



Press release: Drama at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Mengele – Unmasking the face of evil

Brazil 1979: a drowning man is washed up on a beach where he meets a mysterious woman.

She cajoles, questions and flatters him into attempting to defend the indefensible.

Mengele, starring Tim Marriott, is a warning from history that unveils what happens when the world succumbs to the politics of hate and bigotry.

The drama, by Tim Marriott and Philip Wharam, returns to Edinburgh after a brief run last year which saw it win a Fringe Encore award. Since then it has been performed in New York and had a sell-out season at the Adelaide Fringe.

Marriott said: “In order to understand the true nature of evil we need to look at men like Josef Mengele. Here was a Nazi doctor who used personal charm to shroud unspeakable brutality. It is vital for us to understand such men, to learn from history, to stop others like them from rising again.”

Broadway World described the play as “a contemporary expose of a charming manipulator and sociopathic narcissist”. In a five-star review *The Adelaide Advertiser* said: “It is important, today as much as ever, and it is brilliant.”

Mengele looks deep into the psyche of a man who was known both for his experimentation on Auschwitz inmates and his overseeing of their murder in gas chambers.

It is inspired by Wharam’s novel *Right to Live* and was created following advice from the Holocaust Educational Trust. The play is endorsed by the Amud Aish Memorial Museum of NY whose mission is to present the victim experience with specific focus on the role of faith and identity within the broader context of the annihilation of European Jewry.

Auschwitz survivor **Lydia Tischler** underlined the importance of remembering what happened under the Nazis: “because all of us have the capacity to be sadistic and horrible to other people. The potential for destructiveness is in all of us.”

Marriott is best known for seven series of BBC TV's leisure centre sit-com *The Brittas Empire*, appearing in every episode as deputy manager, Gavin. Other TV credits include *Allo Allo*, *Doctors*, *The Bill*, *An Actor's Life for Me*, *The Main Event*, *Luv* and film credits include the forthcoming features *The Real Thing*, *Love Type D* and *Revelation*. He recently returned to the stage after a 17-year career break teaching English and drama. He is also appearing in two other Fringe 2018 productions, *Shell Shock* and *All Change*.

Mengele has earned critical praise in the UK and overseas. *Australian Stage* praised the "sheer power of the writing and the mastery of the performances ...". *Daily Business* called it: "a masterclass in acting and writing" ★★★★★.

Fringe Review said: "We cannot ignore this tale and it is a legacy we ought to be sharing with our children ... It scared me. Such is the power of good theatre done well." *Highly Recommended*. Other reviews include "Absolutely riveting" ★★★★★ *Broadway World (Australia)*, "A commanding performance... a masterclass" 4.5★ *Adelaide Theatre Guide*, "A tremendous performance... very good theatre" ★★★★★ *InDaily*.

- Ends -

Listings Details

- Venue: Assembly George Square Theatre, The Box, EH8 9JZ (Venue 8)
- Time: 12:20
- Duration: 50 mins
- Dates: 9,11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 27 August. Previews 9 August.
- Tickets: Previews £10 (£9); 11-27 August £12 (£11);
- Bookings: at <https://bit.ly/2L2Kijl> or assemblyfestival.com. Call 0131 623 3030 or go to Assembly box offices at Assembly Hall and Assembly Roxy, Assembly George Square, Assembly Checkpoint and Assembly Rooms
- Suitability: 12+

See trailer at <https://vimeo.com/221411082>

About Smokescreen Productions

- Smokescreen Productions create impactful, thematic theatre, working with national charities to bring contemporary issues to life on stage, designed to engage audiences in new work that has broad benefits in the outreach and engagement of topical aims and the objectives of charities. Smokescreen present *Mengele* in rep with *All Change* a new play created in support of the work of St Wilfrid's Hospice and are also producing the award winning PTSD piece *Shell Shock* (supporting multiple military and mental health charities) with *Army@TheFringe* at EdFringe 18.
- For more: W: smokescreenprods.com W: assemblyfestival.com Tw: @SmokeScreenProd FB: @SmokescreenEB

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