THERESE RAQUIN - DIRECTOR’S PITCH – WEDS 10th MAY at 8PM ( performance dates: 28th Nov -2nd Dec in The Seligman Theatre, Chapter.

CAST (7 – 4 males, 3 females)

CAMILLE – a man in his late twenties/early thirties.

THERESE – a woman in of 25-30, his wife.

LAURENT – Camille’s childhood friend in his eary thirties.

MADAME RAQUIN – a woman in her sixties, his mother.

M. GRIVET – a man of about 40-50, an office worker.

M. MICHAUD – a man in his sixties, a retired Police Inspector.

SUSANNE – a young woman of 18-20, Michaud’s niece.

STYLE

The play is set in Paris in the 1860’s with period costume. It has one realistic set with furniture/props. The action takes place in the apartment home of Madame Raquin, Camille and Thérèse and is over a Draper’s shop in the Passage du Pont-Neuf.

SYNOPSIS

A dingy apartment over a haberdashery shop in a poor part of Paris forms the backdrop to this domestic tragedy. Therese is trapped in a tedious marriage to her sickly cousin Camille, and is watched over by her oppressive mother-in-law. Their family friends, Grivet, a senior clerk in the railway office, Michaud, a retired police inspector, and Susanne, his niece visit regularly and add to the sense of impoverished gentility. Therese embarks on a reckless affair with her husband’s childhood friend Laurent. In their desperation to be free, they commit an horrific crime. Though their friends remain oblivious, Therese and Laurent believe their guilt will be discovered and find themselves trapped in a waking nightmare.

BACKGROUND

Emile Zola was a leading figure in the school of Naturalistic fiction in France. “Therese Raquin”, published in 1867, was his first major novel. Some regarded it as pornographic because of it’s treatment of Therese’s sexuality. However, it fulfilled Zola’s aim of showing the dark underside of life in a blunt and frank way. Zola himself adapted the novel as a play in an effort to create a naturalistic theatre that depicted life in the raw, like a scientist looking through a microscope. It was first performed in 1873, before the major works of Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov. However, its sensational content appeared melodramatic, perhaps because of acting styles ill-suited to this new naturalism. It did however light the way for the establishment of theatrical realism.His play forms the basis of this adaptation by Nicholas Wright which was staged in 2006 at the National Theatre, London. Wright’s other credits include “Mrs Klein”, “Cressida”, and the Olivier award winning “Vincent in Brixton.”