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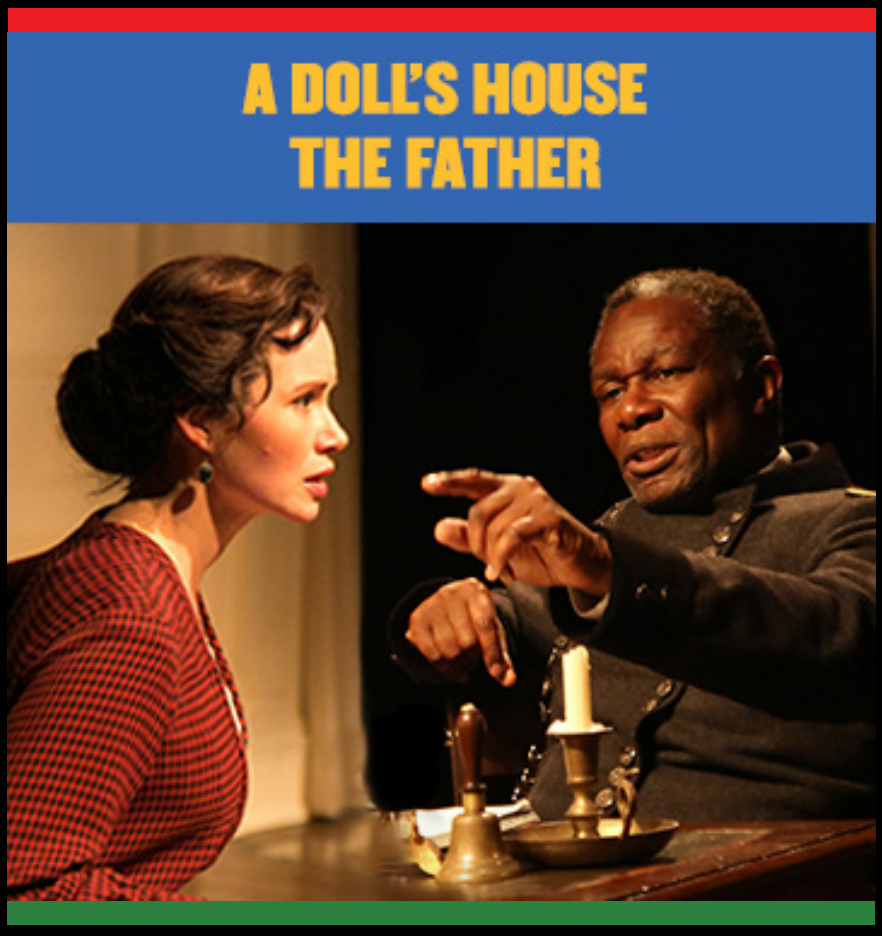
360° SERIES

VIEWFINDER: FACTS AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE PLAY, PLAYWRIGHT, AND PRODUCTION



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A Doll's House is sponsored by

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Major support for *A Doll's House* and *The Father* is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Endowment support for *A Doll's House* and *The Father* is provided by The Howard Gilman Foundation Fund for Classic Drama.
Additional support provided by The American-Scandinavian Foundation and The Royal Norwegian Consulate General.

Notes
Front Cover Art designed by Milton Glaser, Inc. This Viewfinder will be periodically updated with additional information. Last updated May 2016.

Credits
"Perspectives" and "Biographies" of Ibsen and Strindberhg by Jonathan Kalb
Thornton Wilder "Biography" provided by A. Tappan Wilder
David Greig "Biography" provided by David Greig
A Doll's House & *The Father* 360° | Edited by Literary & Humanities Manager Peter Cook | Literary Advisor: Jonathan Kalb | Council of Scholars Chair: Richard McCoy | Humanities Intern: Allison Benko
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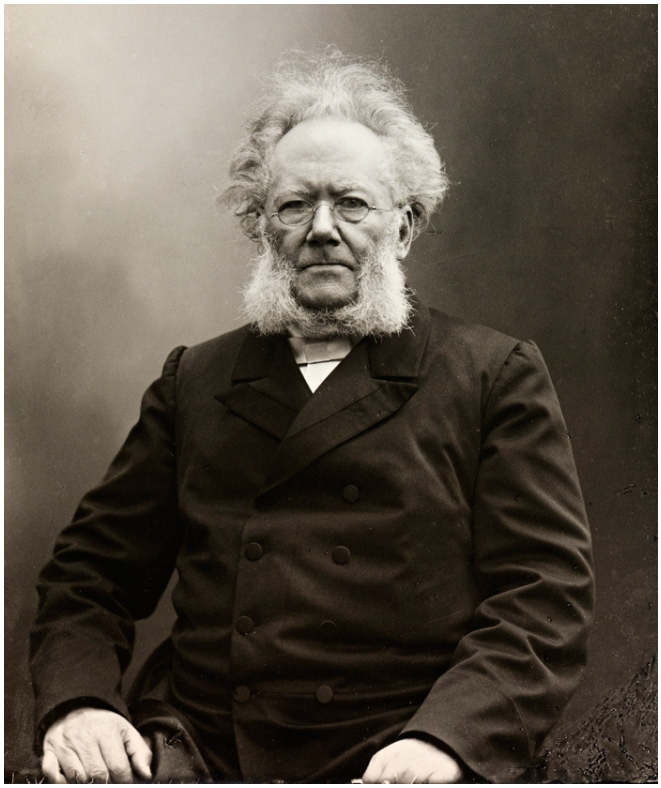
THE PLAYS *A DOLL'S HOUSE* AND *THE FATHER*

Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Henry Grossman.

THE PLAYS PERSPECTIVES



Left: Portrait of Henrik Ibsen, by Daniel Georg Nyblin, 1894. National Library of Norway.
Right: Portrait of August Strindberg, by Lund Lina Jonn, 1897. National Library of Sweden, Collection of Manuscripts, Strindbergsrummet.

The following quotes are selected perspectives on the plays from notable scholars and artists.

"Even to the uninterested bystander it must seem significant that the interest attached to this Norwegian has never flagged for over a quarter of a century. It may be questioned whether any man has held so firm an empire over the thinking world in modern times. Not Rousseau; not Emerson; not Carlyle; not any of those giants of whom almost all have passed out of human ken. "

—James Joyce, "Ibsen's New Drama" (1900)

"On various occasions people have said about me that I am a pessimist. And this I am, in so far as I do not believe in the eternal validity of human ideals. But I am also an optimist, in so far as I believe with full confidence in the propagatory powers of ideas and in their capacity for development."

—Henrik Ibsen, from an 1887 speech at a Stockholm banquet

"In ancient times one killed one's opponent without trying to prove him wrong; now one creates a majority against him, puts him in the wrong, exposes his ideas, attributes ideas to him other than his own, robs him of his means of existence, denies him social standing, makes him ridiculous—in a word, tortures and lies him to death or makes him go crazy instead of killing him."

—August Strindberg, "Psychic Murder" (1887)

THE PLAYS PERSPECTIVES

"Strindberg's observations and experiences in the sphere of which *The Father* principally treats do not accord with my own. But this does not prevent me from recognizing and being gripped by the author's violent strength, in this as in his earlier works."

—Henrik Ibsen, letter to a Swedish bookseller, 1887

"As a creative writer I blend fiction with reality, and all my misogyny is theoretical, for I couldn't live without the company of women. … So don't get depressed when you read *The Father*, for it is fiction."

—August Strindberg, letter to his brother Axel, 1887.

"Women may well be educated, but they are not made for the higher sciences, for philosophy and certain artistic productions which require a universal element. Women may have insights, taste, and delicacy, but they do not possess the idea. The difference between man and woman is the difference between animal and plant; the animal is closer in character to man, the plant to woman, for the latter is a more peaceful [process of] unfolding whose principle is the more indeterminate unity of feeling. When women are in charge of government, the state is in danger, for their actions are based not on the demands of universality but on contingent inclination and opinion."

—G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807)

"In her conversation with Krogstad, Nora is the perfect incarnation of the Hegelian woman. Flighty, irresponsible, caring only for her family's interests, she has no relationship to the law (the universal). At the end of the play, however, all this has changed. Nora has undergone a transformation. She began by being a Hegelian mother and daughter; she ends by discovering that she too has to become an individual, and that this can be done only if she relates to the society she lives in directly, and not indirectly through her husband."

—Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* (2006)

"I think the reason Nora goes away is because she feels that her former life has been so…dirty. Because she has been living a lie—and she has loved her lie. She obtained this money, you know—four thousand eight hundred crowns from Krogstad—and she says to Mrs. Linde: 'We went to the south, and I enjoyed it tremendously.' And yes, of course, she did enjoy it tremendously. She got the money, she falsified her father's signature, she has really behaved very badly—but then, you see, she's an anarchist. All of Ibsen's women are anarchists. I think that's splendid!"

—Ingmar Bergman, from a 1981 interview

"Ibsen's innovative dramaturgy reveals the artificiality of the well-made play, and, as a consequence, the artificiality of the era's well-made woman. It questions the reliability of the artistic order and, as a result, the reliability of the social, even epistemological, order."

—Alisa Solomon, *Re-Dressing the Canon* (1997)

"The Lonely One has degenerated into a touring prima donna…a self-styled aristocrat who greets the new aristocracy in the shape of women and artisans.… Farewell Ibsen, my youth's ideal!"

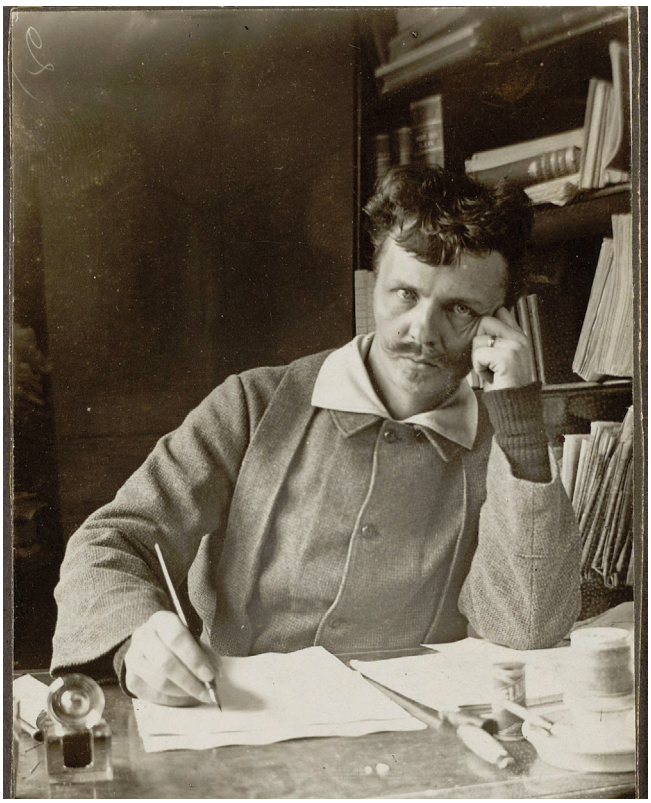
—August Strindberg, letter May 12, 1891

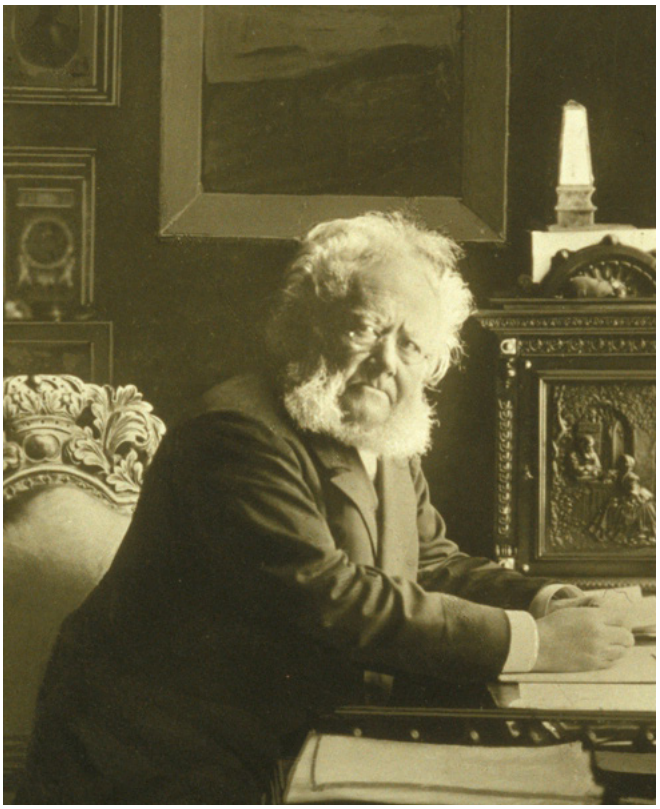
"[Laura, Strindberg] felt, was both more ingenious and more psychologically truthful than Ibsen's Nora. Would Nora, a woman of a certain age and untrained for any occupation except manipulating men, walk out of the doll's house slamming the door on her family life when she could only be walking into a future of prostitution? The wife in *The Father* achieved her independence more thoroughly and with greater wit. It never ceased to rankle with him that Ibsen's play achieved the greater success."

—Sue Prideaux, *Strindberg: A Life* (2012)

"[Nora and Helmer's] fantasies reveal them as much as they conceal them. Because they are fantasies of rescuing the other, of doing something heroic for the sake of love, they reveal that Nora and Helmer love each other as well as they can. They just cannot do any better. Had they known what they were doing when they performed their masquerades, they would have stopped doing it. By showing us their theatrical marriage, Ibsen did not mean to turn these two decent people into villains, but to make us think about the way we theatricalize ourselves and others in everyday life."

—Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* (2006)





Left: August Strindberg, Self-portrait in Gersau, Switzerland, 1886. National Library of Sweden, Collection of Manuscripts, Strindbergsrummet.
Right: Portrait of Henrik Ibsen in his study in Christiania, 1898. The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History.

DIALOGUES HENRIK IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

KRISTEN E. SHEPHERD-BARR

Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Henry Grossman.

Excerpted with permission from The Connell Guide to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House (2015).*

"The Modern Tragedy"

There are no dead bodies littering the stage at the end of *A Doll's House*, as in the classics of Western drama that have provided a template for what we call tragedy, such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Oedipus Rex*. But Ibsen self-consciously called it that: in his "Notes to the Modern Tragedy", his preliminary jottings as he began work on the play, Ibsen challenges the age-old model and the assumption that tragedy hinges on death – though in later plays, from *The Wild Duck* onwards, he gives us plenty of dead bodies at the end.

Ibsen's notes to the "modern tragedy" of *A Doll's House* begin: "There are two laws: one for men, another, entirely different, for women." He is not just talking about the law in a legal sense, but in a natural sense as well; men and women are built differently (both physically and spiritually) yet women are forced to conform to a system that only recognizes masculine modes of being and thinking:

A woman cannot be herself in contemporary society; it is an exclusively male society with laws drafted by men and with counsel and judges who judge feminine conduct from the male point of view.

