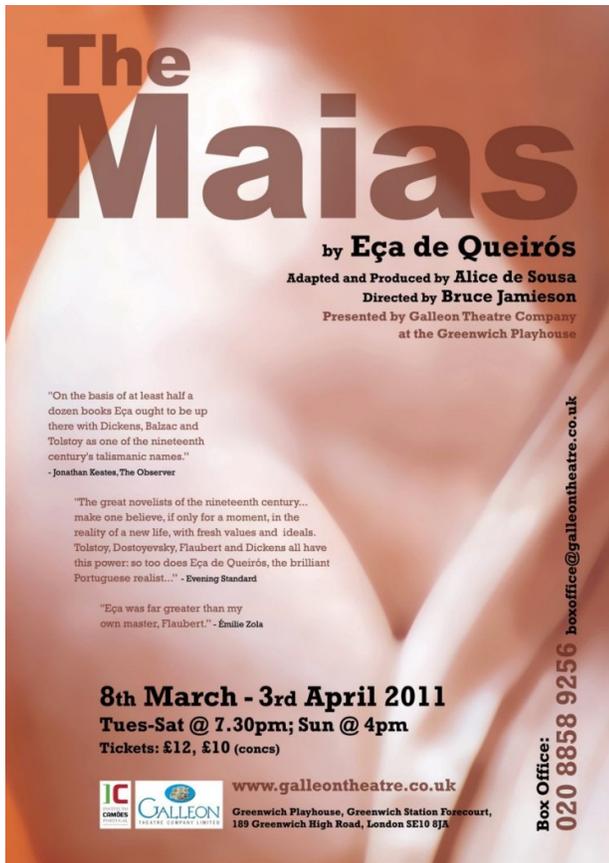
Adapted & Produced by Alice de Sousa
Directed by Bruce Jamieson
Presented by Galleon Theatre Company

DATES: 8th March – 3rd April 2011
Tues-Sat @ 7.30pm - Sun @ 4pm

PRESS NIGHT:
Thursday, 10th March 2011 @ 7.30pm

Tickets: £12, £10 (concs.)
Box Office: 020 8858 9256
boxoffice@galleontheatre.co.uk

VENUE: GREENWICH PLAYHOUSE
Greenwich Station Forecourt,
189 Greenwich High Road
LONDON SE10 8JA



The Maias
by Eça de Queirós
Adapted and Produced by Alice de Sousa
Directed by Bruce Jamieson
Presented by Galleon Theatre Company
at the Greenwich Playhouse

"On the basis of at least half a dozen books Eça ought to be up there with Dickens, Balzac and Tolstoy as one of the nineteenth century's talismanic names."
- Jonathan Keates, The Observer

"The great novelists of the nineteenth century... make one believe, if only for a moment, in the reality of a new life, with fresh values and ideals. Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Flaubert and Dickens all have this power: so too does Eça de Queirós, the brilliant Portuguese realist..." - Evening Standard

"Eça was far greater than my own master, Flaubert." - Émile Zola

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José Maria Eça de Queirós (1845-1900), was the founding father of the Portuguese novel. He was a remarkable writer whom Émile Zola described as being 'far greater than my own master, Flaubert.' He was a master of satire who sought to expose the hypocrisy of a provincial Lisbon society which slavishly paid homage to the cultural eminence of Paris and Romanticism. Eça's fiction is characterised by its barbed humour and lyrical descriptions but it is also tempered by a touching sympathy for humanity's foibles.

At the age of sixteen Eça went to Coimbra University to study Law and by 1867 was a practising lawyer; a profession which he abandoned to join the diplomatic service. He served as Consul in Havana (1872-74); in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1874-79); in Bristol (1879-88); and finally, in Paris where he lived until his death. The Newcastle years were the most productive of his literary career. He published a revised version of The Crime of Father Amaro (1876); the celebrated novel Cousin Basílio (1878), and worked on his collection of Letters from London.

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Although Eça was an admirer of British literature he was not enamoured by English society. In Bristol he wrote: "Everything about this society is disagreeable to me - from its limited way of thinking to its indecent manner of cooking vegetables." As often is the case when a writer is unhappy, the weather is described as 'foul'. However, he was rarely bored in Britain, and was content to stay for fifteen years and to concede: "I detest England, but this does not stop me from declaring that as a thinking nation, she is probably the foremost."

Eça's twilight years were spent in near isolation in Neuilly-sur-Seine where he continued to write journalism and literary criticism. His temperament, it is said, separated him from his fellow men and caused him to seek his own company above others. It is thought that by 1890 his reformist ideas and his Realist spirit were broken. Eça felt that the world which had embraced the Belle Époque had rejected his ideals.

José Saramago (1922–2010), Portugal's Nobel literature laureate described "The Maias" as "the greatest book by Portugal's greatest novelist."

