



# A DOLL'S HOUSE

BY  
HENRIK IBSEN

Souvenir  
programme  
£2

8<sup>TH</sup> TO 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022

WEDMORE VILLAGE HALL

# REHEARSAL PHOTOGRAPHS



## A message from Natalie Dyson, CEO of Diversity Voice

I would like to express heartfelt thanks, on behalf of Diversity Voice, to Wedmore Theatre for its donation to us from this production of *A Doll's House*.

We are a Somerset based charity, formed in 2015, who support local refugees, migrant workers and asylum seekers to settle into the community. The charity receives little core funding, being almost entirely reliant on project funding and donations in order to provide vitally needed interpretation, translation, English tuition and community work.

Diversity Voice provides interpretation and translation support to refugees across Somerset, many of whom have fled the war in Ukraine. We operate the Sedgemoor Welcome Hub, offering advice and support to refugees on housing, benefits, schooling, access to healthcare, employment, mental health and wellbeing, as well as social gatherings across the district (including Wedmore).

We have exciting plans next year to broaden our offering to provide diversity and inclusion training. It is therefore particularly fitting that Wedmore Theatre has chosen to perform *A Doll's House*, arguably the world's first ever feminist play, which is as relevant today as it was in 1879.

This generous donation will be used to fund arts, crafts, health and wellbeing sessions in the Wedmore Welcome Hub. It will enable Diversity Voice to provide free transport to and from a Christmas party for refugees in the Wedmore area, and provide gifts for their children, as well as funding the development of a money management course (translated into Ukrainian) to help support refugees who are shortly moving out from sponsors' homes into independent accommodation.

If you would like to find out more about the work we do, or our exciting new plans, please visit <https://diversityvoice.org.uk> or contact us at [hello@diversityvoice.org.uk](mailto:hello@diversityvoice.org.uk). We are always keen to hear from people in the local community who would like to partner with us.



**Diversity Voice**  
culture & community

## WHAT RELEVANCE HAS IBSEN (1828-1906) TO US TODAY?

When choosing a play, a director has to consider the question "What play would the audience best relate to and enjoy?"

Ibsen is the most performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare, and in 2006 *A Doll's House* was the world's most performed play. This doesn't automatically make it the perfect choice for a Christmas production, nor does it necessarily make it appropriate for a modern audience.

*A Doll's House* opened in 1879 and caused an uproar with its scathing criticism of the marital roles accepted by men and women in

Ibsen's society, not just in Norway but throughout Europe and America. It dominated conversations at Oslo social gatherings and was thought to be an overly provocative feminist play. Ibsen claimed that he never intended to write a play about women's rights, but rather a play about every human being's need to find his or herself, and then the need to try to become that person. However, we continue to see *A Doll's House* as a play about feminism; and despite Ibsen

*One hostess of the time wrote on the invitation to her soirée: "You are politely requested not to mention Mr Ibsen's new play".*

saying that the subject of the play could have been a man or woman, it is a woman he chose to write about, and a married woman at that.

One hostess of the time wrote on the invitation to her soirée: "You are

politely requested not to mention Mr Ibsen's new play". Maybe it was their horror at Nora's abandonment of her children that unsettled them, but how many of those professedly shocked married women didn't secretly understand, if not applaud, Nora's right to 'find herself'?

Ibsen enjoyed upsetting the Establishment. His aim was to bring unpleasant issues into the limelight and get people talking about

them. *A Doll's House* was followed in 1881 by *Ghosts*, a full-on attack on middle-class Norwegian morality, in which a widow's husband's vices are passed on to their son in the form of syphilis. He had already raised this theme in *A Doll's House*, but obliquely, as subtext in the implied cause of Dr Rank's fatal

inherited illness. He revelled in the shock his plays provoked and wrote: "Ghosts will probably cause alarm in some circles, but it can't be helped. If it didn't, there would have been no necessity for me to have written it."

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Ibsen in his old age



Anthony Hopkins and Claire Bloom play Torvald and Nora in the 1973 film

So, is Ibsen's *A Doll's House* the right choice for a 2022 audience? This is a play about the rights of the individual, gender equality and coercive control in a relationship. Do these themes only relate to the restrictions of Victorian society? When Germaine Greer published *The Female Eunuch* 52 years ago, were we right to assume that women's rights were at last on the way to being achieved?

Let's consider this quote from Women's Aid "In England and Wales, between April 2020 and March 2021, there were just 1,403 defendants prosecuted for controlling or coercive behaviour. There were 33,954 offences of coercive control recorded."

