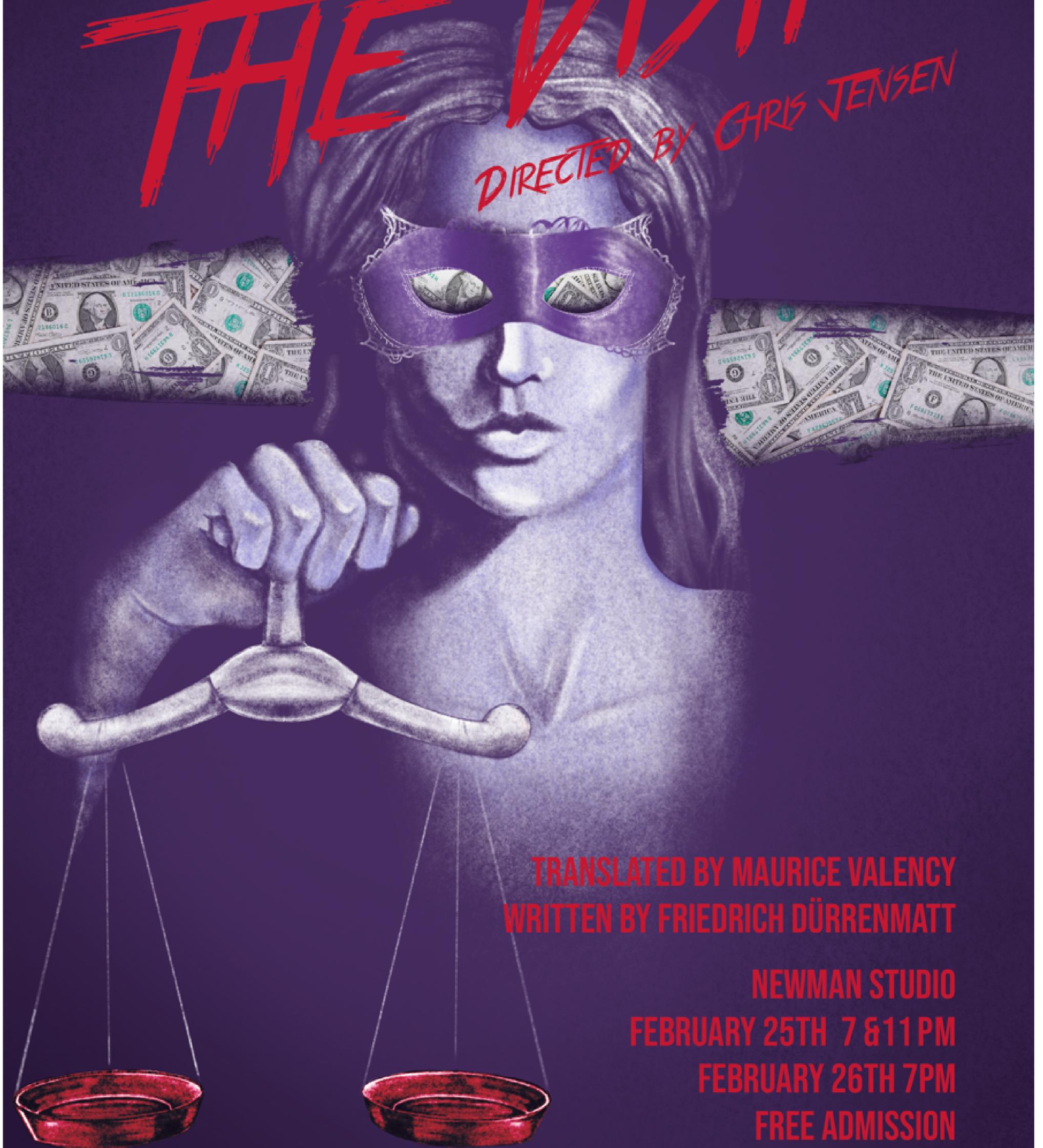




THE VIST

DIRECTED BY CHRIS JENSEN



TRANSLATED BY MAURICE VALENCY
WRITTEN BY FRIEDRICH DÜRRENMATT

NEWMAN STUDIO
FEBRUARY 25TH 7 & 11 PM
FEBRUARY 26TH 7 PM
FREE ADMISSION

THE VISIT

Written by Friedrich Dürrenmatt

Translated by Maurice Valency

Cast of Characters

Claire Zachanassian
Ashley Stewart-Smith

Alfred III
Sam Labovitz

Mayor/Chorus I/Journalist I
Lewis Jackson

Teacher/Chorus II
Pete Dickey

Pastor/Chorus III/Journalist II/Toby
Drake George

Police Officer/Chorus IV/Mrs. III/Conductor
Ashley Kramer

Painter/Chorus V/Doctor/Butler/Daughter
Sophie Thurschwell

Husband VII-IX/Chorus VI
Roby/Son/Radio Reporter
Ryland Gigante

Production Team

Director
Chris Jensen

Assistant Director
Hadley Gorsline

Production Stage Manager
Sarah Cripsey

Dramaturg
Kendall Young

Lighting Designer
Kathleen Alexandrou

Sound Designer
Drake George

Choreographer
Sofia Angelopoulos

Fight/Intimacy Choreographer
Jules Garber

From the Dramaturg

What happens when we allow the masks we present to society to become the driving force for all of our actions? What are the consequences that come with the desperation to keep these masks intact? Through the tactful use of drama, comedy, and overall absurdity, *The Visit* explores the performative nature displayed by all who step foot into the city of Gullen. Within the original translation and our own interpretation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt, the majority of the characters within the show are identified by their occupational title. Rather than given specific names, you will see that many of the characters are called Mayor, Pastor, Teacher, Policeman, etc. Thus, what performance is required or often associated with these roles and positions within society?

When thinking of an individual with a strong political presence or particular religious leadership, many images immediately arise. All of which are simply just that, images. Rarely do we see the raw, unfiltered, grounded presence of people associated with these positions. As people, we often show the best version of ourselves, the version we believe people will want to see. The version of ourselves that allows us to feel the most accepted, rather than displaying our own personal truth. It is a survival instinct— a desperate act to stay in the good graces of the majority. It all begins with something as mundane as common courtesy practices— societal norms that help in creating a particular image in which we have been told is an acceptable way to behave. Thus, a group mentality is formed! Otherwise known as a community understanding that sometimes is held in a higher regard than individual opinions or perceptions. When one only lives to fit into the confines of what is accepted, behaviors and actions that have been practiced time after time are no longer questioned, but passed down. More and more individuals feed into this mentality. More and more individuals practice this behavior. More and more individuals deny their own individuality— thus living in a cycle of perceived success and functionality, partially because they do not have the tools or resources to question this perceived logic. And some just don't want to question what has always been familiar and safe for them.