THE MAIAS, Eça's obra-prima was written over a period of eight years and was published in 1888. The novel traces the decline of an aristocratic family and the incestuous love affair between a brother and sister, who are unaware of their blood relationship. In **THE MAIAS**, Eça creates a powerful sense of human decay which is cultural, political and moral. He sets his fascinating epic novel against the backdrop of a fast changing 19th century Portuguese society. Eça is forceful in his satire and piercing in his social criticism but he is boundless in his enjoyment of the idiosyncrasies of daily life; rich in characterisation; and generous in providing hilarious social comedy.

THE MAIAS is creatively spearheaded by a very experienced and acclaimed director - **BRUCE JAMIESON** and is adapted and produced by **ALICE DE SOUSA**.

The Director - **BRUCE JAMIESON** is a co-founding member of the Greenwich Playhouse, Galleon Theatre Company and Galleon Films. He has directed nearly thirty previous Galleon productions and played leading roles in some sixty stage plays. As an actor, his television and film credits include: The Oxford Murders (Tornasol); Murphy's Law (Tiger Aspect); Monarch of the Glen (Ecosse); Ali G-Inda House (Universal); Roughnecks (BBC); In Suspicious Circumstances (Granada); Crime Solver (BBC); and Spongebob (BBC).

The Adaptor/Producer - **ALICE DE SOUSA** - is a multi-award winning writer, producer and actress who has created over seventy stage productions; played leading roles in some thirty plays; written many acclaimed stage and screen scripts; won in 2009 two awards including the Portuguese government's 'Premio de Talento' in recognition of her 25 year career. In 2005 the American Biographical Institute awarded her with 'Great Women of the 21st Century' and 'Woman of the Year 2005'. (These awards recognise the impact on society of the work of 1000 prolific women worldwide).

Multi-award winning writer, producer and actress - **Alice de Sousa** - has created a highly enjoyable and profoundly affecting theatre adaptation of an unfairly neglected great European literary masterpiece.

"Alice de Sousa is surely London's leading exponent of Portuguese culture"
- Time Out

The talented and very experienced cast includes: HELEN BANG (Countess de Gouvarinho); BARRY CLARKE (Alencar); MARK PHILIP COMPTON (Damaso); ALICE DE SOUSA (Maria Eduarda); ADRIAN FRANCIS (Vilaça); HUGH HEMMINGS (Afonso); PROVENCE MAYDEW (Miss Sarah); CHRISTOPHER PEACOCK (Craft); DAMIAN QUINN (Carlos da Maia); and PETER RAE (Ega).

The dazzling design team includes sumptuous period costumes by RICHARD COOKE (Costume Designer); an exquisite set by SUNEEDA MARUTHIYIL (Set Designer); and atmospheric lighting by PHILIP JONES (Lighting Designer).

'The Greenwich Playhouse is an enjoyably ambitious venue and is a solid producer of classics' – [Evening Standard](#)

Galleon is a London leading independent theatre company which has staged a diverse body of work since 1989. Recent productions include A Woman of No Importance (Wilde); The Cherry Orchard (Chekhov); The Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare); and Hedda Gabler (Ibsen). Galleon specialises in English language theatre productions of neglected Iberian writers. Galleon Theatre Company's production of THE MAIAS was originally staged at the Greenwich Playhouse in 2002. In 2011, Galleon is reviving THE MAIAS which was nine years ago uniformly and internationally acclaimed, with a revised script and an entirely new creative team and cast.

Previous Galleon English language theatre adaptations of Eça de Queirós' novels:

The Maias (2002)

novel by Eça de Queirós; stage play by Alice de Sousa

"The Maias is proof of the niche the Greenwich Playhouse is carving out for itself as an enjoyably ambitious venue that is a solid producer of classics." - [Evening Standard](#)

"This excellent play turned into an evening that was never to be forgotten and must be ranked at least as first rate... The job that Alice de Sousa has done is monumental." - indielondon.co.uk

"The Maias generates superb theatre with a powerful mix of drama, humour and satire". - [Kentish Times](#)

Cousin Basílio (2001)

novel by Eça de Queirós; stage play by Alice de Sousa

"Alice de Sousa has performed an important role in bringing Queirós' work into the 21st century spotlight... an intriguing wake-up call to a Portuguese literary gem" - [Evening Standard](#)

"impish and thoroughly enjoyable." - [Time Out](#)

"Director Bruce Jamieson orchestrates some brilliantly sharp social comedy... a captivating celebration of a literary giant." - [South London Press](#)

"leaves you wanting more, much more Portuguese theatre" - [News Shopper](#)

- [For further information contact the Galleon Theatre Company on 020 8310 7276; the producer on 07957 548010 or \[alice@galleontheatre.co.uk\]\(mailto:alice@galleontheatre.co.uk\)](#)
- [Please consult our website on www.galleontheatre.co.uk](http://www.galleontheatre.co.uk)