Ibsen was 140 years ahead of his time. *A Doll's House* is as relevant today as it was then. We hope you enjoy it!

**Judy Phillpotts and Sue Rippon**



# ***A DOLL'S HOUSE***

## **CAST**

**(In order of speaking)**

<b>Nora Helmer</b>	Carrie Large
<b>Torvald Helmer</b>	Alan Philps
<b>Helen</b>	Venetia Hopkins
<b>Christine Linde</b>	Andrea Brenner
<b>Nils Krogstad</b>	Will Ewens
<b>Dr Rank</b>	David Eccles
<b>Anna</b>	Jendy Weekes
<b>Emmy Helmer</b>	Ruby Ewens
<b>Ivar Helmer</b>	Oliver Large
<b>Understudy</b>	Venetia Hopkins

**Adapted and directed by Sue Rippon**

The action takes place in the Helmers' drawing room in Oslo, over the three days of Christmas 1879.

Running time is approximately 2 hours 15 minutes, including two 15-minute intervals.

The bar is open before the show and during both intervals.

## **Acknowledgements**

Sophie and the staff at Wedmore Village Store and Andrea and staff at Pumpkin, for ticket sales; Wells Reclamation for the loan of an antique door for the set; Mark Pether for use of a truck to move the set; and all the many local people who have lent us props and helped us to put this show together.

# **E** by Henrik Ibsen



## **CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION**

### **Producers**

Judy Phillpotts, Sue Rippon

### **Assistant Director**

Judy Phillpotts

### **Stage Manager**

Anne Richards

### **Costume, Makeup and Hair Design**

Judy Phillpotts

### **Lighting Design**

Mike Rippon

### **Sound Design**

Phil Butterworth

### **Teleprompt Operator**

Greg Phillpotts

### **Set Design**

Geoff Dickson, Anne Richards,  
Mike Rippon

### **Set Construction Manager**

Steve George

### **Set Construction and Decoration Team**

Martin Horton, Judy Phillpotts,  
Greg Phillpotts, Anne Richards,  
Mike Rippon, Jolyon Oliver

### **Choreography**

Venetia Hopkins

### **Props Design**

Anne Richards

### **Props Maker – harpsichord and stove**

Philip Hamlin

### **Programme Design and Cover Photography**

Mike Rippon

### **Poster Illustration**

Anne Richards

### **Bar Manager**

Damien Lovegrove

### **Front of House Team**

Suzie Ladbroke, Pam Holmes,  
Helen Richardson, Jo Lewis,  
Caroline Tollworthy

### **Video Cameraman**

Bernard Coulter

# ARE YOU AN IDEAS PERSON? GOT ANY PRACTICAL SKILLS?

**We are keen to expand the team and share our knowledge. We would love you to lend us your skills.**

If any of the creative roles described below inspire you to join in next time please contact us through our website [www.wedmoretheatre.com](http://www.wedmoretheatre.com), e-mail us at [productions@wedmoretheatre.com](mailto:productions@wedmoretheatre.com) or DM [facebook.com/WedmoreTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/WedmoreTheatre)

## **COSTUME AND MAKEUP**

I have been designing and creating theatrical costumes and makeup for over 30 years It is a hugely rewarding and enjoyable hobby. Actors say that when they are in their costumes, with hair and makeup done, they feel transformed and their character comes alive. It is exciting to enable that transformation, and to feel part of the performance - but no lines to learn!

## **STAGE MANAGEMENT**

Five years ago I had never done anything to do with the theatre. I tried it for one production and absolutely loved it. Collecting all the components of a production together and then putting it into practice, communicating it to the creative team and the actors, and then going from the page to the stage is so satisfying. It's simply project management at its most exciting.

## **SET DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION**

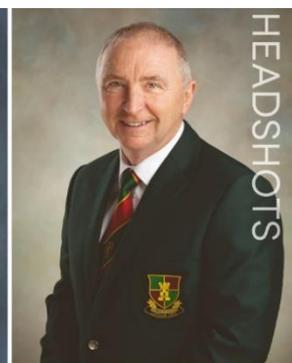
For set design, the director will have lots of ideas! Your job is to create the 'picture' that the director is imagining and then translate it into an achievable plan. For the construction, some DIY skills are useful, but nothing complicated. No dovetail joints are required! Just a willingness to work from the designer's brief and to be creative at finding affordable solutions.

## **DIRECTING**

When choosing a play, I always start with good writing – it doubles your chance of success! The director's job then is to 'be the audience'. Watching the actors up on the stage, I ask myself "How could the action and interpretation be adjusted to improve the audience's enjoyment?" Directors work incredibly closely with actors, and our brilliant Wedmore Theatre actors make the collaborative process of discovery both rewarding and fun.