By giving his play the subtitle "a modern tragedy," Ibsen is announcing that this unacknowledged but fundamental difference between men and women, with the resulting impoverishment of women's lives, is the single greatest tragedy of contemporary life. He is also consciously following the injunction of the influential Danish critic Georg Brandes that modern literature should "submit problems to debate", as he put it in a lecture in 1871 that reverberated throughout Scandinavia's artistic and intellectual circles. As the late eminent Ibsen scholar and translator James McFarlane put it, the play's drama erupts when a woman's "natural instincts are brought into conflict with the notions of authority she has grown up with".

Ibsen actually got his idea for the play from real life.

Nora Helmer was modelled on a young woman of Ibsen's acquaintance, Laura Kieler, whose painful story he adapted to his creative purposes. She was an aspiring writer who confided in Ibsen that when her husband developed tuberculosis, she secretly borrowed money in order to take him, as the doctors advised, to a warmer climate; but, under pressure from her creditors, she ended up committing forgery in order to get more money. When her husband discovered her crime, he demanded a divorce and took her children away from her. She ended up in a mental asylum for a period. At the time, everyone in Ibsen's circle knew instantly that his play was based on Laura Kieler's story, and it caused her deep distress that something so tragic and so personal, which she had told the dramatist in complete confidence, should be revealed in this way. It is indeed a cruel irony that a play that seeks to remedy the exploitation of women should so ruthlessly exploit one unfortunate woman.

Betty Hennings as Nora (this page) and Emily Poulsen as Helmer (opposite page) in the original 1879 production of *A Doll's House* at Det Kongelige Teater, Copenhagen. Photos courtesy of the National Library of Norway.

Ibsen and feminism

Nevertheless, Ibsen dared to put on the stage an issue that was simmering away throughout the Victorian period. He helped to unleash the full force of the women's movement and the widespread agitation for the vote. His articulation of the double standard, the "two laws", directly influenced fellow playwrights like Oscar Wilde who uses the idea and that exact wording "two laws" in his play *An Ideal Husband* (1893), and Shaw, whose plays and prefaces from the 1890s in particular explore the gender divide that Ibsen so powerfully articulated.

Ibsen's life-long interest in the plight of women can be found everywhere in his work, in play after play, utterly refuting a speech he made in 1898 denying an interest in women's issues. "I am not a member of the Women's Right League," he said rather ungraciously to the Norwegian League of Women's Rights who were giving him a banquet to celebrate his 70th birthday. "I thank you for the toast, but must disclaim the honor of having consciously worked for the women's rights movement." He explained that his emphasis was on art and poetry, not "propaganda".

The key word in Ibsen's speech is "consciously". He called his play *A Doll's House* because he was focusing on gender; he made his main character a woman so that he could expose a deep social problem, namely how women are treated like dolls, or playthings, by a patriarchal society. His speech can be explained by his fear of being affiliated with any one particular group, whether feminist, Socialist, anarchist, or Symbolist; he wanted to be his own man. His work is, in a very real sense, one long meditation on women's issues. When someone asks you what *A Doll's House* is about, or *Ghosts*, or *The Lady from the Sea*, or *Rosmersholm*, or *Hedda Gabler*, you start by saying: "It's about a woman who…"

But Ibsen also wrote plays you might start describing with the words: "It's about a man who…." Some of these have to do with men having to juggle family demands with all-consuming careers, particularly artists, as in *When We Dead Awaken* (1900), Ibsen's last word on this subject and a very agonising, guilt-ridden self-portrait. How

far, he seems to be asking, does devotion to one's calling and vocation pre-empt all other aspects of life, including family? He explored this in *Brand* (1865), in *The Master Builder* (1892), and again in *When We Dead Awaken* – all plays that revolve around sacrifice and compromise.

These are also plays that show the pitfalls of a too-rigid (and very male) commitment to idealism, the "all-or-nothing" mentality. *A Doll's House*, too, suggests the danger of such ingrained, archaic male traits. But *A Doll's House* doesn't just point an accusing finger at men; it would never have had the staying power it has had if it just did that. Instead, Ibsen shows how both men and women unconsciously play roles they seem to be expected to play: the obedient wife, the authoritative husband, the loving mother, the distant father, and so on. *A Doll's House* is ultimately about how all of us play roles in life, usually unconsciously and therefore unquestioningly – a theme that Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello explored in his modernist dramas several decades later.

Questioning heroes and villains

The key thing about *A Doll's House* is that its "tragedy of modern life" is not just Nora's tragedy, but Torvald's, Krogstad's, and Dr. Rank's, too; not just women's but men's. The play seems to be asking what kinds of models we have before us as we shape ourselves into adults? Nora says she has to start from scratch and find her own models because she has had none. But perhaps even more damaging are the bad models the men have had in their lives. Far from being villains, the male characters in the play are, like Nora, simply replicating patterns of behavior that have persisted through most of history.

Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Ibsen's dramas is the blurring of the lines between heroes and villains, his plays showing how hard it is to distinguish between the two and how human character is usually a mixture of good and bad. Yes, Torvald is annoying; he bosses Nora around, condescendingly calls her his "little squirrel" and "lark" and other demeaning pet names and "tut-tuts" all the time as he finds her wanting in so many ways. He treats her like a child and like his plaything, so much so that some critics think Ibsen overdoes it. The treatment of Torvald verges on caricature, says Ronald Gray in *Ibsen – A Dissenting View*. Torvald "drips with sentiment"; he is "grotesque".

A less stridently, more unconsciously dominating male could have attracted more sympathy without destroying the sense that Nora leaves her husband because she must.

But Ibsen shows that in the end Torvald is as much a victim of society's upbringing as she is – the play's ending suggests that he too will have to unlearn everything he's ever learned about being a man, especially in his understanding of women. It is moving to see him struggle throughout that final discussion scene, always just a step behind Nora but desperate to fix their problems. He assumes the hysterical female role while she becomes the calm, collected, masterful man.

Dr. Rank is a strange character: a figure of death, as he confides that he is doomed by hereditary disease and will shortly die. (His imminent death will be signaled, he

reveals, by the leaving of a black-edged calling card.) He is a doctor who can diagnose but cannot cure – one of several such doctors in Ibsen's dramas. He can only stand helplessly by as disease and death take hold. Dr. Rank is often referred to as the play's raisonneur; this was a stock character in the well-made play (and earlier, for example in Moliere's dramas). But is he really the voice of reason? In earlier drafts to A Doll's House, he is downright scary and far from reasonable, fanatically advocating eugenics in order to cleanse society of the unfit. In the final version, his presence, so near death, is ghostly, a sickly foil to the vitality of Nora and her children.

Meanwhile, Krogstad seems on the surface to be the stereotypical villain (even the word "krog," which means "hook" in Ibsen's original Dano-Norwegian, lends his name an unpleasant edge). A shady character with a dodgy past, he has done time in prison for embezzlement and he is a loan shark. He shows little mercy when Nora pleads for more time to repay the loan, and seems in fact to enjoy her discomfort. But he has been treated badly too: Torvald turned his back on Krogstad just when Krogstad needed him most. What kinds of models has he had to follow? Thus Ibsen sets up character foils – Nora and Mrs Linde, Torvald and Krogstad – to complicate and deepen the play's treatment of gender. We are constantly weighing one against the other.

What makes it even harder to dislike Krogstad is his genuine soft spot for Mrs. Linde (the play's real raisonneur). Their union in the end humanizes him. While Mrs. Linde acts as a foil for Nora and a rather obvious tool for the exposition of the play in the opening scenes when Nora has to explain to her – and hence to the audience – everything that has happened in the past, she is much more than a mere device for advancing the plot. It is Mrs. Linde who prompts Nora to reveal her big secret by saying dismissively that Nora is immature and child-like: Nora bristles and, to set Mrs. Linde straight, tells all about the loan, about working hard and doing without fine new clothes in order to pay it off. Mrs. Linde also serves as a reminder to the audience of how few alternatives there are for women to support themselves and still be "respectable". Her union with Krogstad is not just for convenience but because she recognizes in him a fellow "shipwrecked soul".

The quiet heroism of the female characters in *A Doll's House* is not just admirable; it also deftly casts Torvald's manly pronouncements in a foolish and melodramatic light. "You know, Nora… many's the time I wish you were threatened by some terrible danger so I could risk

everything, body and soul, for your sake." Hardly swept off her feet by this, Nora's reaction is to say, "firmly and decisively": "Now you must read your letters." She and the audience know that what he imagines himself heroically doing is what she quietly did for him all those years ago.

Rewriting the "well-made play"

The turning point in the play is not when Torvald discovers the letter. That might have been the climax in an old-fashioned play – a moment full of bombast and excitement as the word "climax" suggests. But Ibsen gives us that moment and then provides an even more electrifying, intense climax: the moment when Nora says that she and Torvald need to talk, a discussion that culminates in that final slam of the door with which the play ends. Ibsen simply withholds the traditional resolution. Audiences were stunned to find the lights coming up when they were expecting the action to go on, with Nora returning and the two living happily ever after.

Ibsen's technique is similar to a detective story writer's in that the on-stage action hinges on uncovering past events and secrets. The exposition of these events – the so-called "retrospective action" – is spread throughout the play rather than taking place quickly, in the first act, as in most dramas of the time.

Another of Ibsen's innovations is to dispense, almost entirely, with monologues or soliloquies (except for the moment when Nora is alone on stage and briefly contemplates throwing herself in the lake, before rejecting the idea). The dialogue is spare, the language simple and there are interruptions, hesitations, unfinished sentences – all characteristic of the way we actually speak to one another in everyday life.

Finally, there is Ibsen's use of place. In addition to blurring the distinction between "good" or "bad" by developing his characters more fully than had been done before on stage – and making them psychologically real – Ibsen manages to be both local and universal in his setting. It continues to baffle critics that he can set play after play in a small Norwegian coastal town or high up in the mountains yet appeal to audiences all over the world, both in his own time and now. The setting of the plays has an astonishing flexibility despite the specificity of place.

Bernard Shaw claimed that *A Doll's House* "conquered Europe and founded a new school of dramatic art". As Egil Törnqvist notes in his superb consideration of the play, both statements are valid:

The play has in fact by now conquered the world, and it has done so thanks to what Shaw termed 'the discussion,' the part for which, according to Ibsen himself, the whole play was written. However, what Shaw disregards is that it is the combination of the discussion and Nora's departure that does the trick. Nora not only talks, she also acts.

The cast of the original 1879 production of *A Doll's House* at Det Kongelige Teater, Copenhagen. Opposite page, left to right: Peter W. Jerndorff as Dr. Rank, Sophus Petersen as Krogstad, and Agnes N. Dehn as Mrs. Linde. This page: Betty Hennings as Nora. Photos courtesy of the National Library of Norway.

The power of illusions

When Nora announces that she is taking off her masquerade costume, she is saying that she's finished with performing a role, which is what women have to do to exist in society. This is thrilling stuff; she is a fearless truth-teller, a crusader willing to brave a hostile world for the sake of following through on her beliefs.

Certainly, Nora will pay a huge price for her idealism. (Destitution? Prostitution? Humiliation by being forced by circumstances to return to the home she has just triumphantly renounced?) Maybe living with self-delusion would have been better. Ibsen's next play, *Ghosts*, shows exactly that: a woman who does remain in an unhappy marriage, for the sake of maintaining an illusion.

Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

The consequences are even more devastating than anyone could imagine, making the ending of *A Doll's House* seem benign by comparison: as the curtain comes down the female protagonist, Mrs Alving, is standing next to her brain-dead, syphilitic son clutching a fatal dose of pills he had given her earlier and instructed her to administer should his disease worsen. Before the audience has a chance to see whether she will do it, the play ends.

Ghosts was so scandalous across Europe that when Ibsen's supporters applied to have it performed in Britain in 1890, the Lord Chamberlain refused to grant a license – so they formed the Independent Theatre Company, helping to launch a wave of such enterprises (the "little theatre" movement), where audiences could see new drama that was too controversial to be produced on the mainstream stage.

But Ibsen was always one step ahead of his readers and audiences. He was a contrarian: just when they thought they had him pinned down, he surprised them by going completely against what he had done before. *The Pillars of Society* (1877), *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts* (1880), and *An Enemy of the People* (1882) were his first four "social problem" plays, each driving home a message about how important it is to tell the truth, to expose falsehood and illusion. This idealism is exactly what he then turns around and satirises in *The Wild Duck* (1884), a play that shows the terrible consequences that can arise from exposing the truth, from removing the important "life-lie" that sustains and comforts us because we cannot face the harsh light of truth and the shattering of our illusions. Arguably, the moral of *The Wild Duck* – that the truth can be dangerous – is exactly the opposite of the moral of *A Doll's House*. •

KIRSTEN E. SHEPHERD-BARR is Professor of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Oxford. Her books include *Ibsen and Early Modernist Theatre, 1890-1900* (1997), *Science on Stage: From Doctor Faustus to Copenhagen* (2006), *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* (2015), *Connell Shorts: Ibsen's A Doll's House* (2015), and *Modern Drama: A Very Short Introduction* (2016). Her work with theatre companies includes, most recently, serving as textual advisor on the Old Vic's production of Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, adapted by David Hare and starring Ralph Fiennes (2016).

