Hedda Gabler
by Henrik Ibsen
In a version by Richard Eyre

Photo by John Haynes

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Coutts is delighted to be the principal sponsor of such an innovative and respected theatre as the Almeida. This sponsorship forms an important part of Coutts programme of support for the performing arts, and is now in its second year.

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On behalf of everyone at Coutts, I wish the Almeida Theatre every success with this production of Macbeth.

Sarah Deaves
Chief Executive
Coutts & Co
HEDDA GABLER
by Henrik Ibsen
In a version by Richard Eyre

In order of appearance:

Hedda Tesman        Eve Best
George Tesman        Benedict Cumberbatch
Juliana Tesman       Gillian Raine
Judge Brack          Iain Glen
Eilert Loevborg      Jamie Sives
Thea Elvsted         Lisa Dillon
Berthe               Sarah Flind

Direction            Richard Eyre
Design               Rob Howell
Lighting             Peter Mumford
Sound                John Leonard
Casting              Maggie Lunn
Production Manager   James Crout
Company Manager      Rupert Carlile
Stage Manager        Suzy Bourke
Deputy Stage Manager Vicki Liles
Assistant Stage Manager Kate McDowell
Costume Supervisor   Edward Gibbon
Deputy wardrobe supervisor Holly Hughes
Wig Supervisor       Zoe Goodchild
Production Carpenter Craig Emerson
Stage Crew           Martin Barron
Dominic Rose
Scenic Artist        Gordon Aldred
Assistant Scenic Artist ???
Set Built By         Rocket Scenery
Stage Management Placement Kiera Wheelright
Eve Best

Hedda Tesman

Theatre: Mourning Becomes Electra, Three Sisters, The Coast of Utopia (National Theatre), The Misanthrope (Chichester Festival Theatre), Macbeth (Globe Theatre), The Heiress, The Cherry Orchard (National Theatre), ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore (Young Vic), Sisters Brothers (Gate Theatre), The Promise (Battersea Art Centre), Much Ado About Nothing (Southwark Playhouse), Uncle Vanya (Theatre Studio).
Television: Inspector Lynley Mysteries, Waking the Dead, Lie With Me, Shackleton.
Film: The Lodge.

Benedict Cumberbatch

George Tesman

Theatre: Lady from the Sea (Almeida Theatre), Oh What a Lovely War, Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Love’s Labour’s Lost (The New Shakespeare Company).
Film: To Kill a King, Hills Like White Elephants.
Lisa Dillon

*Thea Elvsted*

**Theatre:** *Othello* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *The Master Builder* (West End), *Iphegenia* (Sheffield Crucible).

**Television:** *Hawking, Cambridge Spies.*

**Film:** *Bright Young Things.*

Sarah Flind

*Berthe*


**Television:** *The Bill, Strange, My Hero, Holby City, Oliver Twist, Eastenders, Norman Ormal, Out of Sight, Casualty, Pissed on the Job, Hettie Wainthrop Investigates, Thiefakers, Tomorrow People, Nice day at the Office, Gone to Seed, Hot Dog Wars, House of Elliott, Stanley and the Woman, Lovejoy, Do It, Last Evensong, Newshounds.*

**Film:** *Gosford Park, The Winslow Boy, The Fool.*
Gillian Raine

Juliana Tesman

Theatre: Mackerel Sky (Bush Theatre), La Grande Magia (National Theatre), A Month in the Country (Albery Theatre), Constant Wife (Theatre Royal, Windsor), Hedda Gabler (St. Martin’s), An Ideal Husband (Strand Theatre), Happy Family (St. Martin’s), Moliere Triple Bill (Oxford Playhouse), The Apple Cart (Mermaid Theatre), On the Rocks (Mermaid Theatre), Heartbreak House (European Tour), Semi-Detached (Greenwich Theatre).


Film: Darling, A Night to Remember, The Last of the Long-Haired Boys.

Iain Glen

Judge Brack

Theatre: The Seagull (Edinburgh Festival), A Streetcar Named Desire (National Theatre), The Blue Room (Donmar Warehouse), Martin Guerre (West End), The Broken Heart, Henry V (Royal Shakespeare Company), Here (Donmar Warehouse), Macbeth (Tron Theatre), King Lear (Royal Court), Coriolanus, She Stoops to Conquer (Chichester Festival Theatre), Hamlet (Bristol Old Vic), Happgood (Aldwych Theatre), The Man Who Had All the Luck (Bristol Old Vic & Young Vic), Road (Royal Court), Edward II (Royal Exchange), Recruiting Officer (Birmingham Rep).


