

# PROSCENIUM

## **An Enemy of the People**

By Henrik Ibsen

In a version by Rebecca Lenkiewicz

From a literal translation by Charlotte Barslund

An Enemy of the People

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Compass Theatre, Ickenham

# An Enemy of the People

## The Cast

Dr Teresa Stockmann .....	Mary-Anne Anaradogh
Christina Kiil .....	Isabelle Iny
Petra Stockmann .....	Sarah Rabin
Mayor Peter Stockmann .....	Mark Sutherland
Morten Kiil.....	David Pearson
Ulrika Hovstad.....	Lynette Alston
Billing .....	Alan Glover
Horster .....	Richard Kessel
Aslaksen.....	Charles Anthony
Crowd .....	Crystal Anthony, Anne Gerrard
.....	Caroline Bronne-Shanbury, Angela Evans
.....	Les Dearlove, Linda Hampson, Zena Wigram
.....	Nischal Patel, Marion Chamberlain
Directed by .....	Linda Hampson
Stage Manager .....	Arnold Glickman
Set Design/Construction .....	Proscenium Members
Stage Crew.....	Crystal Anthony, Anne Gerrard
.....	Assisted by Marion Chamberlain
Lighting/Sound Operation .....	Paul Davis
Costumes.....	Angela Evans
Sound Recording.....	Charles Anthony
Programme Compilation.....	Mark Sutherland

The action takes place in Skien, a coastal town in Southern Norway

Act 1 The home of Teresa and Christina, evening

Act 2 The same, morning, a few days later

Act 3 The editor's office, The People's Messenger, the same afternoon

Act 4 Open land at the Horster residence, an evening later that week

Act 5 The home of Teresa and Christina, the next morning

There will be one interval of 15 minutes between Acts 3 and 4

Many thanks to Jenny Glover, East Lane Theatre

# Director's Note

"What makes a great play?" is a question that attracts many answers. For me, the mark of a great play is that its themes are compelling and universal, so that it transcends time and geography.

Written by Ibsen in 1882, set in 19th century provincial Norway, the play has been reworked many times in different societal and political contexts. "An Enemy of the People" speaks to us today more than ever, wherever we are.

For Ibsen, the context was immediate and deeply personal: his previous play "Ghosts" had been very badly received, and had been labelled "scandalous, degenerate and immoral" for talking frankly about adultery and venereal disease. That he should have been treated as a pariah for telling an unpleasant truth affected Ibsen deeply, and it is therefore no surprise that in "Enemy of the People" his themes are hypocrisy, freedom of expression and the tyranny of easily manipulated majority opinion.

All this is in the context of the choices that must be made when public health clashes, not just with vested interests, but the economic well-being of the community. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

So we at Proscenium could not have chosen a more appropriate time to stage our production. These are precisely the issues that have dominated our news media for the past few years. The challenges of the Covid pandemic have generated division and exposed shocking levels of corruption and hypocrisy.

But this is Ibsen; he does not merely seek to score points about the ills of society. The play is psychologically nuanced and avoids the temptation of labelling its protagonists as villains and heroes. I have been particularly keen to explore this with the actors.

For a director, there are many post-war choices of text ranging from Arthur Miller in the context of 50s America, right up to the version we are using. This is very much a version for our times by Rebecca Lenkiewicz, who gives us a female, rather than a male, whistle-blower and a female rather than a male newspaper editor. Purists might not approve of this departure from the original, but an update is an update, and after all, wilful female protagonists were certainly an Ibsen hallmark. I suspect he would approve!

*Linda Hampson*

# Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)

Norwegian poet and playwright, he was one of the shapers of modern theatre, who tempered naturalism with an understanding of social responsibility and individual psychology. His earliest major plays, *Brand* (1866) and *Peer Gynt* (1867), were large scale verse dramas but with *The Pillars of the Community* (1877) he began to explore current issues. There followed *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), and *An Enemy of the People* (1882). A richer understanding of the complexity of human impulses marks such later works as *The Wild Duck* (1885), *Rosmersholm* (1886), *The Lady from the Sea* (1888), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *The Master Builder* (1892). Imminence of mortality overshadows the last plays, *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896) and *When We Dead Awaken* (1899).

## Rebecca Lenkiewicz (Adapter)

Rebecca Lenkiewicz's plays include *The Night Season* (National Theatre, Critics' Circle Most Promising Playwright award, 2004) and *Her Naked Skin* (National Theatre, 2008), which was the first play by a living female playwright to be staged on the Olivier stage. Other plays include *The Invisible* (The Bush), *Jane Wenham, Soho*, *The Painter* (Arcola), *The Typist* (Riverside Studios), *The Lioness* (Tricycle), *That Almost Unnameable Lust*, *Shoreditch Madonna*, *Blue Moon Over Poplar* (Soho Theatre), *A Soldier's Tale* (Old Vic), *Invisible Mountains* (National Theatre), *Faeries* (Royal Opera House), *Justitia* (Peacock Theatre), and adaptations of Ibsen's *Ghosts* (Arcola) and Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (Almeida). Film includes *Colette*, *Disobedience* and *Ida*, co-written with Pawel Pawlikowski, which won a BAFTA and the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, 2015.

**Source:** *An Enemy of the People – a new version by Rebecca Lenkiewicz, from a literal translation by Charlotte Barslund* (Faber and Faber, 2019)

# Public Safety and Local Economies

## Whistle-blower warns baffling illness affects growing number of young adults in Canadian province

A whistleblower in the Canadian province of New Brunswick has warned that a progressive neurological illness that has baffled experts for more than two years appears to be affecting a growing number of young people and causing swift cognitive decline among some of the afflicted...