FICTION STRINDBERG'S OWN *DOLL'S HOUSE*

AUGUST STRINDBERG

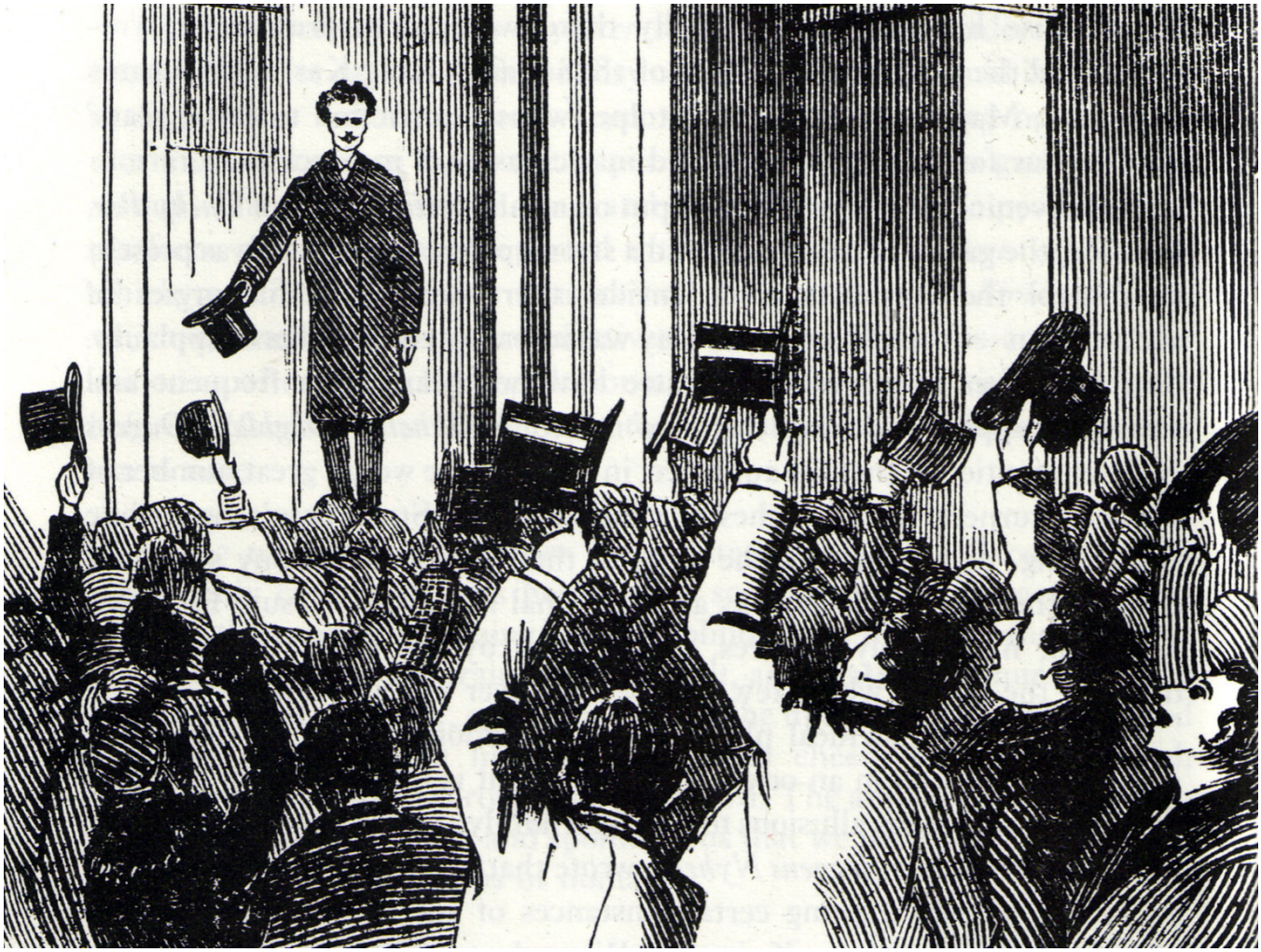


Illustration from a contemporary Swedish newspaper depicting August Strindberg's reception on returning to Stockholm on October 20, 1884, to face charges of blasphemy. Illustration was accompanied by a caption that reads "Jag kommer hem!" ("I'm coming home!").

In 1884, August Strindberg published *Giftas* (*Getting Married*), a collection of twelve short stories depicting "twenty marriages of every variety." The collection was controversial – Strindberg was tried and acquitted on blasphemy charges for a story that contemptuously dismissed the divinity of Christ.

In addition to a preface that overtly attacked Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, the collection featured a short story itself called "A Doll's House," in which Strindberg's critiques were sublimated into fiction. The following excerpts from Strindberg's "A Doll's House" are from the 1913 Modern Library translation of *Giftas*, titled *Marriage*, by Ellie Schleussner. •

[*In Strindberg's story, a naval captain's happy marriage is upended during a long sea voyage when, back at home, a dour feminist (Ottilia) introduces his wife to Ibsen's* A Doll's House.]

A week later he received a second letter from Bordeaux, a letter which was accompanied by a book, sent under separate cover.

"*Dear William!*"—"H'm! William! No longer Pal!" —"*Life is a struggle*"—"What the deuce does she mean? What has that to do with us?"—"*from beginning to end. Gently as a river in Kedron*"—"Kedron! she's quoting the Bible!"—"*our life has glided along. Like sleepwalkers we have been walking on the edge of precipices without being aware of them*"—"The seminary, oh! the seminary!"—"*Suddenly we find ourselves face to face with the ethical*"—"The ethical? Ablative!"—"*asserting itself in its higher potencies!*"—

"Potencies?"—"*Now that I am awake from my long sleep and ask myself: has our marriage been a marriage in the true sense of the word? I must admit with shame and remorse that this has not been the case. For love is of divine origin. (St. Matthew xi. 22, 24.)*"

The captain had to mix himself a glass of rum and water before he felt able to continue his reading.—"*How earthly, how material our love has been! Have our souls lived in that harmony of which Plato speaks? (Phaidon, Book vi. Chap. ii. Par. 9). Our answer is bound to be in the negative. What have I been to you? A housekeeper and, oh! The disgrace! your mistress! Have our souls understood one another? Again we are bound to answer 'No.'*"—"To Hell with all Ottilias and seminaries! Has she been my housekeeper? She has been my wife and the mother of my children!"—"*Read the book I have sent you! It will answer all your questions. It voices that which for centuries has lain hidden in the hearts of all women! Read it, and then tell me if you think that our union has been a true marriage. Your Gurli.*"

His presentiment of evil had not deceived him. The captain was beside himself; he could not understand what had happened to his wife. It was worse than religious hypocrisy.

He tore off the wrapper and read on the title page of a book in a paper cover: *Et Dukkehjem* af Henrik Ibsen. *A Doll's House*? Well, and—? His home had been a charming doll's house; his wife had been his little doll and he had been her big doll. They had danced along the stony path of life and had been happy. What more did they want? What was wrong? He must read the book at once and find out.

He finished it in three hours. His brain reeled. How did it concern him and his wife? Had they forged bills? No! Hadn't they loved one another? Of course they had!

He locked himself into his cabin and read the book a second time; he underlined passages in red and blue, and when the dawn broke, he took: "*A well-meant little ablative on the play* A Doll's House*, written by the old Pal on board the Vanadis in the Atlantic off Bordeaux. (Lat. 45 deg. Long. 16 deg..)*

1. She married him because he was in love with her and that was a deuced clever thing to do. For if she had waited until she had fallen in love with someone, it might have happened that he would not have fallen in love with her, and then there would have been the devil to pay. For it happens very rarely that both parties are equally in love.

2. She forges a bill. That was foolish, but it is not true that it was done for the husband's sake only, for she has never loved him; it would have been the truth if she had said that she had done it for him, herself and the children. Is that clear?

3. That he wants to embrace her after the ball is only a proof of his love for her, and there is no wrong in that; but it should not be done on the stage….

4. That she, when she discovers that her husband is a fool (and that he is when he offers to condone her offence because it has not leaked out) decides to leave her children 'not considering herself worthy of bringing them up,' is a not very clever trick of coquetry. If they have both been fools (and surely they don't teach at the seminary that it is right to forge bills) they should pull well together in future in double harness.

Least of all is she justified in leaving her children's education in the hands of the father whom she despises.

5. Nora has consequently every reason for staying with her children when she discovers what an imbecile her husband is.

6. The husband cannot be blamed for not sufficiently appreciating her, for she doesn't reveal her true character until after the row.

7. Nora has undoubtedly been a fool; she herself does not deny it.

8. There is every guarantee of their pulling together more happily in future; he has repented and promised to turn over a new leaf. So has she. Very well! Here's my hand, let's begin again at the beginning. Birds of a feather flock together. There's nothing lost, we've both been fools! You, little Nora, were badly brought up. I, old rascal, didn't know any better. We are both to be pitied. Pelt our teachers with rotten eggs, but don't hit me alone on the head. I, though a man, am every bit as innocent as you are! Perhaps even a little more so, for I married for love, you for a home. Let us be friends,

therefore, and together teach our children the valuable lesson we have learnt in the school of life.

Is that clear? All right then!

This was written by Captain Pal with his stiff fingers and slow brain!

And now, my darling dolly, I have read your book and given you my opinion. But what have we to do with it? Didn't we love one another? Haven't we educated one another and helped one another to rub off our sharp corners? Surely you'll remember that we had many a little encounter in the beginning! What fads of yours are those? To hell with all Ottilias and seminaries!

The book you sent me is a queer book. It is like a watercourse with an insufficient number of buoys, so that one might run aground at any moment. But I pricked the chart and found calm waters. Only, I couldn't do it again. The devil may crack these nuts which are rotten inside when one has managed to break the shell. I wish you peace and happiness and the recovery of your sound common sense.

How are the little ones? You forgot to mention them. Probably you were thinking too much of Nora's unfortunate kiddies, (which exist only in a play of that sort). Is my little boy crying? My nightingale singing, my dolly dancing? She must always do that if she wants to make her old pal happy. And now may God bless you and prevent evil thoughts from rising between us. My heart is sadder than I can tell. And I am expected to sit down and write a critique on a play. God bless you and the babies; kiss their rosy cheeks for your faithful old Pal.

§

[*When the Captain returns home, his wife is polite but distant and Ottilia seems to be exerting a baleful influence on the household. The next day, he accompanies his wife on a private walk.*]

They went out together, arm in arm. But they did not talk much; and what they said were words uttered for the sake of concealing their thoughts more than for the sake of exchanging ideas.

They passed the little cholera cemetery and took the road leading to the Swiss Valley. A faint breeze rustled through the pine trees and glimpses of the blue sea flashed through the dark branches.

They sat down on a stone. He threw himself on the turf at her feet. Now the storm is going to burst, he thought, and it did.

"Have you thought at all about our marriage?" she began.

"No," he replied, with every appearance of having fully considered the matter, "I have merely felt about it. In my opinion love is a matter of sentiment; one steers by landmarks and makes port; take compass and chart and you are sure to founder."

"Yes, but our home has been nothing but a doll's house."

"Excuse me, but this is not quite true. You have never forged a bill; you have never shown your ankles to a syphilitic doctor of whom you wanted to borrow money against security *in natura*; you have never been so romantically silly as to expect your husband to give himself up for a crime which his wife had committed from ignorance, and which was not a crime because there was no plaintiff; and you have never lied to me. I have treated you every bit as honestly as Helmer treated his wife when he took her into his full confidence and allowed her to have a voice in the banking business; tolerated her interference with the appointment of an employee. We have therefore been husband and wife according to all conceptions, old and new-fashioned."

"Yes, but I have been your housekeeper!"

"Pardon me, you are wrong. You have never had a meal in the kitchen, you have never received wages, you have never had to account for money spent. I have never scolded you because one thing or the other was not to my liking. And do you consider my work: to reckon and to brace, to ease off and call out 'Present arms,' count herrings and measure rum, weigh peas and examine flour, more honourable than yours: to look after the servants, cater for the house and bring up the children?"

"No, but you are paid for your work! You are your own master! You are a man!"

"My dear child, do you want me to give you wages? Do you want to be my housekeeper in real earnest? That I was born a man is an accident. I might almost say a pity, for it's very nearly a crime to be a man now-a-days, but it isn't my fault. The devil take him who has stirred up the two halves of humanity, one against the other! He has much to answer for. Am I the master? Don't we both rule? Have I ever decided any important matter without asking for your advice? What? But you—you bring up the children exactly as you like! Don't you remember that I wanted you to stop rocking them to sleep because I said it produced a sort of intoxication? But you had your own way! Another time I had mine, and then it was your turn again. There was no compromise possible, because there was no middle course to steer between rocking and not rocking. We got on very well until now. But you have thrown me over for Ottilia's sake!"

"Ottilia! always Ottilia! Didn't you yourself send her to me?"

"No, not her personally! But there can be no doubt that it is she who rules now."

"You want to separate me from all I care for!"

"Is Ottilia all you care for? It almost looks like it!"

"But I can't send her away now that I have engaged her to teach the girls pedagogics and Latin."

"Latin! Great Scott! Are the girls to be ruined?"

"They are to know everything a man knows, so that when the time comes, their marriage will be a true marriage."

"But, my love, all husbands don't know Latin! I don't know more than one single word, and that is 'ablative.' And we have been happy in spite of it. Moreover, there is a movement to strike off Latin from the plan of instruction for boys, as a superfluous accomplishment. Doesn't this teach you a lot? Isn't it enough that the men are ruined, are the women to be ruined, too? Ottilia, Ottilia, what have I done to you, that you should treat me like this!"

"Supposing we dropped that matter.—Our love, William, has not been what it should be. It has been sensual!"

"But, my darling, how could we have had children, if it hadn't? And it has not been sensual only."

"Can a thing be both black and white? Tell me that!"

"Of course, it can. There's your sunshade for instance, it is black outside and white inside."

"Sophist!"

"Listen to me, sweetheart, tell me in your own way the thoughts which are in your heart; don't talk like Ottilia's books. Don't let your head run away with you; be yourself again, my sweet, darling little wife."

"Yours, your property, bought with your labour."

"Just as I am your property, your husband, at whom no other woman is allowed to look if she wants to keep her eyes in her head; your husband, who made a present of himself to you, or rather, gave himself to you in exchange. Are we not quits?"

"But we have trifled away our lives! Have we ever had any higher interests, William?"

"Yes, the very highest, Gurli; we have not always been playing, we have had grave hours, too. Have we not called into being generations to come? Have we not both bravely worked and striven for the little ones, who are to grow up into men and women? Have you not faced death four times for their sakes? Have you not robbed yourself of your nights' rest in order to rock their cradle, and of your days' pleasures, in order to attend to them? Couldn't we now have a large six-roomed flat in the main street, and a footman to open the door, if it were not for the children? Wouldn't you be able to wear silk dresses and pearls? And I, your old Pal, wouldn't have crows' nests in my knees, if it hadn't been for the kiddies. Are we really no better than dolls? Are we as selfish as old maids say? Old maids, rejected by men as no good. Why are so many girls unmarried? They all boast of proposals and yet they

pose as martyrs! Higher interests! Latin! To dress in low neck dresses for charitable purposes and leave the children at home, neglected! I believe that my interests are higher than Ottilia's, when I want strong and healthy children, who will succeed where we have failed. But Latin won't help them! Goodbye, Gurli! I have to go back on board. Are you coming?"

But she remained sitting on the stone and made no answer. He went with heavy footsteps, very heavy footsteps. And the blue sea grew dark and the sun ceased shining.

"Pal, Pal, where is this to lead to?" he sighed, as he stepped over the fence of the cemetery. "I wish I lay there, with a wooden cross to mark my place, among the roots of the trees. But I am sure I couldn't rest, if I were there without her! Oh! Gurli! Gurli!

§

[*After a short period of living as a bachelor in his own home, the Captain, upon the advice of his concerned mother-in-law, embarks upon a campaign of flirtation with Ottilia. As he later recounts to the mother-in-law, his wife's jealousy leads her to turn on Ottilia (and Ibsen), and domestic bliss is restored.*]

"I had promised to show Ottilia some astronomical instruments at the College at twelve o'clock on the following day. She kept her appointment, but she was much depressed. She had been to see Gurli, who had treated her very unkindly, so she said. She could not imagine why. When I came home to dinner I found a great change in Gurli. She was cold and mute as a fish. I could see that she was suffering. Now was the time to apply the knife.

"'What did you say to Ottilia?' I commenced. 'She was so unhappy.'"

'What did I say to her? Well, I said to her that she was a flirt. That's what I said.'

'How could you say such a thing?' I replied. 'Surely, you're not jealous!'

