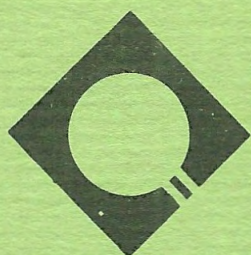




HENRIK IBSEN'S
ROSMERSHOLM

Translated by
MICHAEL MEYER



THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

First performance 28 January 1978

ROSMERSHOLM by HENRIK IBSEN

John Rosmer KENNETH RATCLIFFE
owner of Rosmersholm, a former parish priest

Rebecca West MICHELE MIKARDO
living at Rosmersholm

Mrs. Helseth MARY HODLIN
housekeeper at Rosmersholm

Dr. Kroll JOHN ROBB
a headmaster, brother-in-law to Rosmer

Ulrik Brendel NED GETTINGS

Peter Mortensgaard NEVILE CRUTTENDEN

Production by Tony Rushforth
Setting designed by Nigel Cowell
Lighting by Frank Wood

The action takes place at Rosmersholm, an old country seat in the neighbourhood of a small town by a fjord in western Norway.

Act 1 — A Summer evening

Act 2 — The next morning

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

Act 3 — The following morning

Act 4 — That evening

<i>Stage Manager</i>	— Lesley Montgomery
<i>Deputy Stage Manager</i>	— Geoff Moore
<i>Assistant Stage Managers</i>	— Geoffrey Barker Philip Dean Rita Fenoughty Tom Hall Liz Robertson Ian Russell Carole Smillie
<i>Costumes</i>	— Lindsay Udell
<i>Assisted by</i>	— Jane Gillin Edith Ricket
<i>Sound</i>	— Mike Emery
<i>Lighting Assistants</i>	— Malcolm Robertson — Huw Robson
<i>Properties</i>	— Iris Phelps
<i>Construction</i>	— Geoff Moore Alexander Atcheson Geoffrey Barker Russel Dame Philip Dean
<i>Wigs dressed by</i>	— Julie Cruttenden

Rosmersholm is an impressive play, with its finely worked texture, and its authentic particularity. If one hesitates to judge it a complete success, it is because one is uncertain about the nature of the characters. With Rosmer, and especially with Rebecca, there is an element of the familiar suggestiveness of naturalism — the hint at the unrevealed, the private motives which underlie their conduct and professions. Both are studied in much greater detail than the comparatively expected and typical characters of his immediately preceding plays. *Rosmersholm* is almost free of the conscious charm of parts of *The Wild Duck*. But the very scale of the creation imposes difficulties. It involves a degree of detail which cannot fully be realized in the explicit, spoken framework of the play. The refinement of the characters, one might say, is a fictional refinement; the degree of attention to motive and behaviour is that of the psychological novel. But, as characters in the play, Rosmer and Rebecca must function as conventional, explicit figures; they must go towards a *dénouement* which is at quite a different level of reality. All that part of their creation which cannot be directly realized in the play is conveyed by hint and by implication. Thus one is being continually led away from what is explicitly presented. The characters are at the same time explicit figures of the drama and as it were summaries of the slowly realized figures of the novel.

Raymond Williams. *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*

Rosmersholm is perhaps the supreme example of the dramatic technique that lifts veil after veil from the past both of action and of motive, and while the events move forward in time, leads us further and further back into the hidden world. And so, as the play progresses from cause to effect, the characters, on their spiritual exploration, and we with them, regress from effect to cause.

Una Ellis-Fermor

In *Rosmersholm*, Ibsen tells the old story of the domestic servant who takes her mistress' place in the master's affections: with the difference that Rebecca West is no villainess. Piecing together just what did happen in that morning room before Beata Rosmer took her last walk to the mill-race is an exercise nobody has properly completed. Ibsen left too many loopholes in the evidence and the secretiveness of Rebecca's character.

Irving Wardle

The practising psycho-analytical physician knows how frequently, or how invariably, a girl who enters a household as servant, companion or governess, will consciously or unconsciously weave a daydream, which derives from the Oedipus complex, of the mistress of the house disappearing and the master taking the newcomer as his wife in her place. *Rosmersholm* is the greatest work of art of the class that treats of this common phantasy in girls. What makes it into a tragic drama is the extra circumstance that the heroine's daydream had been preceded in her childhood by a precisely corresponding reality.

Sigmund Freud — Character Types

And so often in Ibsen, the central conflict is between an oppressive inheritance and the present imperative. John Rosmer, the widowed apostate who wants to disown his clerical past and espouse the cause of freedom blowing through Norway, finds his will crushed by his ancestry. Equally Rebecca West, his companion and help-mate, is infected by the deadly spirit of Rosmersholm.