...In one study, high concentrations of BMAA were found in lobster, an industry that drives the economies of many of New Brunswick's coastal communities. The province's apparent resistance to testing for suspected environmental factors has led to speculation among families that the efforts to rule out the existence of a cluster could be motivated by political decision making.

"If a group of people wanted to breed conspiracy theorists, then our government has done a wonderful job at promoting it," said Beatty (*relative of deceased*). "Are they just trying to create a narrative for the public that they hope we'll absorb and walk away from? I just don't understand it....I don't know why the province wouldn't just simply do the science and look. They have my dad's remains. We've given them full permission to do toxicology and do what needs to be done...Yet, nothing has been looked at."...

*Leyland Cecco, The Observer, 2 Jan 2022*

## Government Interference in Science

...In a May 2018 survey, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspector general's office found that nearly 400 science-related employees said they had experienced, but did not report, potential violations of the EPA's scientific integrity policy. More than 250 employees said their concern was that a manager or senior leader had possibly interfered with science, and nearly 175 said they had experienced "suppression or delay of release of scientific report or information." Commenters said they had observed "suppression, changes, manipulation, or exclusion of scientific information, results, or research." They

said people in senior positions, particularly political appointees, often do not understand or adequately consider science in their decisions, and they expressed a belief that their leadership is "greatly influenced by political, industry, state, or regulated groups."...

...In July 2020, as Trump pushed publicly for all schools to reopen fully, a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report came under pressure from the White House, the White House coronavirus task force, and the office of the Vice President. Officials including Deborah Birx of the task force and Olivia Troye of Pence's staff pressed for the report to play down any risks involved in in-person schooling, and to stress the need for children to be in school for mental-health reasons. When the report, intended to guide parents by giving them a basis for decision making, was ready for distribution, it was distributed to multiple White House officials who were allowed to make edits. Among other things, a claim was inserted that the coronavirus was less deadly to children than seasonal flu—a claim which CDC scientists had objected to earlier in the week...

...In February 2020, the EPA released a report on the toxicity of the industrial chemical trichloroethylene (TCE), establishing the benchmark for unsafe exposure levels. Instead of the benchmark established by the agency's scientists, namely an exposure level known to cause fetal heart abnormalities, their draft report had been completely altered to establish a much less stringent benchmark. All references to "cardiac toxicity" were eliminated. The report established autoimmune disease as the endpoint—a criterion allowing nearly 500 times as much TCE exposure. The report had been rewritten at the urging of chemical industry lobbyists and on direct orders from the Executive Office of the President.

*Wikipedia, Trump administration political interference with science agencies*

On 14 April [2020], the EPA proposed to maintain current standards for fine-particulate pollution, despite evidence and advice from government and academic scientists who overwhelmingly backed tighter regulations. "It's totally devastating," says Francesca Dominici, an epidemiologist at Harvard University, whose group found that strengthening standards could save tens of thousands of lives each year. "Not listening to science and rolling back environmental regulations is costing American lives."

*Nature, 05 October 2020*

# Politics and Science

“No science is immune to the infection of politics and the corruption of power.”

*Jacob Bronowski (Polish-British mathematician and philosopher)*

“The crossroads of science and politics is a dodgy place.”

*Nancy Gibbs (American essayist)*

“I was raised with the idea that if you're not smart enough to do science you can do politics.”

*Michael Crichton (American author and filmmaker)*

“Public opinion, I am sorry to say, will bear a great deal of nonsense. There is scarcely any absurdity so gross, whether in religion, politics, science or manners, which it will not bear.”

*Ralph Waldo Emerson (American essayist and philosopher)*

“The politician ... is sometimes tempted to encroach on the territory of the scientific estate. Sometimes he interferes directly with the scientist's pursuit of basic science; but he is more likely to interfere when the scientist proposes to publish findings that upset the established political or economic order, or when he joins with the engineering or medical profession in proposing to translate the findings of science into new policies. ... Who decides when the apparent consensus of scientific opinion on the relation of cigarettes to lung cancer is great enough to justify governmental regulatory action? In such issues the problem is less often whether politics will presume to dictate to science than it is how much politics is to be influenced by the new findings of science.”

*Don K. Price (American political scientist), The Scientific Estate, 1965*

“In science scientists say, 'You know that's a really good argument; [I'm] mistaken,' and then they actually change their minds, and you never hear that old view from them again. It doesn't happen as often as it should because scientists are human, change is sometimes painful...I cannot recall the last time something like that happened in politics or religion.”

*Carl Sagan (American astronomer), 1987*

## **Our Next Production**

# **The Memory of Water**

**By Shelagh Stephenson**

After years of separation three sisters return to the family's Yorkshire home for their mother's funeral. As they revisit their past it becomes clear that their memories are both subjective and unreliable, exposing hidden lies, self-betrayal and personal, unresolved crises.

Their mother's death impacts on the sisters in different ways but each is forced to face unsettling and often poignant home truths that challenge their current lifestyles and ambitions.

A warm, well-observed, often hilarious but strangely unnerving play.

Directed by Janet Harrison

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022, 7:45pm

Compass Theatre, Ickenham

Box Office : 01895 250 615

## **About Proscenium**

Proscenium was founded in 1924. Since then, the aim of this experienced group has been to present classic and contemporary plays to as wide an audience as possible. Since 1990, performances have taken place at the Harrow Arts Centre and, more recently, at the Compass Theatre, Ickenham.

The company meets three times a week in Harrow for rehearsals, so that four plays are presented in each season. Social, fund raising activities and play readings take place throughout the year.

Secretary : Marion Chamberlain

Chair : David Pearson

Contact us at [www.proscenium.org.uk](http://www.proscenium.org.uk)