'I! Jealous of her!' she burst out.

'Yes, that's what puzzles me, for I am sure an intelligent and sensible person like Ottilia could never have designs on another woman's husband!'

'No,' (she was coming to the point) 'but another woman's husband might have designs on her.'

'Huhuhu!' she went for me tooth and nail. I took Ottilia's part; Gurli called her an old maid; I continued to champion her. On this afternoon Ottilia did not turn up. She wrote a chilly letter, making excuses and winding up by saying she could see that she was not wanted. I protested and suggested that I should go and fetch her. That made Gurli wild! She was sure that I was in love with Ottilia and cared no more for herself. She knew that she was only a silly girl, who didn't know anything, was no good at anything, and—huhuhu!—could never understand mathematics. I sent for a sleigh and we went for a ride. In a hotel, overlooking the sea, we drank mulled wine and had an excellent little supper. It was just as if we were having our wedding day over again, and then we drove home."

"And then—?" asked the old woman, looking at him over her spectacles.

"And then? H'm! May God forgive me for my sins! I seduced my own little wife. What do you say now, granny?"

"I say that you did very well, my boy! And then?"

"And then? Since then everything has been all right, and now we discuss the education of the children and the emancipation of women from superstition and old-maidishness, from sentimentality and the devil and his ablative, but we talk when we are alone together and that is the best way of avoiding misunderstandings. Don't you think so, old lady?"

"Yes, Willy, dear, and now I shall come and pay you a call."

"Do come! And you will see the dolls dance and the larks and the woodpeckers sing and chirrup; you will see a home filled with happiness up to the roof, for there is no one there waiting for miracles which only happen in fairy tales. You will see a real doll's house." •

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)
Author of *A Doll's House*

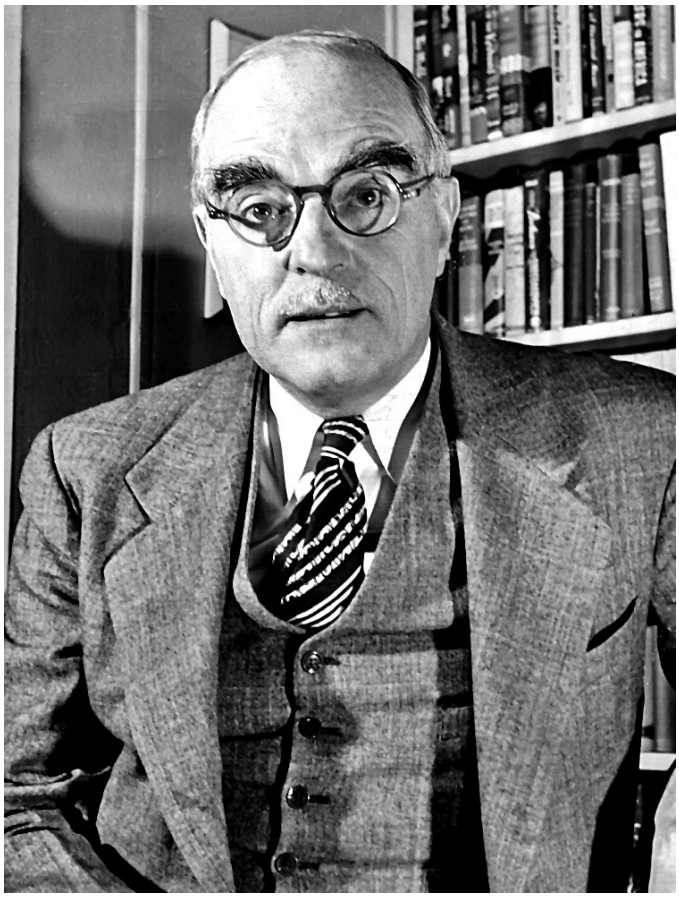
Portrait of Henrik Ibsen in Munich, Germany, 1878. Courtesy of the The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History

The scion of an impoverished family from an out-of-the-way corner of a peripheral country devoid of strong cultural institutions, Ibsen rose to become one of the prime generative forces of modern drama. His father, a prosperous merchant in the small Norwegian port town of Skien, descended into bitterness and alcoholism after his business collapsed in 1834 and his eldest son Henrik's formal education ceased at age 15 when he was sent to become a pharmacist's assistant. Miserable and lonely, he became a voracious reader and a keen observer of people. He also, at age 18, impregnated a servant in the shop, 10 years older, and was forced to pay child support for the next 16 years for a son he probably never met.

The young Ibsen had strong radical sympathies. He wrote his first play *Catiline* flush with enthusiasm for revolutionary romanticism after the 1848 European uprisings. After failing his university entrance exams, he took a job at a theater in Bergen, which broadened his horizons by sending him on foreign theatergoing trips. Over the next decade he acquired extensive practical theater experience—writing, producing and directing many different types of plays. In 1858 he married Suzannah Thoresen who gave birth in 1859 to their only child, Sigurd (later a prominent Norwegian politician). The family's finances were precarious, and Ibsen was threatened with debtor's prison. With help from friends and a small government grant, he left Norway in 1864 and lived abroad for the next 27 years.

All the plays that established Ibsen's career were written in exile. He lived aloof from all but the most intimate friends and family in Rome, Dresden and Munich. His epic verse dramas *Brand* (1866) and *Peer Gynt* (1867)—both dazzlingly imaginative blends of folklore and psychological observation—won recognition and respect throughout Scandinavia. It was his series of prose dramas written between 1877 and 1899, however, set in middle-class Norwegian homes—including *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *Rosmersholm*—that made him a household name in Europe, receiving prominent productions and sparking passionate debates. *A Doll's House* (1879) catapulted him to notoriety, selling out multiple editions, provoking censorship, and becoming a cause célèbre for women's rights advocates. The revolution in drama that it helped spark reached beyond specific social issues, however, as Ibsen had given the world a new model for a bourgeois drama freed from all its old obligations to idealism.

Ibsen wrote his last 4 plays after returning to Norway in 1891. By then his younger rival Strindberg, incensed by the "swinery" of *A Doll's House*, had become his nemesis, abusing him as a "decrepit old troll," an "ignorant women's writer," and more. Ibsen never took the bait. He respected and admired Strindberg, hanging a portrait of him over his writing desk and insisting he couldn't work without "that madman staring down at me."



Thornton Wilder (1897-1975)
Adaptor of *A Doll's House*

Press photo of Thornton Wilder, 1948.

Thornton Wilder was a pivotal figure in the literary history of the twentieth-century. He is the only writer to win Pulitzer Prizes for both fiction and drama. He received the Pulitzer for his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927) and the plays *Our Town* (1938) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). His other novels, all but one a best seller, include *The Cabala*, *The Woman of Andros*, *Heaven's My Destination*, *The Ides of March*, *The Eighth Day* and *Theophilus North*. His other major dramas include *The Matchmaker* (adapted as the musical *Hello, Dolly!*) and *The Alcestiad*. *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* and *The Long Christmas Dinner* are among his well-known shorter plays.

Wilder's many honors include the Gold Medal for Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the National Book Committee's Medal for Literature and the Goethe-Plakette Award (Germany).

Wilder was born in Madison, Wisconsin, on April 17, 1897. He spent part of his boyhood in China and was educated principally in California, graduating from Berkeley High School in 1915. After attending Oberlin College for two years, he transferred to Yale, where he received his BA in 1920. His post-graduate studies included a year spent studying archaeology and Italian at the American Academy in Rome (1920-21) and graduate work in French at Princeton (Master's degree, 1926).

In addition to his talents as a playwright and novelist, Wilder was an accomplished essayist, translator, research scholar, teacher, lecturer, librettist and screenwriter. In 1942, he teamed with Alfred Hitchcock on the classic psycho-thriller *Shadow of a Doubt*. Versed in foreign languages, he translated and adapted plays by Ibsen, Sartre and Obey. He read and spoke German, French and Spanish, and his scholarship included significant research on James Joyce and Lope de Vega.

Wilder enjoyed acting and played major roles in several of his plays in summer theater productions. He also possessed a life-long love of music and wrote librettos for two operas based on *The Long Christmas Dinner* (composer Paul Hindemith) and *The Alcestiad* (composer Louis Talma).

One of Wilder's deepest passions was teaching. He began this career in 1921 as an instructor in French at The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. During the 1930's he taught courses in Classics in Translation and Composition at the University of Chicago. In 1950–51, he served as the Charles Elliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard.

During WWII, Wilder served in the Army Air Force Intelligence. He was awarded the Legion of Merit Bronze Star, the Legion d'honneur and the Order of the British Empire.

In 1930, with the royalties received from The Bridge of San Luis Rey, Wilder built a home for himself and his family in Hamden, Connecticut. Although often away from home, restlessly seeking quiet places in which to write, he always returned to "The House that The Bridge Built." He died here on December 7, 1975.

August Strindberg (1849-1912)
Author of *The Father*

Portrait of August Strindberg, possibly by Harman Anderson, circa 1902.

Also a principal architect of modern drama, the author of *The Father* (1887) was an artist of extraordinary energy, invention, humor, curiosity and intelligence. Strindberg, recognized in his time as a luminary of Naturalism, was also a father of Expressionism, Surrealist theater, Theater of the Absurd, and more. In addition, he is sometimes called "Sweden's Shakespeare" because of his 12 masterful history dramas that grapple with the profoundest human themes through close psychological combat among famous figures. Along with his 61 plays, his oeuvre includes 18 novels, 9 autobiographies, 3 books of poetry, 10,000 letters, and uncounted journalistic pieces.

Strindberg was, by all accounts, an unloved child. His father was a disappointed Stockholm businessman with inflated views of his rightful social position, his mother a waitress in a local inn and a stubbornly ignorant Pietist who died at age 39 after bearing 12 children. Strindberg was bullied in his authoritarian grade school and subjected to continual unwarranted punishment at home, which marked him with lifelong crankiness and hypersensitivity to perceived injustices. He had an exceptional memory and facility with languages, however, and became the first in his family to graduate high school. He began writing plays in 1870 while a student at Uppsala University, ceasing formal study there in 1874 to take up a librarian job where he could study and write on his own.

More than many other writers, Strindberg tapped his life directly for material, distorting the facts with wild imaginings. He once wrote that he found "the joy of life in its strong and cruel struggles," and to some extent he created struggles to write about them. His 3 marriages, all to women destined to confirm his worst fears, are fine examples. His first two wives were unfaithful and the third was 29 years younger than him when he married her at 52. As a young man he had advocated female emancipation in stronger terms than most of his liberal contemporaries, calling for equal rights to education, jobs, voting, money and sexual freedom. The breakdown of his stormily passionate first marriage—to the actress Siri von Essen—turned him radically anti-feminist.

The Father is in part a reaction to that disintegrating marriage and in part a counter-play to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. *Sir Bengt's Wife* (1882), a starring vehicle for Siri, was an earlier anomalously romantic response to the same play. *The Father* was a serious effort to affect the public debate on marriage, as were the realistic plays that followed, *The Comrades* (1888), *Miss Julie* (1888) and *Creditors* (1889), whose sexual frankness shocked the public.

The remainder of Strindberg's life is too eventful and marvelously improbable to deserve quick summary. It includes exile from Sweden, madness, gutsy experimentation in multiple art forms, bitter rejection and eventual reverence by his countrymen. Shortly before his death, 15,000 Swedes contributed 45,000 kronor to award him an "anti-Nobel prize." Ten thousand people followed his coffin.

David Greig (1969-)
Adaptor of *The Father*

David Greig, photo by Murdo MacLeod.

David Greig was born in Edinburgh in 1969. He spent much of his childhood in Jos, Nigeria during the 1970's where his father worked in the construction industry. In 1980 his family returned to live in Edinburgh where he went to school. His first involvement with theatre was with Edinburgh Youth Theatre where he acted in a number of shows. In 1987 he went to Bristol University to study English and Drama.

Since his first mainstage production *Europe* at The Traverse in 1996, David's plays have been produced by most of the major theatre companies in the UK. His plays have also been translated and produced throughout Europe, the USA and Canada, Brazil, Australia and Japan. From 2005 to 2007 he was the first dramaturg of the National Theatre of Scotland.

As well as writing plays, David is now the Artistic Director of the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh.

Plays include: *The Events* (ATC), *Glasgow Girls* (NTS/ Theatre Royal, Stratford East), *Dalgety* (Theatre Uncut, Oran Mor), *Fragile* (Theatre Uncut), *Letter of Last Resort* (Tricycle Theatre, Traverse), *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (NTS), *Monster In The Hall* (TAG), *Dunsinane* (RSC/NTS), *Midsummer* (The Traverse Theatre Co.), *The Miniskirts of Kabul* (Tricycle Theatre), *Kyoto*, *Brewers Fayre*, *Being Norwegian* (Oran Mor), *Damascus* (The Traverse Theatre), *Yellow Moon* (TAG Theatre Co, TMA Best Play For Children and Young People, 2008 Brian Way Award), *Pyrenees* (Paines Plough, Tron Theatre), *The American Pilot* (The Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford and London), *San Diego* (Edinburgh International Festival, Tron Theatre) (Herald Angel and Best New Play, Tron Theatre Awards), *Outlying Islands* (Traverse Theatre, The Royal Court) (Scotsman Fringe First, Herald Angel, Best New Play, Scottish Critics Awards), *Not About Pomegranates* (Al Kasaba Theatre, Ramallah, Palestine), *The Speculator* (Edinburgh International Festival, Grec Festival, Barcelona, Traverse Theatre), *Caledonia Dreaming* (7.84 Theatre Company) (Herald Archangel), *The Cosmonaut's Last Message To The Woman He Once Loved In The Former Soviet Union* (Paines Plough, Tron Theatre) (John Whiting Award), Victoria (RSC), *The Architect* (Traverse Theatre), *Europe* (Traverse Theatre), *Stalinland* (Citizen's Theatre).

Suspect Culture work includes: *Futurology*, *8000m*, *Lament*, *Casanova*, *Candide 2000*, *Mainstream*, *Timeless*, *Airport*, *One Way Street*.

