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Wednesday 30 October to Saturday 2 November 1974

THE MASKERS

present

A DOLL'S HOUSE

by Henrik Ibsen

In the translation by Michael Meyer

Directed by DAVID BARTLETT

Designed by KENNETH SPENCER

. . . . "A woman cannot be herself in modern society. It is an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess female conduct from a male standpoint.

A mother in modern society, like certain insects, goes away and dies once she has done her duty by propagating the race".

Henrik Ibsen in 'Notes for a Modern Tragedy'
19 October 1878

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Future presentations at THE MASKERS THEATRE, adjacent to the Schooner Inn in Burgess Road will include, "GASLIGHT", Patrick Hamilton's Victorian thriller (19 - 23 November) directed by Kenneth Spencer and in February we are pleased to announce that Robert English, the Leverhulme Fellow of Drama at the University of Southampton will direct for us John Bowen's "AFTER THE RAIN". In preparation is our next Nuffield production William Congreve's classic restoration comedy "THE WAY OF THE WORLD", directed by Roy Tabor and to be presented early in 1975. We would welcome you at any, or all, of the events as a member of our growing regular audiences.

If however you are interested in a greater participation with Southampton's most active society your membership is invited. Our plans for 1975 will, in addition to many productions at our own theatre and here at the Nuffield Theatre, include classes and practical training sessions on all aspects of the theatre, our annual schools tour, participation with two festivals (one of them on "Coarse Acting"), our annual 'barn storm" at The Southampton Show and a full and varied social programme.

On-stage or off, "behind the scenes" or "front-of-house" THE MASKERS will welcome you.

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A DOLL'S HOUSE

Cast

Torvald Helmer DAVID PIKE

Nora, his wife ANN ARCHER

Dr. Rank HUGH LEWIS

Mrs. Linde JANE O'SULLIVAN

Nils Krogstad PHILIP DE GROUCHY

The Nurse (Anne-Marie) LILIAN GUNSTONE

The Maid (Helen) CAROL PIERCE

The Helmers' Children ROBERT GOOSEN

HELEN WHARAM

VICTORIA MANDEVILLE

A Porter MONTY ROSE

The action takes place in the Helmers' flat

Act One Christmas Eve

Act Two Christmas Day

Act Three The Day after Christmas

There will be two intervals of fifteen minutes during which the fully licensed Theatre Bar will be open. Coffee, soft drinks, chocolates and ice-cream also available.

"I am not a member of the Association for Women's Rights . . . I have never written a play to further a social purpose. I have been more of a poet and less of a social philosopher than most people seem inclined to believe. I thank you for your good wishes, but I must decline the honour of being said to have worked for the Women's Rights movement. I am not even very sure what Women's Rights really are".

Henrik Ibsen addressing the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights, 26 May 1898.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Ibsen wrote "A Doll's House" in the summer of 1879, during his long, self-imposed exile in Italy. As soon as it was published in Copenhagen, it caused a sensation which was to recur time and time again all over the world. "Everywhere", writes Michael Meyer in an introduction to his translation, "it was triumphant and controversial. Its challenge to the sanctity of marriage and the authority of the husband, and its central concern with the need of the individual to determine his or her own life were explosive themes which resounded far outside theatre walls".

Ten years were to elapse before the play 'exploded' into England, but its history here before it arrived at the Novelty Theatre is rather amusing. An early translation by one T. Weber, a Danish schoolmaster, contains the following masterpieces:

Helmer: Don't utter such stupid shuffles . . . doff the shawl.

Helmer: You are first of all a wife and a mother.

Nora: I believe that I am first of all a man, I as well as you—or at all

events, that I am to try to become a man.

Nora: As I am now, I am no wife for you.

Helmer: I have power to grow another.

Bernard Shaw claims the first ever performance in England when, on 15

January 1886 a private reading was held 'on a first floor in a Bloomsbury lodging house. Karl Marx's youngest daughter played Nora Helmer, and I impersonated Krogstad at her request, with a very vague notion of what it was all about'. But Shaw obviously overlooked the very free translation given in 1884 entitled 'Breaking a Butterfly' in which Nora becomes Flora—Flossie to her husband, Humphrey Goddard—and Dr. Rank is replaced by a character called Ben Birdseye, and which ends conventionally in the words of Harley Granville Barker with 'every ounce of lbsen emptied out of it'.

There was also a gle, memorable performance on 25 March 1885 at the School of Dramatic Art. The play was entitled 'Nora', and was part of a programme given as 'An entertaynement by Ye Scribblers inne aide offe that worthie Charitie Ye Society for ye Prevention offe Cruelty to Children!' All the performers were amateurs, and William Archer, writing in the 'Dramatic Review' has this to say:

"It has been proved of old that amateurs rush in where artists fear to tread, but never was there a more audacious case in point than the late performance of Et Dukkheim (A Doll's House) . . . I have not seen an audience so helplessly bewildered . . . The actors themselves had a glimmering idea of the plot and situations, but even this they failed to convey to the spectators . . . I could not but reflect that the best possible translation of lbsen's drama, played by the best available English actors, would have been scarcely less bewildering to an average English audience".

In fairness to Archer it must be stated that he did retract this last statement four years later.

Now that controversy and scepticism have long since died away, the play can be recognised as a major foundation stone in the structure of modern realistic drama. And nowadays amateurs can at least rush in where artists no longer fear to tread, hoping, perhaps paradoxically, and as Michael Meyer observes in his absorbing biography of Ibsen, that 'The unspoken thoughts in the cars and taxis returning from a modern performance of the play cannot vary much from those in the returning carriages of ninety years ago'. For Ibsen's message is still relevant and universal: "What is really wanted", he maintained, "is a revolution of the spirit of man".

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The Nuffield Theatre acknowledges financial assistance from the Southern Arts Association and the Leisure Committee of the City of Southampton towards the costs of maintaining this theatre.

In accordance with the requirements of the licensing authority:

- 1 The audience may leave at the end of the performance by all exit doors.
- 2 All gangways, corridors, staircases and passageways which afford a means of exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction.
- 3 Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways except in positions authorised by the licensing authority and in the numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.
- 4 The safety curtain shall be lowered and raised at each performance in the presence of the audience.

The management reserves the right to refuse admission, also to make any alteration in the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable causes.

The use of cameras or tape recorders in the theatre is forbidden.

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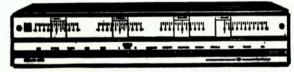
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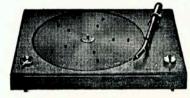
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