

**STATE THEATRE COMPANY**

**WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW**

# State Ed

**STATE THEATRE COMPANY**  
*SOUTH AUSTRALIA*

## **A DOLL'S HOUSE**

**BY HENRIK IBSEN**

**A NEW ADAPTATION BY ELENA CARAPETIS**

### **CREATIVES AND CAST**

Adaptation	Elena Carapetis
Director	Geordie Brookman
Set & Lighting Designer	Geoff Cobham
Costume designer	Ailsa Paterson
Composer	Alan John
Kristine	Rachel Burke
Nora	Miranda Daughtry
Krogstad	Rashidi Edward
Torvald	Dale March
Dr Rank	Nathan O'Keefe
Anna	Anna Steen
Emmy	Haley Grey
Emmy	Clio Tinsley

## A BLUFFER'S GUIDE TO IBSEN



Name: Henrik Johan Ibsen

Also known as: The Father of Modern Drama, The Father of Realism

Born: 20 March 1828 (Skein, Norway)

Died: 23 May, 1906 (Oslo, Norway - known as Kristiania at the time)

Genre: Realism

Notable works: *Peer Gynt*, *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Master Builder*

His career in a sentence: Ibsen wrote over 25 plays, developing from an early period influenced by folk tales, though several plays that attack society's entrenched beliefs, through to a later focus on psychological realism.

### SOME USEFUL FACTS:

- He's the second most-performed playwright in the world (after Shakespeare).
- He's known for his 'problem plays', which examine contentious issues through realistic interactions between characters. Some examples to remember: women's lives (*A Doll's House*), sexually transmitted diseases (*Ghosts*), and morality in his time (*An Enemy of the People*).
- He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature three times: 1902, 1903 and 1904, losing to Theodor Mommsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and, finally, both Frédéric Mistral and José Echegaray.
- Characters in his plays are often based on and even named after members of his family. Jon Gynt in *Peer Gynt*, Old Ekdahl in *The Wild Duck* and Daniel Hejre in *The League of Youth* are all considered to be modelled on his father, Knud.
- Despite his focus on morality, he was something of a cad himself. The character of Hilda in *The Master Builder* is based on three separate women; Ibsen had an affair with two.
- His last word, "Tvertimod", was his response to a nurse who told a guest that he was getting better. Translation: "On the contrary".
- His son, Sigurd, went on to become Prime Minister of Norway.
- Ibsen believed that there is no better way to tackle contemporary issues than a strict focus on realism and interpersonal psychology.

Source: [National Theatre UK](#)

## ABOUT STATE THEATRE COMPANY'S ADAPTATION



RASHIDI EDWARDS AND MIRANDA DAUGHTRY

Known for the “door slam heard around the world”, at the time of writing *A Doll's House* created uproar for its depiction of a woman leaving her husband and children.

State Theatre Company's production of *A Doll's House* retains the themes and plot points of Ibsen's original, however the adaptation by Elena Carapetis (*Gorgon, Sista Girl*) has contemporised the language and the setting has been relocated from a cold Norwegian winter to a hot Australian Christmas.

The set and costumes, by Geoff Cobham and Ailsa Patterson, are also contemporary. More about their design and inspirations will be available in the study guide, released shortly before the season opens.

### THEMES

Identity, marriage, the roles of men and women, love, deceit, parenthood, freedom, money, power, reputation.

### FURTHER PREPARATION RESEARCH

Websites:

[Sparknotes](#)  
[Shmoop](#)

Videos:

**State Theatre's Tangent Series:** A panel of experts discuss “Can men really be feminists? And why don't all women want to identify as one?”  
Monday 6 June 2017, State Library SA. Hosted by Geordie Brookman, director

From National Theatre UK

[Ibsen Part 1](#)  
[Playwrights on adapting Ibsen](#)

# SYNOPSIS

## *Act I: Christmas Eve*

Nora is preparing Christmas presents she has just purchased but is told off by her husband, Torvald, for spending too much money. She has also been eating Haigh's chocolates which she hides from Torvald when he enters the room as he does not approve. They talk about the new role Torvald has won at a bank, and the beautiful life they will share with their daughter once he starts receiving his new salary.

An old school-friend of Nora's, Kristine Linde, visits hoping that Nora can ask Torvald to help her find work at his bank. Nora reveals to Kristine that she has secretly borrowed an enormous sum of money to finance her husband's recovery from illness and has been paying it back slowly in secret.

Meanwhile, a bank-employee, Krogstad, visits Torvald. After their meeting Torvald reveals that he does not trust Krogstad and intends to fire him, and offers his position to Kristine.

Krogstad returns and reveals to Nora that he knows she forged her dying father's signature to receive the loan and threatens to expose her if she does not convince Torvald to keep him on staff. Despite her best attempts, she is unsuccessful at convincing Torvald to retain Krogstad.

## *Act II: Christmas Day*

Nora is preparing for a costume party where she will perform a musical number but she has not found a costume; Kristine comes over to help. Nora reveals that Krogstad is blackmailing her about the loan. Torvald emails Krogstad to dismiss him from his job. In her desperation, Nora talks to Dr Rank, a close family friend, to seek his help. Dr Rank admits to Nora that he is in love with her and therefore Nora decides not to ask for his help.

Krogstad visits Nora having been fired by Torvald and sends an email to Torvald exposing her secret regarding the loan. Nora diverts Torvald's attention from his inbox by breaking his phone and making him help her practice for her performance.

## *Act III: Boxing Day*

We learn that Krogstad and Kristine know each other and had previously been in love. They decide to reinstate their relationship and Krogstad considers trying to recall the email as he wants to be a better man. Kristine convinces him that it would be better if Torvald did receive the email so that he and Nora had to address the lies in their relationship.

After the party, they return home and Torvald reads the email. He confronts Nora and is only concerned about how his reputation is damaged rather than seeing that Nora has lied in order to save his life. Nora is unnerved because she thought that Torvald loved her so much that would protect her but Torvald is only scathing of her actions and criticises her about many aspects of her life. This causes Nora to finally see their relationship as it truly is. Krogstad sends another email that reveals he is not going to take legal action and Torvald is immediately soothed, but Nora has seen the truth about his priorities. She questions whether she has truly ever been anything more than a daughter and wife and whether she can be a good role model for her daughter if she doesn't know who she is. The play concludes when she leaves both Torvald and Emmy.