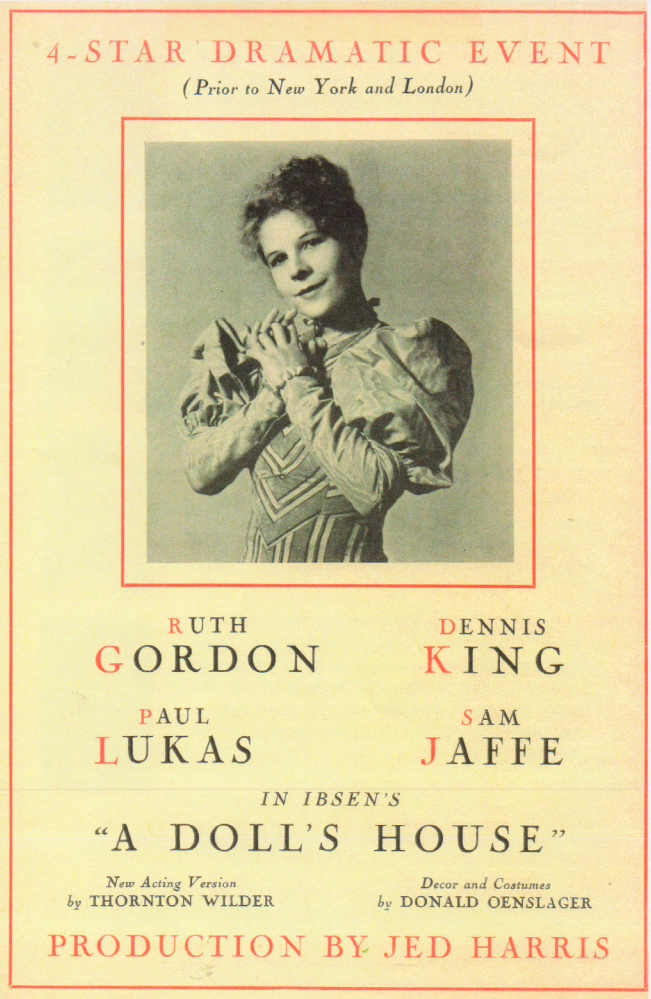
Translations and adaptations include: Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* (Old Vic, London), Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (Edinburgh International Festival), Roald Dahl's *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* (Theatre Royal, Drury Lane), Strindberg's *Creditors* (Donmar Warehouse), Herge's *Tintin In Tibet* (The Young Vic Theatre Company, The Barbican), Albert Camus' *Caligula* (Donmar Warehouse), Laurent Gaude's *Battle of Will* (National Theatre Studio), Alfred Jarry's *King Ubu* (Dundee Rep, The Barbican).

Plays for young people include: *Gobbo*, (Best Show For Children and Young People 2007 CATS Awards), *Dr Korcak's Example* (Tag Theatre Co.), *Danny 306 + Me 4ever* (The Traverse Theatre), *Petra* (Tag Theatre Co).

David lives and works in Fife.

PRODUCTION THORNTON WILDER & *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

A. TAPPAN WILDER



Program cover, featuring Ruth Gordon as Nora in *A Doll's House*, 1937. Courtesy of The Wilder Family LLC.

Theatre for a New Audience's production of Thornton Wilder's version of A Doll's House *is its first revival since the original 1937-38 production starring Ruth Gordon as Nora. It also marks the occasion of the first printed edition of the play, published by Theatre Communications Group (2016). The following afterword to this edition is presented here with permission of Theatre Communications Group.* •

Two theater professionals, Jed Harris (1900–1979) and Ruth Gordon (1896–1985); and their stage-struck friend, Thornton Wilder (1897–1975), created the 1937 version of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Harris served as producer and director, Gordon played Nora, and Wilder provided the script. All were in their mid-to-late-thirties and all full of energy and ambition.

Soon after they first met in 1927, Wilder promised Jed Harris a play. At the time Harris was at the peak of his powers as the phobia-driven, self-destructive, complicated wunderkind of Broadway, whose shows in the 1920s could not fail. Like others of his breed, he was cordially disliked and deeply admired by the same people (feelings Wilder would experience). In 1928, Time placed Jed Harris on the cover.

Wilder met Ruth Gordon in 1930. Although still twelve years away from her Time cover in 1942 (shared with Katharine Cornell and Judith Anderson), Gordon was already an important actress of great versatility, intelligence and, above all, driving ambition. Thornton Wilder adored her.

In spring 1937, Harris found himself in a jam: with his cast set and rehearsals scheduled for a revival of *A Doll's House*, he lacked a new English version of the play that he and Ruth Gordon could live with. (In a 1998 New York Times piece, riddled with factual errors, Garson Kanin claimed that Harris had commissioned a version by Clifford Odets, which had not worked out. The more likely scenario, which I found in an undated clipping, identifies playwright Paul Osborn as the first adaptor retained by Harris for a "touching up" of the work.) Wilder, despite embarking on a plan to spend three years working on his own plays, was glad to help his friends, and threw himself immediately into the task. He undertook the project without a contract or discussion of money. Indeed, as he informed his attorney, he did the job for Ruth for "free." (When the production proved successful, Harris moved to pay Wilder a weekly royalty. In all, he received a total of $4,519 from the Harris office for A Doll's House, approximately $76,000 today. In addition to performance royalties, the figure included fees for three play-related radio broadcasts: the Kate Smith Hour on October 7, 1937; and after the play closed, Lux Radio Theatre on June 6, 1938, and an NBC *A Doll's House* on December 31, 1941.)

Wilder crafted his new acting version of *A Doll's House* for several weeks starting in April 1937, at his home in Hamden, Connecticut, outside New Haven. "All previous [English] translations are as wooden as they can be," he wrote to his brother Amos. Wilder was

referring particularly to the first English translation of the play done by William Archer in 1889, still revered and used in the 1930s. Seeking to get as close as possible to Ibsen's intentions, Wilder, drawing on his knowledge of German, based his version on German translations of the play, with special attention given to the work of Ibsen's friend, Georg Brandes. He may have used a literal Danish-to-English translation, and later wrote that he had "consulted Norwegian friends on details." To the press in 1937 he described his version as, "colloquial English designed to give the play a twentieth-century feeling." Harris's publicist provided the following description:

> This production is enriched by a new acting version by Thornton Wilder of the University of Chicago, whose novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* was long among the bestsellers. While making no pretense at rewriting *A Doll's House*, this scholarly playwright has provided a more supple, pertinent and stageworthy text—something applicable to the living need of theater rather than the isolation of the library.

Illustration from Esquire Magazine, 1937. Courtesy of The Wilder Family LLC.

It is not clear why Jed Harris decided to revive *A Doll's House*. He had lost much of his fortune and, it appeared, his Broadway magic with the crash of 1929. As the popularity of social-realistic plays faded, classical works were increasingly back in fashion starting in the late 1930s. After modest success into the mid-1930s, Harris decided to stake the recovery of fame and a new fortune on an extraordinarily ambitious revival, promoting *A Doll's House* as a "symbol of the renaissance of the legitimate stage toward which all theater lovers are hopefully moving." In so doing, he was tapping into a trend in drama in the late 1930s as well as his own soul. A New York theater critic at the time, John Anderson, described Harris as "one of the theater's most passionate intellects," a producer-director who venerated Ibsen as "the ancestor of the modern drama."

By the 1930s, *A Doll's House* was commonly regarded as dated. Written in 1879, and not seen on Broadway since 1918 with the legendary Madame Nazimova as Nora, its perceived principal theme of the emancipation of women was an issue many agreed had been resolved or was well on its way to being resolved. In short, this masterpiece of dramatic literature, certainly worthy of the library and classroom, was yesterday's story at the box office. Here, Harris, fascinated by the play's broader timeless questions of power and domination in relationships, seized the opportunity to mount a production in which Nora Helmer would not (to cite the play's promotional material) "overshadow the important male characters that form Ibsen's pattern of conflicting basic psychology and conflicting interests." And to serve his vision of the play, Harris put together a production that featured not one, but four stars who shared equal billing. The principal actors who carried the play to its record-breaking Broadway run were Ruth Gordon, Dennis King, Paul Lukas and Sam Jaffe, a cast billed as "the greatest ever in the history of this great drama." (Note: Lukas replaced Walter Slezak after the Central City, Colorado engagement.)

Harris' production, fully realized by the fall of 1937, included not one but two notable destinations: Broadway and the West End. The cast incorporated assets that

promised a fresh, exciting and "historic" reinterpretation of a dusty masterpiece: None had previous public association with Ibsen, several had eye-catching screen credits, one was a cinematic heartthrob making a "debut" on the American stage, and Jaffe and Lukas's foreign accents added still more glamour to an iconic piece headed for great things on both sides of the Atlantic.

Billing aside, one star in A Doll's House of course, shined brighter than the others—and her name was always listed first. Although A Doll's House was Harris's idea, it was built around Ruth Gordon. Despite the private dynamics of their relationship by 1937—Gordon had been Harris's mistress and the mother of a child born in 1929—it is clear that Gordon wanted badly to play Nora. In the fall of 1936 she had enjoyed a great triumph as Mrs. Pinchwife in Wycherley's *The Country Wife* at London's Old Vic. The first American actress to play a leading role on that stage, she returned home to perform the role again in a successful Broadway production in the winter of 1936–1937. In an interview during *A Doll's House's* Fall 1937 out-of-town run, she related to a reporter that only twice in her life as an actress had a dream "come off"—her Nora and her appearance as Mrs. Pinchwife. "There is a difference, you know, between achieving a high ambition and achieving a success. I like successful things—the Bing Crosbys, Fred Warrings, the slick Broadway comedies—but it's more satisfactory to have one's heart in something one believes in." The role of Nora was her second realized "high ambition," one that Gordon hoped would take her back to London, the site where she had achieved the first.

Program cover from the Milwaukee engagement of *A Doll's House*, 1937. Courtesy of The Wilder Family LLC.

Harris's plan to launch *A Doll's House* in New York during the fall of 1937 changed when Broadway producer Richard Aldrich offered an expense-covered deal to feature the play as part of the Sixth Annual Play Festival in Central City, Colorado. (Aldrich managed the festival that summer.) The three-week run, July 17–August 7, 1937, afforded Harris a cost-free opportunity to test the work with the public, and he naturally agreed. The play's great success in Central City spurred Harris to arrange a major ten-week out-of-town tour for fall 1937.

With Walter Slezak now replaced by Paul Lukas, Harris's fully realized "4-Star Dramatic Event" (prior to New York and London) opened with a five-day engagement at Toronto's Royal Alexander Theatre on October 11, 1937, and moved on to shorter visits in twelve Midwestern cities, including Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Louisville, Columbus, St. Louis, Des Moines, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Madison and Milwaukee. A concluding two-week engagement at Chicago's Grand Opera House ended the play's "trek to the heartland" on December 18, 1937. With few exceptions, critical comment was overwhelmingly favorable, offering enthusiastic praise for Gordon, the other actors, Wilder, and more often than not Harris. A Columbus, Ohio, reporter called A Doll's House "one of the most magnificent comebacks in recent theatrical annals." Jed Harris's dusty masterpiece staged in a bold "fresh" production put him back in the limelight.

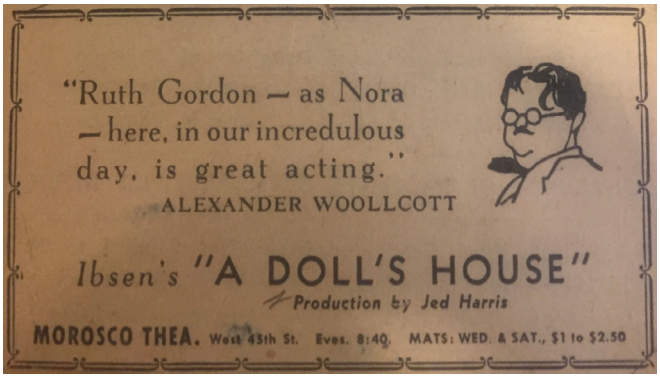
In mid-June, after completing *A Doll's House*, Wilder moved on to The MacDowell Colony, an artist retreat in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Here he began at last to dedicate himself full-time to his own work. But not

long after his arrival, Wilder accepted a last-minute offer to replace the American delegate to The Second General Conference of National Committees on Intellectual Co-operation to be held in Paris in July 1937. The timing of his departure for Europe allowed him to attend a few rehearsals for *A Doll's House* prior to its Central City appearance, but he was not present when the cast re-rehearsed in October for the Fall tour. By then, he was lodged in a town near Zürich, Switzerland, trying to finish his own plays, and dealing with all matters by mail, cable and the occasional phone call. And the news was good; after receiving a cable from Ruth Gordon, he wrote to his family on October 16: "Sixteen curtain calls in Toronto, and in Detroit the audience cheered."

No sooner had the last curtain fallen in Toronto when Jed Harris, eager for a second drama from Wilder's hand, set sail for Europe. The two met in Paris on October 31 where "Thorny" read him drafts of *Our Town* and *The Merchant of Yonkers*, explaining that he could not give Harris the latter, as Wilder had promised his farce to director Max Reinhardt. But Harris returned to New York with drafts of the first two acts of *Our Town* and plans to mount it on Broadway as soon as possible in the new year—and Wilder returned to Switzerland to complete it.

By the end of November Wilder had returned to New York, still working tirelessly to finish *Our Town*. He finally managed to break free and travel to Chicago on December 13, 1937, to reconnect face-to-face with *A Doll's House* for first time in six months. Here he found himself caught up in "continuous conferences and alternations" leading up to the play's New York premiere at The Morosco Theatre on December 27.

On the road, the vast majority of influential critics had raved over the new "timeless" *Doll's House*. Following the play's Broadway opening, however, while critical response was strong in influential corners, there were also notable dissents regarding whether a dated play could be revived, how Gordon had interpreted the role, and even outrage that Ibsen and William Archer had been tampered with. Whether the mixed notices or the time of year were to blame, three weeks into the run, Harris apparently decided to close the show. Wilder wrote his friend Gertrude Stein at the time, "Balcony



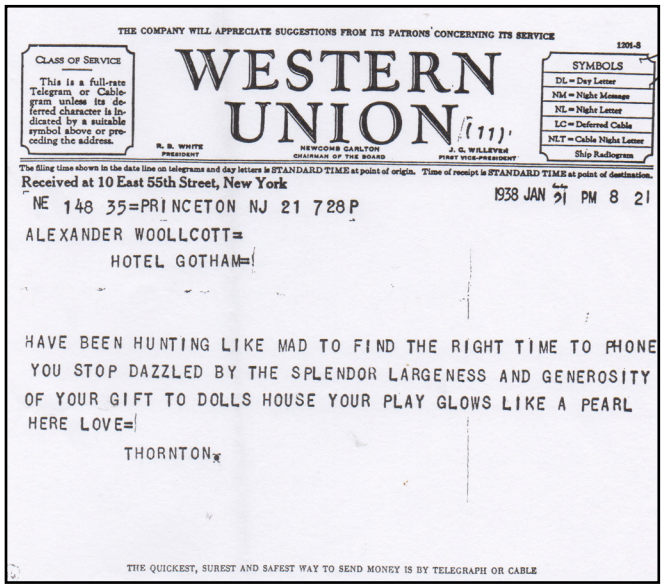
Print advertisement for the 1938 Broadway run. Collection of Newspaper Clippings of Dramatic Criticism, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

alway(s) sold out, while the rich people downstairs seem to shrink from the name of Ibsen."

At this moment, early in 1938, one of the periods larger-than-life theatrical personages entered into the history of *A Doll's House*. Alexander Woollcott—leading critic, influential broadcaster, and great admirer of Ruth Gordon—devoted his January 21 *Town Crier* broadcast to praising her performance and the play. His words (among them "one of the greatest nights in the theater of the world of our time") had such an "electrifying effect" on the box office that three days later, Harris was able to move the production on January 24 to the slightly larger Broadhurst Theatre. (Shortly after, on February 4, 1938, *Our Town* would open on Broadway at Henry Miller's Theatre with lines at the ticket booth.) Wilder in Princeton, New Jersey, preparing for the world pre¬miere performance of *Our Town* at the McCarter Theatre on January 22, was not too busy to telegram thanks to Woollcott, to whom he would soon publically dedicate his new play.

