

## The Season

November 15, 16, 17, 18  
Twelve Angry Men  
by Reginald Rose  
Compass Theatre Ickenham

January ~~24, 25, 26, 27~~ 17-20  
John Gabriel Borkman  
by Henrik Ibsen  
Travellers

March 28, 29, 30, 31  
As You Like It  
by William Shakespeare  
Travellers

May 23, 24, 25, 26  
Dancing at Lughnasa  
by Brian Friel  
Travellers

### Company contacts

**Secretary:** Crystal Anthony,  
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Compass Theatre for Twelve Angry Men  
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This season supported by  
**HOGARTH RECRUITMENT**

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# PROSCENIUM

## 77th SEASON 2000-2001

**PROSCENIUM**

**Twelve Angry Men**

**By Reginald Rose**

**Twelve Angry Men**

**15th, 16th, 17th and 18th November, 2000  
Compass Theatre, Ickenham**



## Twelve Angry Men

By Reginald Rose

<b>Voice of the Judge</b>	Roderick Jones
<b>Guard</b>	Anne Gerrard
<b>Juror 1 (Foreman)</b>	Michael Williams
<b>Juror 2</b>	Paul Davis
<b>Juror 3</b>	Colin Hickman
<b>Juror 4</b>	Michael Gerrard
<b>Juror 5</b>	Mark Kimsey
<b>Juror 6</b>	Owen Anthony
<b>Juror 7</b>	Charles Anthony
<b>Juror 8</b>	Mark Sutherland
<b>Juror 9</b>	Morris Suckling
<b>Juror 10</b>	Duncan Sykes
<b>Juror 11</b>	Sam Thornton
<b>Juror 12</b>	Phillip Smythe
<b>Directed by</b>	David Watkins
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Margaret Rudolph
<b>Assisted by</b>	Crystal Anthony
<b>Set Design</b>	Michael Williams
<b>Set construction</b>	Barry Rudolph
<b>Properties</b>	Anne Gerrard
<b>Lighting &amp; Sound</b>	Colin Tufnell, Philip McCusker, Michael Kilroy, Craig Cronin

The action of the play takes place in a Jury Room in New York in 1954.

There will be one interval.

*With thanks to The Mountain Spring Water Co. Ltd.*

*The photographs in this programme were taken during rehearsals at the Harrow Arts Centre*

## The Author Explains

*Twelve Angry Men* was originally presented as a television play in 1954, made into a film in 1957 and first produced on the stage in 1958.

### The Inspiration

In 1954 I was called for jury duty in New York City. I had never been inside a courtroom before and I found myself in awe of the ritual, the rules, the solemnity of the proceedings and the responsibility I bore. The man on trial was charged with manslaughter; he had, with neither premeditation nor intent to kill, assaulted another man in front of many witnesses. Three days later the victim was dead. The facts of the case were clear and the



jury was given the choice of three verdicts by the judge: Guilty of Manslaughter; Guilty of First Degree Assault; or Not Guilty.

In the jury room we agreed immediately that the defendant was guilty. And the battle began. Was he guilty of manslaughter or assault? Should he serve 20 years in prison or only three to five years? We argued bitterly for eight high-decibel hours before we brought in a unanimous verdict of First Degree Assault, whereupon the judge told us what we were not allowed to know during the trial, that any conviction, since it would be the defendant's fourth felony conviction, would automatically carry a sentence of life imprisonment.

The violent arguments in the jury room hadn't mattered at all. But I had participated in what clearly was a powerful





situation on which to base a television play. I called it *Twelve Angry Men*.

### Jury Service

In New York, in the mid-50s, jurors were selected from a list of registered voters. I suppose they felt that if you registered to vote you were a responsible citizen. When you received a notice to report for jury duty you were told to appear for an interview at a specified time. You filled in forms with vital statistics: age, business or profession, etc. and you were questioned briefly about such matters as whether you had a criminal record or were stone deaf. You were allowed to offer reasons why you could

not serve: reasons which would need to be backed up by a physician's note. If you were a woman, and did not wish to serve, you were automatically excused.

When your two week's service began, you reported to an enormous Central Jury Room where you sat and waited with hundreds of others. It was possible to spend the entire two weeks simply sitting and waiting in that room. I once wrote most of a television play doing just that.

Every so often the Chief Clerk would call for silence. A huge lottery wheel was spun and some 30 or 40 names were picked from it. Those people, 98% of them white males, were taken to a court room. There another lottery wheel was spun and 12 of those men were selected to sit in the jury box. The first name picked became the foreman.

Lawyers then described the case to the 12 jurors and questioned them one by one to decide on their suitability to judge this particular case. If a juror was excused, for whatever reason, the lottery wheel was spun again and another member of the panel

took that juror's place and was questioned. When the selection was complete, the jury was sworn in.