Gülen is a physical manifestation of this way of life. The strength of group mentality in the presence of desperation, highlights the overall risks faced by those ostracized from the group while also displaying the danger that comes from having power to persuade the masses. Thus, calling into question, does desperation allow us to dissolve our own individual morality? Can individual morality stand in the face of group mentality? The people of Güllen are connected through the power of group mentality, they are a community composed of individual desires, often following the majority for their own personal gain. Whether through being a part of a collective group mentality or wearing a mask to showcase the most acceptable parts of themselves, overall accountability and ownership for one's self, actions, and words cease to exist on an individual level. What you will see happen in Güllen is merely just a glimpse into our own everyday reality, but on a smaller and a little more humorous scale.

-Kendall Young

From the Director

On the surface, the Visit is a satirical piece with over-the-top vaudevillian characters and comedically melodramatic stakes to match. But something about it is viscerally unsettling. Every time I read it, Dürrenmatt leaves a pit in my stomach. Underneath the lampoon-like critique of capitalism is a deeply disturbing epiphany that morality itself cannot exist under our current economic structure. By utilizing the language of wealth, justice, and morality to destroy Güllen's spirit, Claire Zachanassian reveals horrifying truths about the current state of our society. At best, our most sacred institutions are illusions to disguise selfish chaos. And at worst they are vehicles of greed maintaining inequity and injustice. The Visit asks deeply important questions about how fallible we are as individuals for this state of affair and what responsibilities we have towards changing them.

-Chris Jensen

Resources to Explore

At its core *The Visit* is a play about how structural inequalities lead to poverty and other forms of injustice. If you are interested in learning more about what organizations exist in our local community that are aimed at reshaping defunct systems and imagining a brighter future for our society, here are some places to explore.

Washtenaw County Workers Center

Food Gatherers (<https://www.foodgatherers.org/>)

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation

(<https://www.aaacf.org/About/About-AAACF>)

Shelter Association of Ann Arbor

(<https://www.annarborshelter.org/>)

Ann Arbor ACLU

(<https://www.aclu.org/other/ann-arbor-mi>)