> HAVE BEEN HUNTING LIKE MAD TO FIND THE RIGHT TIME TO PHONE YOU STOP DAZZLED BY THE SPLENDOR LARGENESS AND GENEROSITY OF YOUR GIFT TO DOLL'S HOUSE YOUR PLAY GLOWS LIKE A PEARL HERE LOVE
>
> THORNTON

The distinguished actress Lynn Fontanne also participated in *A Doll's House*'s rescue. At the conclusion of her Saturday evening, January 22, 1938, performance in *Amphitryon 38*, at the nearby Shubert Theatre, her



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THORNTON

THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE

Telegram from Thornton Wilder to Alexander Woolcott, January 21, 1938. Courtesy of The Wilder Family LLC.

co-star and husband Alfred Lunt, escorted Fontanne to the edge of the stage. "My wife has something in mind," he said. Fontanne then confided, "a trifle breathlessly," that she had seen *A Doll's House* at a Wednesday matinee and "wanted to tell everyone about it." Her gesture, apparently a most unusual one for Fontanne, was national news.

Having righted itself and moved to a new home, *A Doll's House* ran until Saturday April 30, 1938, setting a Broadway record of 144 performances, which lasted sixty years. Near the end of the run, King and Lukas were replaced, respectively, by Frederic Tozers and Kent Smith. After its Broadway closure, Harris moved *A Doll's House* to Philadelphia for a two-week run at the Shubert's Forrest Theatre. Despite press indicating that the play was still headed for London, on May 14, 1938, the original production of *A Doll's House* closed in Philadelphia, and soon after the Harris office announced that its 4-Star show would go no further.

Did the production fail to reach London because two of its four stars had moved on? A shift in the producer's priorities? Lack of interest from a West End stage? The growing threat of war in Europe? Probably more than one reason figured in the decision. But reading the record, one senses that a remarkably successful production of *A Doll's House* had, in fact, reached a natural end point in Philadelphia. Ruth Gordon, star among the stars, deserves the last word. She was quoted in the press as saying that she had "previously expressed a desire to do the play in London where she clicked in *The Country Wife*," but had "recently decided she was tired after thirty-five consecutive weeks in this show."

Throughout the years after *A Doll's House* closed, Wilder's agents received occasional inquires about the work's availability, replying routinely that the script, which Mr. Wilder had prepared for "a special purpose" was not available. When feelers surfaced from notables such as Laurence Olivier in 1944 and Julie Harris in 1954, a script was sent and it can be assumed that Wilder would have fashioned a definitive treatment if a feeler turned into serious interest. Absent a major push, Thornton Wilder is hardly the first writer who found it difficult to return to an earlier job. (Only after much nagging did he finally craft his definitive version of *Our Town* in 1957.) "That text [*A Doll's House*] has never been established," he reminded his dramatic agent in 1951. "Jed's interpolations here and there prevent my being able to say that 'Lo! This translation is by me.' So I've got to refuse all requests to print it." And because Wilder never revisited the play, *A Doll's House* was never published and was eventually assigned to the shelf. When it was discovered that the work had never been copyrighted, this act was quickly rectified. It occurred officially on May 2, 1969, six years before Wilder's death.

It fell to the managers of Thornton Wilder's intellectual property in a new century to "rediscover" a drama with marvelous credits that had long been in plain sight but nevertheless long overlooked. It is a thrill, seventy-eight years after its New York premiere, to welcome this play back as a double bill— this century's premiere performance of *A Doll's House* at the hands of Theatre for a New Audience and the first publication of the text by Theatre Communications Group.

A. TAPPAN WILDER is Thornton Wilder's nephew and literary executor, and the manager of his literary and dramatic properties. He has written afterwords for several published editions of Wilder's works, including *Our Town* and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. He is also involved with the literary legacies of Thornton's three sisters and older brother. Wilder is a graduate of Yale College and holds an M.A. in American history from the University of Wisconsin and a M. Phil. in American studies from Yale.

INTERVIEW THE DIALOGUE OF "DIFFERENT BEASTS"

ALISA SOLOMON IN CONVERSATION WITH ARIN ARBUS AND DAVID GREIG

Maggie Lacey and John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

On a break from rehearsals, playwright ***David Greig*** *(adaptor of* The Father*) and director* ***Arin Arbus*** *sat down for a conversation about Strindberg and Ibsen with* ***Alisa Solomon****, a member of Theatre for a New Audience's Council of Scholars.*

ALISA SOLOMON: I believe that Theatre for a New Audience is presenting Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Strindberg's *The Father* in repertory together for the first time ever, in English. Arin, why did you want to pair them this way? How do the plays relate to each other?

ARIN ARBUS I actually became interested in the two plays separately and I didn't know about the intense rivalry between Ibsen and Strindberg and Strindberg's obsessive outrage with *A Doll's House*. I later learned that he was outraged by Ibsen's scandalous attack on the male sex as depicted in *A Doll's House*. Strindberg wrote a preface to *Getting Married*—which is a book of short stories about marriage—that's amazing. He spends pages and pages doing a scene-by-scene criticism of *A Doll's House*, and then lays out his utopian manifesto for the role of women in society. I became interested in the connections between the two plays. They both view marriage as a form of entrapment, I think. They're both about the effect of troubled marriages on children.

ALISA: Did the rivalry go in both directions with Ibsen just playing it more like a grown-up? Supposedly, he had a portrait of Strindberg hanging over his desk, and he complimented *The Father*—he said something like, "It's not my point of view, but I admire its force," whereas Strindberg really lashed out against Ibsen, as you were saying.

DAVID GREIG: I don't think Strindberg would like me saying this, but I think there's something about the rivalry that is, in Strindberg's terms, a pure, almost teenage rebellion at the way the world is, and as Ibsen represents it, whereas Ibsen doesn't strike me as really that worried about it.

Maybe it's like when punk came along and the old bands had to up their game a bit.

Strindberg's furious with Ibsen, Strindberg's got an incredible father complex happening anyway. There's a rivalry, but one of the men is cool and in control of his world and life, and this other man is a boy. Not even a boy, he's the id, the uncontrolled male id in all its sproingling craziness.

ALISA: What do their visions of marriage and family have in common?

DAVID Both men identify bourgeois Victorian patriarchal family life as being somehow hollowed out and flawed, but one of them's a reformist.

Strindberg's play is called *The Father*. It's about the essence of patriarchy being built on the fact that you have to construct a massive edifice to control family and to make sure that you're not wasting your resources bringing up somebody else's child. All of that primal stuff is at the root probably of both of them, but in different ways.

ALISA: *A Doll's House* deals with the question of legitimacy, too. Not in that literal sense of bastards or adultery or the question of the children's paternity, but the legitimacy of the marriage. Both playwrights are dealing with questions of lies at the core of marital relationships.

ARIN They're both criticizing the institution of marriage, or revealing its hypocrisies and problems. They seem to be coming at it from very different points of view.

I think Ibsen's really talking about the society, and Strindberg is a little bit, too, but he's talking more about something in the nature of relationships between men and women.

One might see in Ibsen the idea that if this society changed, if we smashed all of these false institutions, perhaps there would be a way for a man and a

John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

woman to have a true marriage, and I don't think Strindberg feels that way.

DAVID I think the same can be true if you look at Ibsen and Strindberg, not so much in their direct personal relationships, but look them almost as archetypes of masculinity.

Strindberg, the man, who apparently is about male supremacy, well, he's almost certainly weak. Ibsen just radiates strength, a kind of cool.

You just get the sense that with Strindberg it's all bluff. I think it's a mistake to take what's coming out of his mouth too seriously.

The important thing is to look at the play he wrote because something in his inability to have any skin means that he wrote plays that end up being, strangely, psychologically maybe more interesting than the Ibsen plays. Ibsen is too in control, whereas Strindberg is not in control.

ALISA: Your translation of Strindberg's *Creditors* played here in New York in 2010. It's a play that also deals with this battle, and portrays the woman -- and the men aren't too appealing, either -- as the force that's going to suck all the energy and authority and talent out of a man.

DAVID I know. Yeah. And this may sound like making excuses, but Strindberg genuinely believes that women are terrifying, and I think the reason they terrify him is that they're humans with brains, and hearts, and abilities. They're not whatever it was the Victorian world thought they were. And he also sees what to him is a primal power about life and all that kinda hippy stuff.

Then, even beyond that, there's another power, which is the power they have over him because he needs them. He wants them. In a Strindberg play, the woman might appear to be painted as a terrible Machiavel, but he really thinks that the woman is powerful, whereas in many, many, many plays by

Maggie Lacey and John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

men, post the Greeks, there's a slightly patronizing, "Women, they're actually quite powerful."

Slightly, like George Bernard Shaw, like, "Women, yeah, who'd have thought it?" You're writing plays to show that contrary to what you might think, women can actually do some of it, too.

ALISA: Isn't it always a destructive power in Strindberg?

DAVID In Strindberg, yeah. He makes his plays like a bear pit. It's very difficult to see anybody—male or female—coming out of them well, which is fun to watch.

ALISA: I wonder what each playwright would have to say about the very primal currents related to gender being unleashed in our presidential campaign.

DAVID You can look at a phenomenon like Donald Trump and you can say, "What I shall do is explain this complicated scenario and show how it's problematic and wrong and show how it's not entirely the fault of the people contained within the scenario as well."

Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Henry Grossman.

That's what Ibsen would do. Ibsen would think, "What I must do is find the sort of family or the town in which this is taking place and expose its workings." That's a noble cause. That's a good thing to do. And it would drive Strindberg berserk.

It wouldn't be that Strindberg necessarily would want to vote for Trump, but Strindberg would see rage, and he would go, "Rage. Rage is what's interesting. How can you ignore the rage?" He would write a character who would be awful.

This is why they're essentially different beasts looking at the same issues of family.

ALISA: Thinking about some more parallels between Strindberg and Ibsen, I'd like to ask about a couple of specifics about the time the plays are set and about the characters. First, the main female characters. We have Nora and Laura. I don't know if Strindberg chose a name for his character that rhymed with Ibsen's.

ARIN I suspect it's not a coincidence.

ALISA: How calculating are these women?

ARIN It's difficult to talk about them together, although there is certainly a big connection between the two of them. They both come to the realization that they have to shatter their marriages and family life, and that that is the only way to move forward.

Both of them are also flying by the seat of their pants. I think they're calculating at every moment, they're both in a continual state of panic when we see them. That's the connection between them.

ALISA I read something that surprised me that I'd love your take on. The other day, I pulled off my shelf, a crumbling copy of the Elizabeth Sprigge translation of *The Father*—my college copy, I think—and in her introduction she says this about Laura: "It is her lack of common sense, not her lack of morals, that the captain criticizes when he upbraids her for

ruining his life. The play falls to pieces if we cannot see Laura as an ordinary, rather stupid, middle class girl brought up in ignorance, and the captain as an intelligent, ambitious young man walking in the springtime and falling in love with her."

ARIN Wow.

DAVID That's not the play I read.

ARIN Me neither.

DAVID Laura is many, many things, and I think Strindberg wants us to perceive her as many, many things, but stupid or ordinary is not one of them. She's an all-powerful goddess who can unman men.

ALISA Is she, or is that the captain's fevered fantasy about her?

DAVID She was a goddess to him when they walked through the forest, and she's a goddess to him now.

Then, she was a benign goddess, and now, she's a wrathful goddess, but she's always a goddess. Now, of course, women aren't goddesses, and in a way, that perception is part of the trouble.

ARIN I think you've made her flesh and blood.

DAVID I tried to do that.

Even when you strip away what the captain thinks of her, I still don't think she's stupid or ordinary. That's, in a way, the problem. If she was stupid or ordinary, it would be fine. They'd get through it.

ALISA You could say the same thing about Nora, too. Another thing the two plays have in common is that they are set at Christmas time. Why?

ARIN At least in *A Doll's House*, it's when the family is supposed to be closest, and happiest, and celebrating.

DAVID Yes, for *The Father*, too, Christmas is the time when the bourgeois family supposedly comes together. But for Strindberg, I think it's less

John Douglas Thompson and Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Henry Grossman.

Christmas than winter and darkness. Christmas is very close to the winter solstice, the shortest day. It's a play that takes place from the last remnants of light of the afternoon, through darkness, into the very early hours of the morning.

Though the nurse says, "We must celebrate our savior's birth," it's so blackly ironic, by the time you hear it, you're just thinking, "Oh, you have so many other things to deal with in this family before you worry about Christmas."

ALISA What's it like to be knocking around inside Strindberg's head and soul, as I imagine you must be when you're working from the inside out on his texts?

DAVID With *Creditors*, the first few drafts were really horrible. It was awful. I was in a depression, and I only later realized that part of the reason I might be in a depression was I was spending so much time inside Strindberg's head.

In the later drafts, and also in this draft of *The Father*, it was much, much easier because—it's so hard to explain, but it's an incredible privilege if you do the job of free adaptation.

ALISA How do you work on the text?

DAVID I work with a translator, and my job is not necessarily wholly and only to look at the words, it's to think about the play as a written object, and to try, in essence, to recreate a written object.

John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Henry Grossman.

ALISA Which is what Wilder did, with *A Doll's House*, so we'll come back to that. First, David, say more about what that experience is like.

DAVID It's an unbelievably privileged thing, unlike anything else I can think of. It's an incredibly intimate relationship with somebody who's not there, who's dead, because you have to feel what they feel. I have to feel like I am writing this play, like it is coming out of me.

ALISA You're channeling it somehow.

DAVID Yeah, yeah. Sometimes I do whole drafts without any reference to the original at all, and then I go back and look at the result.

Spending time in his head now is quite enjoyable because the darkness isn't scary to me. I think it's amazing when he hits it.

When he hits it, I really go, "Wow, that's psychologically so sort of astute and ahead of its time."

ALISA Would you explain more about the difference between a translation and a free adaptation? What is at the core of your effort?

DAVID I would like translate the experience. An audience in Stockholm in 1888 going to see *The Father*—I'd like to try to give you the same kind of experience. They weren't in the past, so what you have to do with the version is find a way where you're not advertising that it's in the past.

I mean, it's obviously in the past. They have sleighs and not Volvos parked outside, but at the same time, you have to try to not make it archaic—this is the production's job as well. So if that audience in Stockholm were going to be genuinely shocked by a moment, it would be great if they were genuinely shocked now, and if they were going to laugh at a moment, you want them to laugh now. That's where you're doing the underground work where it might not be exactly a translation.

ALISA For example?

DAVID Strindberg has some speeches where people talk about science which in his day would have been current. He uses it to explain why men and women are a certain way, or why his doubts about paternity are reasonable, and he'll go off on a tangent.