Film: Tara Road, Man to Man, Kingdom of Heaven, Song for a Raggy Boy, Spy Sorge, The Soulkeeper, Darkness, Tombraider, Gabriel & Me, Silent Scream, Fools of Fortune, Mountain of the Moon, Paranoid, Mararia, Young Americans, Ferdy Durke, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Gorillas in the Mist, Paris by Night.
Jamie Sives

Eilert Loevborg

Theatre: Edward II (Sheffield Crucible).

Television: To the Ends of the Earth, Avenging Angels, Rockface, Ultimate Force, Glasgow Kiss, Psychos, Split Second.

Film: A Woman in Winter, On a Clear Day, One Last Chance, Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself, Frozen, The Knickerman, Mean Machine, Dead on Time, Poof.

Richard Eyre

Director

Richard Eyre was Artistic Director of Nottingham Playhouse 1973-78. He was Producer of Play for Today for BBC TV 1978 – 81. He became an Associate Director of the National Theatre in 1981 and was Artistic Director from 1988 -1997.


Opera: La Traviata (Covent Garden), Le Nozze Di Figaro (Festival d’Aix en Provence).


Radio: Angel, Macbeth.

Films: Stage Beauty, Iris (also wrote with Charles Wood), Laughterhouse, The Ploughman’s Lunch.

Books: National Service, Changing Stages (with Nicholas Wright), Utopia and Other Places.
Rob Howell

**Design**

Theatre includes: Buried Child (National Theatre), Endgame (West End), The Graduate (UK Tour), Tell Me On a Sunday (West End & UK Tour), The Lady From The Sea (Almeida Theatre), Simply Heavenly (Young Vic & West End), Our House (West End), Faith Healer (West End), Proof (Donmar Warehouse), The Graduate (Broadway), Faith Healer (Almeida Theatre), Sunset Boulevard (UK Tour), Howard Katz (National Theatre), Lulu (Almeida Theatre & Kennedy Center, Washington), The Caretaker (Comedy Theatre), Conversations After a Burial (Almeida Theatre), Hard Fruit (Royal Court), Eddie Izzard (UK Tour 1999/2000), Battle Royal (National Theatre), Betrayal (Theatre D’atelier, Paris), Family Reunion (Royal Shakespeare Company), Money (National Theatre), Troilus and Cressida (National Theatre), Vassa (Almeida Theatre), Real Classy Affair (Royal Court), Richard III (Royal Shakespeare Company), How I Learned to Drive (Donmar Warehouse), Eddie Izzard – Glorious Tour, Government Inspector (Almeida Theatre), Entertaining Mr Sloane (Theatre Clwyd), Chips With Everything (National Theatre), Tom and Clem (Aldwych Theatre), Little Eyolf (Royal Shakespeare Company), Peter Pan (West Yorkshire Playhouse), Habeas Corpus (Donmar Warehouse), The Loves of Cass Maguire (Druid Theatre Company), Tortuffe (Almeida Theatre), The Glass Menagerie (Donmar Warehouse), The Painter of Dishonour (Royal Shakespeare Company), Simpatico (Royal Court), True West (Donmar Warehouse), The Shakespeare Revue (Royal Shakespeare Company), Julius Caesar (Royal Exchange, Manchester), Private Lives (Dalateatern, Sweden), Oliver (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), Eurovision (Sydmonston Festival & Vaudeville Theatre), Relative Values (Chichester Festival Theatre, UK Tour & Savoy Theatre).

**Opera**: Sophie’s Choice (Royal Opera House), The Turn of the Screw (Welsh National Opera).

Peter Mumford

**Lighting**

Theatre includes: The King and I (UK Tour), Becket (Theatre Royal Haymarket), Playboy of the Western World (Abbey Theatre, Dublin & US Tour), Don Juan, Man and Superman, Blithe Spirit (Theatre Royal Bath & UK Tour), Out of This World, The Master and Margarita, The Gondoliers, The Seagull (Chichester Festival Theatre), The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? (Almeida & West End), Blood (Royal Court), Brand (Swan Theatre, Stratford & Haymarket Theatre), Betrayal, Design For Living, Fight For Barbara, As You Like It (Theatre Royal, Bath & The Rose of Kingston), The Talking Cure (National Theatre), Bacchae (National Theatre), Private Lives (Albery Theatre & Broadway), Hamlet, Othello, The Taming of the Shrew (Royal Shakespeare Company), Luther (National Theatre), The People Are Friendly, Redundant (Royal Court), Iphigenia (Abbey Theatre, Dublin), God Only Knows (Vaudeville), Medea (Queen’s Theatre), The Dispute and the Critic (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), Lautrec (Shaftesbury Theatre), I Laskarina (Acropol Theatre, Athens), Summerfolk, The Merchant of Venice, Money, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (National Theatre), A Long Day’s Journey Into Night, An Ideal Husband, Oliver Twist, Therese Raquin (Gate Theatre, Dublin).