There were many games played in the Central Jury Room: chess, checkers, gin rummy, cribbage. And guards routinely broke up crap games in the men's lavatory.

The pay, as I remember it, was \$3 a day, and, if you were deliberating a case, when lunchtime came around you were taken, under guard, to a local restaurant, Caruso's (very greasy Italian food), where they had a fixed price lunch for 85 cents. No booze was allowed. The court paid for the lunch and a ten cent tip.

Once you were called for jury duty the first time, you were called every two years thereafter. I found, and I could never understand why, that at least four or five members of every jury I was on in the 50's and 60's were men who worked for public utility companies, the phone company, gas and electricity companies, civil servants of all kinds, including New York firemen, but not policemen.

### The Death Penalty

"If we vote 'guilty', we send the accused to the electric chair." The foreman of the jury introduces the first vote in the jury room with this warning, and it is this prospect which makes the situation so dramatic and the debate so passionate. The first juror to vote 'not guilty' declares, "It is not easy for me to raise my hand and send the boy off to die without talking about it first." and the other jurors return to the theme time and time again: "You can't send someone off to die on evidence like that."

When the play is set, New York did have the death penalty. Executions, which took place at the Sing Sing prison, were by electric chair. In 1967, with the rest of the USA, New York abandoned the death penalty under the moratorium that was







in place until the late 1970s.

There were many campaigns to reintroduce the death penalty to New York; until the mid 1990s they had always failed. Without the death penalty, New York had experienced one of the sharpest declines in violent crime anywhere in the USA. In 1995 the newly elected Republican Governor, George F. Pataki, fulfilled one of his key campaign promises by restoring the death penalty to the city for several categories of murder, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 1995. New York legislators agreed to replace the electric chair with lethal injection. No executions have yet been carried out. Only capital crimes committed after

Pataki signed the bill are punishable by death.

### The Electric Chair

The most popular method of execution in the USA until the mid-70s. A small current (amperage) will kill a human being but the electrical resistance of the human body is so great that a very large voltage is needed to force this small current through the body. In US prisons, an alternating current of about 2000 volts is used for electrocution. Death is assumed to be painless, with loss of consciousness usually being instantaneous. The victim is strapped into the chair. One electrode is applied to the scalp, the other to the calf of one leg. Death occurs within two minutes after the current begins to flow, though it has been known to take considerably longer and sometimes several attempts are necessary before death is achieved.

### The Film

The 1957 film of *Twelve Angry Men* was Henry Fonda's sole credit as a producer. A blindingly simple 95 minutes set entirely in a claustrophobic jury room, it was the feature film debut of Sidney Lumet, then a veteran of TV. Lumet shot it in an actual New York jury room and anyone familiar with the film will be amazed how he did it.

Though the power of the story rests with the humid, fractious build-up as Fonda's juror doggedly changes the other 11 minds, the action was actually shot totally out of sequence. Lumet liked to 'finish off each wall', as he puts it, in other words shoot all the action against wall A before moving on to wall B, thus taking away the time-consuming need to relight each shot. For example, the heated exchange between Fonda and Lee J Cobb in the finished film was shot with each actor performing in isolation - seven days apart. The effect is still electrifying, which Lumet puts down to two weeks rehearsals before shooting.

Lumet achieved the increasing claustrophobia by shooting the first third from above eye level, and the final third from below. On a slim budget of £350,000, he wrapped in just 19 days with £1,000 to spare. Unfortunately, for all the production genius and fine acting, *Twelve Angry Men* failed to turn a profit, and producer Henry Fonda never received his deferred actor's fee.



R E C R U I T M E N T

This season has been generously supported by Hogarth Recruitment, providers of administrative, commercial and managerial staff.

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If you are interested in supporting Proscenium, please contact Crystal Anthony on 020 8954 2761



## Proscenium

George Woollands and Margaret Rendle founded Proscenium in 1924. The company's first production was the now little-known *The Tide* by Basil McDonald Hastings. Since then, the company has performed nearly 250 plays, using Harrow as a base since 1945. In this time Proscenium has built up a strong reputation for performing challenging plays (both classic and contemporary) to a high standard.

If you would like to find out more about Proscenium, please contact :

The Secretary, Proscenium, 020 8954 2761

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### **John Gabriel Borkman,** By Henry Ibsen

In Ibsen's penultimate play, written in the 1890s, John Gabriel Borkman, a former "pillar of society", has been in voluntary seclusion since undergoing a 5 year prison sentence for embezzlement.

His wife, her twin sister, his son - and even Borkman himself - are entrapped in the suffocating atmosphere of this claustrophobic household... only one will escape ...

The present version, by Nicholas Wright, was first performed at the National Theatre in 1996.

Directed by Jeanne Hawkes  
Wed 17th - Sat 20th January  
7.45 pm, Travellers Studio Theatre,  
Harrow Arts Centre

Tickets : £6.00  
Concessions : £5.00