For example, he goes down a big tangent about zebras and hereditary experiments. It doesn't make any sense to us now. Our audience would be spending their time thinking, "I just don't know what this man's talking about. Why is he talking about zebras," whereas the original audience would be going, "Ah, yes, I've heard of that."

ALISA What are some of those dark places you mentioned you had to go into in The Father?

DAVID At first, you would laugh at the idea that men should be bothered about whether their children aren't their children. I mean, it's very odd to base a whole play around it, but as he digs in, and digs in, and digs in to this idea that you cannot know, you cannot know, that's the root. I do start to think, "That's really core to being male, is that you cannot know"—

ALISA Well, except now you can. I mean, something so primal must be going on here. It's like, penicillin is to *Ghosts* as DNA testing is to *The Father*: Solving the ostensible problem wouldn't make either play's issues go away.

DAVID If you go to all the trouble of getting a DNA test, I still think a bit of you would wonder—what if the DNA test was wrong, though? What if there was a mistake in the machinery? You can't ever know, whereas that is profoundly obviously not the case with a woman.

There's a speech where the Captain basically says, "All I have are doubts," and he says, "If I really did think that you were being unfaithful, it would be better because then I could start to find some truth to put my foot down, but because I kind of believe you were

John Douglas Thompson and Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

faithful, therefore, I know my doubts are irrational, but I can't get rid of my doubts, so I'm tormented and will never escape."

That's the sort of thing Strindberg will write that is just hovering on the edge of sense. I certainly don't think he's the only man who has been frozen with this awful horror around his inability to control the woman in his life in that way. That's quite dark. I wouldn't write that. I wouldn't want anyone to think I thought that. He doesn't care.

ALISA Your sensibility does seem so different from Strindberg's. I think the last work of yours that was here in New York was *The Events*, a powerful play that shows a survivor of a mass shooting trying to come to terms with what happened. Though it was inspired by the act of a violent misogynist—Anders Behring Breivik—it is a deeply humanistic play, one that looks for connection and human bridge-building. Not exactly what one would find in Strindberg.

DAVID That's maybe what I meant when I was saying before that there's something comforting and redemptive about working on Strindberg. My working on Strindberg is not at all dissimilar to the priest character in *The Events* trying to understand the character called the Boy [the perpetrator of the shooting], trying to understand, trying to get in.

Also, as a playwright, I personally feel I'm probably much more Ibsen-like in the way I see the world. I'm much more interested in adapting Strindberg because he's not like me.

ALISA Let's turn to Ibsen. Arin, why did you choose Wilder's version of *A Doll's House*?

ARIN Wilder made something more taut than some adaptations. It feels very alive. He wrote it for Ruth Gordon, Jed Harris. It was done on Broadway in 1937, and that's the last time it's been in New York. It feels very fresh and concise and incisive.

Maggie Lacey and John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

THE DIALOGUE OF "DIFFERENT BEASTS" ALISA SOLOMON

ALISA When I was looking at the play the other day—not the Wilder version, which is only now being published for the first time—I became really interested in the ending. I was struck by Torvald asking Nora, "Well, couldn't you just stay here and we could live chastely," and she says, "That's not possible."

It made me think about their relationship in a different way. All of the little squirrely, cutesy language that's in most of the translations I've ever read, always comes off—especially in production—like he is simply infantilizing her. But fixing on that exchange at the end, I thought, there's something really hot between them, it's a really sexy marriage.

ARIN I feel that very, very strongly. I think they are deeply, deeply in love with one another, and at the beginning of the play, they're very, very happy in that house, and I think they have, in some ways, a really intense, great marriage. So when you sit in the audience and you look at it initially, you might think, "Oh, I wish my marriage was like that," because they believe in it.

They're not dumb people. I believe it's totally possible to believe in something and then realize that actually it's toxic or is based on a series of lies and false roles.

DAVID I was also thinking that the Captain and Laura have a sexy marriage as well.

I mean, it isn't now—the now when we meet them in the play. But it has been. If we cast ourselves back 100 or so years, I think it is miraculous, almost, that both Ibsen and Strindberg are representing sexualities that we're able to connect with. It was pretty taboo to talk about any of this stuff at all.

Strindberg was getting into stuff that even now, if you put it on a stage, can come across as, if not taboo, certainly slightly shocking.

ALISA Are these productions going to look like the

Maggie Lacey and John Douglas Thompson in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

late 1800s?

ARIN They're both set in the past, in the period—not in a historically accurate way, but the plays don't land for me if you set them now.

ALISA Why not?

ARIN Nora's decision to leave is different. It doesn't have the same meaning or weight. Marriage is different now. It's a porous thing now where you can get out of it if you want, and it's important that these people feel locked inside of it.

DAVID Also, when you work with an object like a play, the most satisfying thing is when the audience say to themselves, "Oh, that's just like now. That's like me."

They've made some act of imagination, and think, "It might be 19th century Sweden, but it feels like me," whereas if we did update it or set in 1948 New York or something, they would have spent the whole of the play going, "That's not quite how it was in 1948 New York." Or even if it went well, they'd still be going, "Wow, it's amazingly like 1948 New York," instead of just having that gut feeling of connection.

ALISA What kind of connection is left at the end of both plays? There's a commonality between them here, too. You could say both leave ruined husbands at the end.

DAVID Dead husband in one.

ARIN And in the other, also some kids are left . . .

DAVID I think at the end of *The Father*, there is a sense of post-war. I mean, it's horror.

ALISA Take up the bodies.

DAVID Right. Nothing is left at the end of *The Father*. It's bleak.

ARIN There is stuff left at the end of *A Doll's House*. I don't know what will become of Nora, but something.

ALISA One does hold out some hope that she'll go off and find herself in some way– and maybe even hope that she could come back to make a marriage of equals, which was a new concept at this time.

ARIN I also have some hopes for Torvald at the end of *A Doll's House*.

Ruben Almash, Jayla Lavender Nicholas and Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

John Douglas Thompson and Kimber Monroe in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Henry Grossman.

ALISA Which are?

ARIN His world has been cracked open, and I don't know what will happen to him, but there is the potential for him to grow in some way because she speaks the truth, which she has never acknowledged before and doesn't understand in some way, but then he is left to make sense of it.

ALISA What's it like to be rehearsing two things at the same time?

ARIN It's hard!

ALISA Do the plays swim together in your head? Do Laura and Nora meet in your dreams.

ARIN No, they're very separate in my mind. Designing it was tricky because you've got to keep them separate.

ALISA I imagine for the actors, too, the question of where there's overlap and where there's distinctiveness between the characters they're playing, it has to be very clear.

ARIN The great thing is that the characters are so different from each other. Just the way they speak and the way they move through the world is so, so different. Ibsen is about decorum and about the way people behave, and Strindberg has ripped off the skin, and there's all of this chaos. The chaos that's inside of us is sort of exploding out of them, so that helps the actors to push in opposing directions, or different directions, at least. I do think they have a big, very hard job ahead. To do these two plays in one day's a lot to ask.

DAVID I must admit, the project for me is exciting partly because of how this dialogue between the plays will emerge I don't think any of us knows what that dialogue will reveal. •

This interview has been edited and condensed.

ALISA SOLOMON is a teacher, writer and dramaturg living in New York City. She directs the Arts and Culture concentration in the MA program at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Her criticism, essays and political reporting have appeared in a wide range of magazines and newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Nation*, *Forward*, *Theater*, and *Village Voice* (where she was on the staff for 21 years). Her book, *Re-Dressing the Canon: Essays on Theater and Gender* (Routledge, 1997) won the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism. She is the co-editor (with Tony Kushner) of the anthology *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Grove, 2003). Her latest book is *Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddler on the Roof* from Metropolitan Books (Holt).

Maggie Lacey and Laurie Kennedy in iTheatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

RUBEN ALMASH (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Ivar) is extremely excited for his first-ever onstage performance. Ruben lives with his mom and two younger brothers in Brooklyn, where in addition to acting, he dreams of becoming a forensic scientist. He would like to thank Roberta Loew and John Isgro at Acting Out! for their guidance and encouragement.

NIGEL GORE (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Doctor Rank; *FATHER*: Doctor Ostermark). New York: *Sense & Sensibility*, *Seagull* (Bedlam), *Women of Will*. Regional: Richard, *Richard III* (Colorado Shakes; Best Actor, WestWord Denver); George, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Public Theatre, Boston; Eliot Norton Award Outstanding Actor); Henry, *The Lion in Winter* (Oldcastle); Jacques, *Mother of the Maid* (Shakespeare & Co.); Caesar, *Julius Caesar* (Orlando Shakes, Shakespeare & Co.); Brutus, *Julius Caesar*; Claudius, *Hamlet* (Prague). Film: *The Last Knights*.

LAURIE KENNEDY (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Anna; *FATHER*: Margaret). TFANA: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*. Broadway: *A Delicate Balance*, *Copenhagen*, *Angels in America*, *Major Barbara*, *Man and Superman*, *Spoils of War*, *Macbeth*. Off-Broadway: *London Wall*, *What the Public Wants*, *Madras House*, *Master Builder*, *Recruiting Officer*, *He & She*, *Candida*. National Tour: *Three Tall Women*. TV: "Madame Secretary," "Law & Order," "L&O: SVU," "CSI," "Oz," "Third Watch," "Homicide," "Love Letter," "Choices," "Perfect Tribute," "London Wall." Film: *Iris*, *Armless*, *All Good Things*, *Kennedy*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Winter Passing*, *Path to Paradise*. Awards: Drama Desk & Tony nominations, Theatre World, Clarence Derwent, Fox Fellowship 1999.

MAGGIE LACEY (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Nora; *FATHER*: Laura). TFANA: *Engaged*, *Andorra*. Broadway: *Our Town*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Dividing the Estate*. Off-Broadway: Signature, Roundabout, MTC, Primary Stages, W.E.T., Keen Co., Playwrights Horizons. Regional: McCarter, Cleveland Playhouse, Long Wharf, Arena Stage, Westport Country Playhouse, Seattle Rep, Hartford Stage. TV/Film: "Satisfaction," "South of Hell," "The Good Wife," "The Following," "Elementary," *Our Town*, *The Life Before Her Eyes*, *The Word*. Maggie is the recipient of a TCG Fox Fellowship Grant for Extraordinary Potential.

CHRISTIAN J. MALLEN (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Porter; *FATHER*: Nordstrom) is making his stage debut at TFANA. Additional credits include the film *Manchester-by-the-Sea*, written and directed by Kenneth Lonergan, and Larry David's HBO film *Clear History*. Mr. Mallen was educated at the Moscow Theatre Arts program in Cambridge, Mass and Boston Children's Theater.

KIMBER MONROE (DOLL'S HOUSE: Ellen; FATHER: Bertha). Broadway: *South Pacific* (Ensemble/US Ngana and Jerome). Regional: T*he Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds* (Tillie). Film: *Applesauce* (Cameron). Commercial: National print/TV. Other: *She Kills Monsters* (Agnes Evans), *Macbeth* (Porter). Third year BFA student at The New School. Much love to my ever supportive mom and brothers Kai and Coco. Thanks to Mallory and everyone at GenerationTV.

This page: Jesse J. Perez and Linda Powell in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Opposite page: Nigel Gore in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

JAYLA LAVENDER NICHOLAS (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Emmy) is delighted to be making her theatre debut in *A Doll's House*. Recent credits include commercials for Zarbees, Sprout, and Chiquita Banana. She loves dressing up, playdates, and having fun. Special thanks to supportive parents, family, and friends. More at jaylalavender.com.

JESSE J. PEREZ (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Nils Krogstad; *FATHER*: Pastor). New York: *Informed Consent* (Primary Stages), *In the Penal Colony* (Classic Stage Company), *Recent Tragic Events* (Playwrights Horizons), *The Triple Happiness* (Second Stage), *Up Against the Wind* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Metropolitan Opera). Regional: Yale Rep, Berkeley Rep, American Repertory Theatre, The Goodman, The McCarter, The Huntington. International: The Venice Biennale Festival and the Salzburg Festival. TV and Film: "Person of Interest," "Life on Mars," "Law & Order," *American Splendor*, *Enter Nowhere*.

LINDA POWELL (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Christina; *FATHER*: Granny Astrid). Broadway: *On Golden Pond*, *Wilder Wilder Wilder*. Off-Broadway: *The Christians*, *The Overwhelming*, *Omnium Gatherum*, *The Odyssey*, *Jar the Floor*, *Jitney*, *Love's Labor's Lost*. Regional: *The Christians* (World Premiere), *A Doll's House*, *Angela's Mixtape*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Film: *American Gangster*, *I Think I Love My Wife*. TV: "The Good Wife," "Damages," "Sex and the City."

JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON (*DOLL'S HOUSE*: Thorwald; *FATHER*: Captain). TFANA: *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*. Recently, he appeared in *The Iceman Cometh* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and as Louis Armstrong in *Satchmo at the Waldorf* at Westside Theater. Broadway credits include: *A Time to Kill*, *Cyrano*, and *Julius Caesar*. Other portrayals include Brutus Jones in *The Emperor Jones* at Irish Rep; Herald Loomis in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* at Mark Taper Forum; Ira Aldridge in *Red Velvet* at Shakespeare & Co; Hotspur in *Henry IV* at The Royal Shakespeare Company and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Awards include OBIE, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, Callaway, AUDELCO, Robert Brustein, and Samuel H. Scripps.

ARIN ARBUS (Director) is the Associate Artistic Director at Theatre for a New Audience, for which she directed *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*. She staged *La Traviata* for The Canadian Opera Company and The Lyric Opera of Chicago as well as Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at Houston Grand Opera. She was a Drama League Directing Fellow, a Princess Grace Award Recipient and spent several years making theatre with prisoners at Woodbourne Correctional Facility in association with Rehabilitation Through the Arts.

RICCARDO HERNANDEZ (Scenic Designer). Broadway: *The Gin Game*, *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* (Tony 2012 Best Musical Revival), *The People in the Picture* (Studio 54), *Caroline, or Change*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*, *Noise/Funk* (also National Tour and Japan), *Parade* (Tony/Drama Desk Noms), Hal Prince director, *The Tempest*, *Bells are Ringing*. Recent: *La Mouette*, *Jan Karski*, *Mon Nom Est Une Fiction* (both for Avignon Festival: *Cour d'Honneur*, Opera Theatre, France), *The Dead* (Abbey Theater, Dublin) *Il Postino* (L.A. Opera, PBS Great Performances), Philip Glass' *Appomattox* (SFO), *Lost Highway* (London's ENO/Young Vic) Over 200 Productions US/Internationally: NYSF/Public, BAM, LCT, ART, Guthrie, Lyric Opera Chicago, NYCO, HGO, OTSL,Theatre du Chatelet, Festival Automne, Paris; Vienna's Theater an der Wien, Opera de Nice, Oslo National Theater, MXAT Moscow, Teatr Polski, Warsaw; London's National, Old Vic, Royal Court. Princeton Lecturer.