Michael Billington

Truth, freedom, responsibility, love, innocence, joy, these are among the dominant themes of the later plays and their evaluation by the characters is a large part of the subject-matter; events, deeds, and motives, are read and re-read in the light of these values and the light itself increases as the significance grows clear. But because all the others derive from or depend on the first, upon the practice of truth in the heart, there is continuous self-examination, not only of the deeds and motives of the moment but of those of the past and of a past that recedes ever further and further until the initial act or thought is disclosed that has set the whole process at work. If we had to describe in one phrase the subject-matter shared by all these late plays, we should probably call it spiritual exploration; it is in fact, in most cases, an examination of conscience without benefit of clergy.

Una Ellis-Fermor

Apart from the recent production at the Haymarket Theatre with Claire Bloom and Daniel Massey the play was last revived in the West End in 1959 with Peggy Ashcroft and Eric Porter. In 1973, Michael Meyer's translation was presented at the Greenwich Theatre with Joan Plowright and Jeremy Brett.

Henrik Ibsen 1828-1906

"I have been more of a poet, less of a social philosopher, than people generally seem to want to believe.....
My task has been to create human beings"

A Chronological List of his Major Plays:

- 1850 — *Catiline*
- 1854 — *Lady Inger at Ostraat*
- 1857 — *The Vikings at Helgeland*
- 1862 — *Love's Comedy*
- 1863 — *The Pretenders*
- 1866 — *Brand*
- 1867 — *Peer Gynt*
- 1869 — *League of Youth*
- 1873 — *Emperor and Galilean*
- 1877 — *Pillars of the Community*
- 1879 — *A Doll's House*
- 1881 — *Ghosts*
- 1882 — *An Enemy of the People*
- 1884 — *The Wild Duck*
- 1886 — *Rosmersholm*
- 1888 — *The Lady from the Sea*
- 1890 — *Hedda Gabler*
- 1892 — *The Master Builder*
- 1894 — *Little Eyolf*
- 1896 — *John Gabriel Borkman*
- 1899 — *When We Dead Awaken*

Ibsen was a great artist, working in a tradition which was acutely inimical to art. That is the scope of his success and of his failure. It is very unfortunate that incidental aspects of his work should, from the beginning, have been over-valued and widely imitated. However, elements of his work still stand as landmarks in our continuing search for a fully dramatic form. As for the work itself, parts of it — the fifth act of *Brand*, most of *Peer Gynt*, parts of *Emperor and Galilean*, much of *Ghosts* and *Rosmersholm* and *Hedda Gabler*, and again of *Little Eyolf*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, and *When We Dead Awaken* — are great positive achievements. It is not the greatness of Shakespeare, or of Sophocles. But it is work as valid and as permanent as our century has. We must remember, in making any final act of valuation, that we are called upon to value something of which we are still a part; something which, more than any other man, Ibsen created: the consciousness of modern European drama.

Raymond Williams. *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*

On Tuesday 7 February at 7.45 p.m. in the Bernard Shaw Room, Michael Meyer, whose translation of *Rosmersholm* you are seeing tonight, will talk about the play and Ibsen's work for the theatre generally, and head a critical discussion on this production.

Michael Meyer is generally acknowledged as the leading translator of Ibsen for the modern English stage and is the author of a two-volume definitive biography of Ibsen.

All are invited. TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY at 7.45 p.m.

NEXT PRODUCTION

ASHES

by David Rudkin

An unequivocal play about a childless couple's luckless attempts to have a child of their own and the subsequent failure of their aspirations to parenthood by adoption. As the play deals with a very ordinary situation which must arise in many people's lives, it is of universal interest.

Tuesday 14 February to Saturday 18 February at 7.45p.m.
Members FREE, Guests £1.00 and £1.25

COMING SOON

OH! WHAT A LOVELY WAR

by Charles Cilton and others

opening March 11

THE RIDE ACROSS LAKE CONSTANCE

by Peter Handke

translated by Michael Roloff

opening April 8

IN THE STANISLAVSKY ROOM

The Questors Student Group

FOUR COMEDIES

A balanced, varied and entertaining evening comprising four different comedies, four different authors and four different styles.

Monday 27 February to Friday 10 March excepting
Sunday 5 March — all at 7.45 p.m.

Members FREE, Guests 50p

The Questors Film Society presents

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

The classic Marx Brothers — need one say more?

Friday February 3 in the Theatre at 11 p.m.

Film Society members 50p., Guests 75p

REFRESHMENTS

Why not visit our cafeteria in the Foyer for tea or coffee during the interval? If your taste fancies something stronger then visit the Foyer bar — advance orders welcome.

EXHIBITION

During the run of *Rosmersholm* there will be an exhibition of the work of TONY BARNETT in the Foyer.