## **LIGHTING AND SOUND**

The set is built, the actors have learnt their lines and are in costume, but without lighting and effects the whole theatrical experience would be completely flat. The director told you a long time ago what the visual mood of each scene was – day, night, warm, cool, perhaps claustrophobic. Now all you have to do is make it feel like that on the night. The icing on the cake is that the lighting and sound is all run by networked computers nowadays, so technically that is really fun too!



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# MEET THE CAST



## CARRIE LARGE

### Nora Helmer

Carrie has been acting, singing and dancing since primary school and has studied theatre and performing arts for many years, recently graduating from The Bristol Acting Academy. Over the years, she has acted and directed numerous productions including *Cabaret*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Grease*, *The Vagina Monologues*, and Wedmore Theatre's *The Wind in the Willows*.



## ALAN PHILPS

### Torwald Helmer

After graduating from Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art, Alan appeared in several TV dramas and also toured with the Arts Council. Here, he has starred in *Antony and Cleopatra*, played the Mirror in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, First Voice in *Under Milk Wood*, Mac the Knife in *The Scottish Panto*, Sir Harcourt Courtly in *London Assurance*, Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Ernest*, and of course Dame Edna in our revues.



## DAVID ECCLES

### Dr Rank

Having performed several female roles with Wedmore Theatre over the last 4-5 years, this is David's first part in a 'serious' play. He is heartily glad that this time he has considerably fewer lines than when he played Toad in *Wind in the Willows*.



## WILL EWENS

### Nils Krogstad

Will's debut as the Washerwoman in *Wind in the Willows* set him up perfectly for this more challenging role as Nils Krogstad. Will is also really proud to be performing in the play alongside his daughter, Ruby.



## ANDREA BRENNER

### Christine Linde

Andrea has appeared in a number of Wedmore Theatre productions over many years, including *Under Milk Wood*, *Bazaar and Rummage*, *Whose Wedding is it Anyway?*, *The Panto that Goes Wrong*, and as the Doctor in *The Railway Children*. She is a former Chair of Wedmore Theatre, and now owns Wedmore's Pumpkin Delicatessen and Café.



## JENDY WEEKES

### Anna

Jenny has been a member of Wedmore Theatre for over 20 years. During that time, her roles have included the levitating Witch in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, a nun in *Once a Catholic*, and the Magistrate in *Wind in the Willows*. She has also directed *Confusions*, *Deadly Nightcap*, *Living Together*, *Home*, *An Evening of Reflections*, and *The Railway Children*. She is currently secretary of Wedmore Theatre.



## OLIVER LARGE

### Ivar Helmer

Making his acting debut, Oliver has been enjoying creating the character of Ivar and has been inspired to carry on his acting journey in the future. He says that his favourite part of being involved in the production has been "all the laughs" and the biscuits during rehearsals.



## RUBY EWENS

### Emmy Helmer

After a 'furry' enjoyable debut as Mouse Margaret in Wedmore Theatre's *Wind in the Willows*, Ruby is really looking forward to playing this important role as the lead character's daughter.



## VENETIA HOPKINS

### Helen and Understudy

A long-time associate of Wedmore Theatre, this is Venetia's third production as a performer having previously participated in *The Eleventh Hour* and *The Panto that Goes Wrong*. Some will remember her rendition of 'K-K-K-Katie' dressed as a yellow chick.



*Blue Cedar Homes is proud to sponsor Wedmore Theatre's production of 'A Doll's House'.*



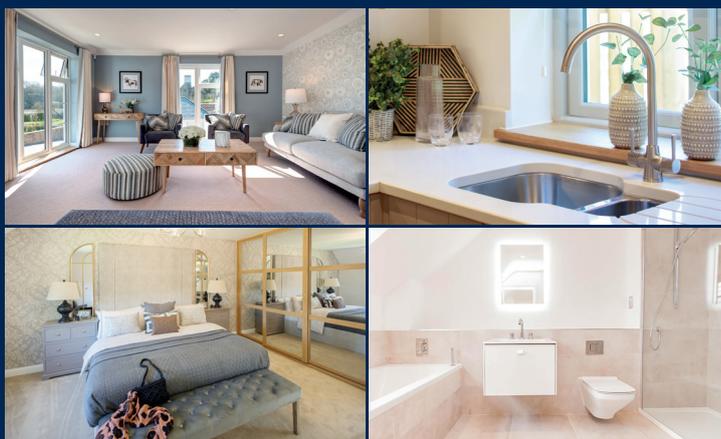
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