SUSAN HILFERTY (Costume Designer) has designed 300+ productions world-wide. TFANA: *King Lear*, *Broken Heart*, *General From America*. Directorial collaborators include Athol Fugard (set, costumes, co-director), Mayer, Lapine, Falls, Woodruff, Mantello, Akalaitis, Wright, Lamos, Elliot, Ellis, Galati, McAnuff, Richard Nelson, Ashley, Leon, Laurie Anderson, Kushner, Hynes and Mann. Recent work: *Rigoletto* (Metropolitan Opera). Broadway: *Annie*, *Road to Mecca*. Off Broadway: *Buried Child*, *Familiar*, *Hungry*. Her numerous awards include OBIE; Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards for *Wicked*; Tony nominations for *Spring Awakening*, *Lestat*, and *Into the Woods*. Chairs Grad/Design at NYU/Tisch.

MARCUS DOSHI (Lighting Designer) designs for theatre, dance, opera, and non-performance-based work. With TFANA: *Othello* (Lortel nomination), *Hamlet* (Drama Desk & Henry Hewes nominations), *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, *The Broken Heart*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *King Lear* (Henry Hewes nomination). His designs have been seen at most major regional theatres and opera companies and internationally at Festival Lyric d'Aix-en-Provence, La Commedie Francaise, La Monnaie, Venice Biennale, Holland Festival, Canadian Opera and the Sydney Festival among many others. Marcus is a company member of Kuwait/UK based Sabab Theatre. He has degrees from Wabash College and The Yale School of Drama and is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Northwestern University. www.marcusdoshi.com

DANIEL KLUGER (Composer/Co-Sound Designer). TFANA: *Pericles*. NEW YORK: *Antlia Pneumatica*, *Marjorie Prime*, *Iowa* (Playwrights Horizons); *The Effect*, *Hit the Wall* (Barrow Street Theatre); *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, *Nikolai and the Others* (Lincoln Center); *Significant Other*, *The Common Pursuit* (Roundabout); *Lost Girls*, *The Nether* (MCC); *I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard*, *Women or Nothing* (Atlantic Theater Company); *You Got Older* (PAGE73); *Somewhere Fun*, *The North Pool* (Vineyard). REGIONAL: The Old Globe, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf, Pig Iron, Two River Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley. www.danielkluger.com

This page: Laurie Kennedy in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Opposite page: Nigel Gore in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

LEE KINNEY (Co-Sound Designer) is a New York-based sound designer, composer, and music director. Recent credits include: *The Convent of Pleasure* (Cherry Lane Theatre), *A Wolf in the River*, *Student Body*, *Smoke* (The Flea), *Empathitrax*, *Shitloads of Money*, *Asking for Trouble*, *Metro Cards* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *peer@me* (NYU Tisch), *12th Night* (Atlantic Acting School), *In the Car with Blossom and Len*, *Harvey* (Centenary Stage Company).

SAM PINKLETON (Choreographer). TFANA: *Tamburlaine the Great*. Recent: *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812* (ART, Broadway Fall 2016); *Rimbaud in New York* (BAM); *Amelie* (Berkeley Rep); *Kansas City Choir Boy* (ART, CTG); *Significant Other* (Roundabout); *Heisenberg* (MTC, Broadway Fall 2016); *Pretty Filthy* (The Civilians); *Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play* (Playwrights Horizons). Associate Artist: The Civilians, The Dance Cartel, Witness Relocation. Upcoming: *Runaways* (Director – City Center Encores). www.sampinkleton.com

J. ALLEN SUDDETH (Fight Director). TFANA: *Pericles*, *Tamburlaine*, *The Killer*, *The Broken Heart*, *Henry V*, *Cymbeline*, *As You Like It*, and several more. J. Allen is a Broadway veteran of twelve shows, over 150 Off-Broadway shows, and hundreds of regional theatre productions. He has staged over 750 television shows and teaches at SUNY Purchase and Strasburg. Allen authored a book, *Fight Directing For The Theatre*.

JON KNUST (Properties Supervisor) is a NYC-based prop master and artisan. Recent prop master credits include *The Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek*, *Big Love*, and associate prop master of *Appropriate* (Signature); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (1st National Tour); *Too Much Sun* (The Vineyard); *Marie Antoinette*, *…The Death of Walt Disney*, and *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation…* (Soho Rep). Jon frequently does overhire prop work for Signature, Playwrights Horizons, Roundabout, The Atlantic, Propstar, The Mint and the NYTW. Jon got his start in props at Williamstown Theatre Festival.

DAVE BOVA (Hair/Wig & Makeup Designer). TFANA: *Pericles*, *The Killer*. Broadway: *Violet*, *The Real Thing*. Off-Broadway: *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Here Lies Love*, *Booty Candy*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *Good Person of Szechwan*, *The Ohmies*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Nothing But Trash*. Regional: *Marie Antoinette*; *Last of the Boys* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Two Gentleman of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice* (DC. Shakespeare Theatre); *Guys and Dolls*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Great Lakes Theater Festival); *Les Mis*, *Light in the Piazza* (Weston Playhouse). Thank you to Zevie for all the love and support.

JONATHAN KALB (Resident Literary Advisor/Dramaturg) is Literary Advisor and Resident Artist at Theatre for a New Audience and Professor of Theatre at Hunter College, CUNY. He has twice won the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism, which he received for his books *Beckett in Performance* (1991) and *Great Lengths: Seven Works of Marathon Theater* (2012). *Great Lengths* also won the Theater Library Association's George Freedley Award.

THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

DEBORAH BROWN (Casting Director). This is Deborah Brown's 24th season with Theatre for a New Audience. She has cast for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and many of the leading regional theatres in the country. She shared an Emmy for the HBO series "From the Earth to the Moon." Other television includes "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd" and New York casting on "Band of Brothers."

DIANE HEALY (Production Stage Manager). Recent NY credits include: *Imagining the Imaginary Invalid* (Mabou Mines); *Perfect Arrangement* (Primary Stages); *Twelfth Night/What You Will* (Bedlam); *City Of* (Playwrights Realm); *The Searchers* (Atlantic Theatre Co.); *Hit The Wall*, *Tribes* (Barrow Street Theatre); *Bill W. & Dr. Bob* (Soho Playhouse); *Painting Churches* (Keen Co.); LCT3, LaMama, The Civilians, EST. 8 seasons with Shakespeare & Company. 10 seasons with Oldcastle Theatre Co. (VT). Other: Dance & Theatre at Bard College, Green Mountain College, East Tennessee State University & St. Andrew's University. Love to Tini & Nick.

ANNE CIARLONE (Assistant Stage Manager) is a NYC-based director, stage manager, and arts administrator. Anne has worked with companies such as TFANA (*Isolde*), Soho Rep, Fiasco Theater, the cell, The Vineyard Theatre, Transport Group, and The Drama League. Anne is a co-founder of The Pantry: a new reading series for young artists. Proud graduate of Marymount Manhattan College. www.anneciarlone.com

TORI SHEEHAN (Assistant Stage Manager). New York: *dEAD dOG pARK* (Bedlam at 59E59); *King Lear* (Cherry Lane Mentor Project); *A Christmas Carol* (TheatreworksUSA); *Bill W. & Dr. Bob* (Soho Playhouse); *The Nance* (Lincoln Center Theatre); *Rapture Blister Burn*, *Assistance*, and *Milk Like Sugar* (Playwrights Horizons). Regional: *Cabaret*, *Black Comedy*, and *The Lion in Winter* (Oldcastle Theatre Company); *Shakespeare's Will* and *Love's Labour's Lost* (Shakespeare & Company); *Man of La Mancha* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey). Proud member of AEA and graduate of Ithaca College.

THE BRUCE COHEN GROUP (Press Representative) is celebrating its 40th year of publicizing the good causes that make New York City the capital of the world: the performing and visual arts, community development, historic preservation, business improvement districts, public spaces, tourism and organized labor. Bruce Cohen is a former president of I.A.T.S.E. Local 18032. He owes his first job to Merle Debuskey.

This page: John Douglas Thompson and Maggie Lacey in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *A Doll's House*. Photo by Henry Grossman.
Opposite page: Jesse J. Perez and Christian J. Mallen in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Father*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

JEFFREY HOROWITZ (Founding Artistic Director) began his career in theatre as an actor and appeared on Broadway, Off Broadway, and in regional theatre. In 1979, he founded Theatre for a New Audience. Horowitz has served on the Panel of the New York State Council on the Arts and on the Board of Directors of Theatre Communications Group. He is currently on the Advisory Board of The Shakespeare Society and the Artistic Directorate of London's Globe Theatre. He received the John Houseman Award in 2003 and The Breukelein Institute's 2004 Gaudium Award.

DOROTHY RYAN (Managing Director) joined Theatre for a New Audience in 2003. She spent the previous ten years devoted to fundraising for the 92nd Street Y and the Brooklyn Museum. Ryan began her career in classical music artist management and has also served as company manager for Chautauqua Opera, managing director for the Opera Ensemble of New York, and general manager of Eugene Opera. She is a 2014 Brooklyn Women of Distinction honoree from Community Newspaper Group.

MICHAEL PAGE (General Manager) has been working in commercial and not-for-profit arts management for over ten years; this is his third season at TFANA. Prior credits include Nina Raine's award-winning *Tribes*, David Cromer's landmark production of *Our Town*, *Mistakes Were Made* by Craig Wright, and Fiasco Theater's *Cymbeline* (Barrow Street Theatre); Douglas McGrath's *Checkers*, Rajiv Joseph's *The North Pool*, Jenny Schwartz's *Somewhere Fun* (Vineyard Theatre), among others. MFA: Ohio University.

THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, is a modern classical theatre that produces Shakespeare alongside other major authors in a dialogue that spans centuries. The Theatre promotes the ongoing training of artists through the Actors and Directors Project, led by Cicely Berry, C.B.E., director of voice, Royal Shakespeare Company and Andrew Wade. The company's productions and affiliated artists have been honored with prestigious awards and nominations including Drama Desk, Lortel, Obie, and the Tony. The Theatre's production of *The Green Bird* by Carlo Gozzi directed by Julie Taymor opened Off-Broadway, toured to La Jolla Playhouse, and later moved to Broadway. In 2001, the Theatre became the first American company to be invited to bring a production of Shakespeare to the RSC. *Cymbeline* directed by Bartlett Sher opened at the RSC's Other Place, November 2001. In January 2006, the Theatre's production of *Souls of Naples* starring John Turturro toured to Naples, Italy, and in March 2007 we returned to the RSC with *The Merchant of Venice* starring F. Murray Abraham and directed by Darko Tresnjak. The Theatre created and runs the largest in-depth program for introducing Shakespeare in the NYC Public Schools. Over 127,000 young people ages 9–18 have been served since 1984. In partnership with The City of New York, which has provided leadership support through the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, Theatre for a New Audience has opened its first home. The building is named Polonsky Shakespeare Center, in recognition of a naming gift from The Polonsky Foundation.

STAFF

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Managing Director Dorothy Ryan
General Manager Michael Page
Director of Institutional Advancement James J. Lynes
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Resident Director of Voice Andrew Wade
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Education Intern Kate Trammel
General Management Intern
Janine Cunningham
Humanities Intern Allison Benko

About Theatre for a New Audience

Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, the mission of Theatre for a New Audience is to develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classic drama. Theatre for a New Audience produces for audiences Off-Broadway and has also toured nationally, internationally and to Broadway. We are guided in our work by five core values: a reverence for language, a spirit of adventure, a commitment to diversity, a dedication to learning, and a spirit of service. These values inform what we do with artists, how we interact with audiences, and how we manage our organization.

Theatre for a New Audience Education Programs

Theatre for a New Audience is an award-winning company recognized for artistic excellence. Our education programs introduce students to Shakespeare and other classics with the same artistic integrity that we apply to our productions. Through our unique and exciting methodology, students engage in hands-on learning that involves all aspects of literacy set in the context of theatre education. Our residencies are structured to address City and State Learning Standards both in English Language Arts and the Arts, the New York City DOE's Curriculum Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theater, and the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Begun in 1984, our programs have served more than 126,000 students, ages 9 through 18, in New York City Public Schools city-wide.

A New Home in Brooklyn: Polonsky Shakespeare Center

After 33 seasons of award-winning and internationally-acclaimed productions, Theatre for a New Audience's new home, Polonsky Shakespeare Center, is a centerpiece of the Brooklyn Cultural District.

Designed by celebrated architect Hugh Hardy, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is the first theatre in New York designed and built expressly for classic drama since Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont in the 1960s. The 27,500 square-foot facility is a unique performance space in New York. The 299-seat Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage, inspired by the Cottesloe at London's National Theatre, combines an Elizabethan courtyard theatre with modern theatre technology that allows the stage and seating to be arranged in seven configurations. The new facility also includes the Theodore C. Rogers Studio (a 50-seat rehearsal/performance studio), and theatrical support spaces. The City of New York-developed Arts Plaza, designed by landscape architect Ken Smith, creates a natural gathering place around the building. In addition, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is also one of the few sustainable (green) theatres in the country, with an anticipated LEED-NC Silver rating from the United States Green Building Council.

Now with a home of its own, Theatre for a New Audience is contributing to the continued renaissance of Downtown Brooklyn. In addition to its season of plays, the Theatre is expanding its education and humanities offerings to include lectures and activities for families, as well as seminars, workshops, and other activities for artists, scholars, and families. When not in use by the Theatre, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is available for rental, bringing much needed affordable performing and rehearsal space to the community.

THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE MAJOR SUPPORTERS

Even with capacity audiences, ticket sales account for a small portion of our operating costs. The Theatre expresses its deepest thanks to the following Foundations, Corporations, Government Agencies and Individuals for their generous support of the Theatre's Humanities, Education, and Outreach programs.

Theatre for a New Audience's Humanities, Education, and Outreach programs are supported, in part, by The Elayne P. Bernstein Education Fund.

The 360° Series: Viewfinders has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the Human Endeavor. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this Viewfinder, do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A Challenge Grant from the NEH established a Humanities endowment fund at Theatre for a New Audience to support these programs in perpetuity. Leading matching gifts to the NEH grant were provided by Joan and Robert Arnow, Norman and Elaine Brodsky, The Durst Organization, Perry and Marty Granoff, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, John J. Kerr & Nora Wren Kerr, Litowitz Foundation, Inc., Robert and Wendy MacDonald, Sandy and Stephen Perlbinder, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Inc., and Theodore C. Rogers, and from purchasers in the Theatre's Seat for Shakespeare Campaign.

For more information on naming a seat or making a gift to the Humanities endowment, please contact James Lynes, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 212-229-2819 x29, or by email at jlynes@tfana.org.

Theatre for a New Audience's productions and education programs receive support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Theatre for a New Audience's education programs are part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

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Additional support for these programs is provided by the generosity of the following Foundations and Corporations through their direct support of the Theatre's Education programs and through their general operating grants to the Theatre's Annual Fund:

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