**Television**: The Little Prince (Director of Photography, BBC), Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues - J S Bach (Director & Lighting Director, BBC2), Jenufa (Director of Photography, BBC2), Richard II (Channel 4).

**Ballet**: Peter Pan (Set & Lighting, Northern Ballet Theatre), The Nutcracker (Scottish Ballet), Madame Butterfly (Northern Ballet Theatre), Of Oil and Water (Siobhan Davies Dance Co.), Irek Mukhamedov and Dancers (Sadler’s Wells), Arthur (Birmingham Royal Ballet), The Crucible, Hidden Variables, A Stranger’s Taste, This House Will Burn / Ashley Page (Royal Ballet), Sounding, Unrest, The Celebrated Soubrette (Rambert Dance Co.).

**Opera**: Così Fan Tutte (English National Opera), La Traviata (Antwerp Opera), Siegfried and Gotterdammerung (Scottish Opera & Edinburgh Festival Theatre), The Bartered Bride (Royal Opera House), Il Corsaro (Athens Concert Hall), Don Pasquale (Opera Zuid, Holland), The Coronation of Poppea (English National Opera), Eugene Onegin, Madame Butterfly (Opera North), Giulio Cesare (Opera De Bordeaux), Earth and the Great Weather (Almeida Opera 2000), L’heure Espagnole, L’enfant Et Les Sortileges (Co-Directed, Set & Lighting, Opera Zuid), Un Ballo In Maschera (Vilnius Festival & Opera House).

John Leonard

**Sound**

Theatre: Recent credits include: Macbeth (Almeida Theatre), The Odd Couple (Liverpool Playhouse), Becket (West End), How to Act Around Cops (Soho Theatre), Brighton Rock (Almeida Theatre), The Anniversary (Liverpool Playhouse), Misconceptions (Royal Theatre, Northampton), Final Judgement (Theatre Royal, Windsor), Mercy (Soho Theatre), The Old Masters (Birmingham Rep & West End), Twelfth Night/Cymbeline (2004 Ludlow Festival), The Black Bottom (Liverpool Playhouse), Guantanamano (Tricycle Theatre), Whistling Psyche (Almeida Theatre), Rattle of a Simple Man (Malvern & West End), Flash (Soho Theatre), Jumpers (National Theatre, West End & Broadway), The Astonished Heart/Still Life (Liverpool Playhouse), The Dumb Waiter (Oxford Playhouse), The Entertainer (Liverpool Playhouse),Five Gold Rings (Almeida Theatre), Les Liaisons Dangereuses (West End), Sweet Panic (West End), The Mercy Seat (Almeida Theatre), Under Milk Wood (Wales Theatre Company), Wrong Place (Soho Theatre), Squint (Chelsea Theatre), I.D (Almeida Theatre), Sunday Father (Hampstead Theatre).
Henrik Johan Ibsen was born in 1828 in Skien, a small town on the coast of Norway. His father was a merchant whose business failed, forcing the family to move to a farm in Gjerpen. At the age of sixteen Henrik was apprenticed to a pharmacist in Grimstad and two years later was compelled to begin supporting his illegitimate child born to a servant girl. In 1850 he moved to Christiania (now Oslo) where he studied and earned a little from journalistic writings. In the same year he wrote two plays, Catilina and The Burial Mound.

Ibsen had hoped to become a physician but, after failing university entrance examinations, was appointed in 1851 as ‘stage poet’ of Den Nationale Scene, a small theatre in Bergen. There he wrote four plays based on Norwegian folklore and history, which failed to attract an audience. In 1852 the theatre sent him on a study tour to Denmark and Germany and in 1857, after the theatre went bankrupt, he returned to Christiania to become Artistic Director of the new Norske (Norwegian) Theatre.

In 1858 he married Suzannah Thoresen, the stepchild of the novelist Magdalene Thoresen. Their only child, Sigurd, was born the next year. To this period belong The Vikings of Helgoland (1858) and The Pretenders (1864), both historical sagas, and Love’s Comedy (1862), a satire which was produced with some success. In 1864 Ibsen received a grant for foreign travel from the Norwegian government which enabled him to visit Italy and Germany, and in 1864, he settled in Rome where he wrote his great poetic drama Brand. This made a reputation for him throughout Europe and earned him a state pension. He visited Stockholm, dined with the King, and later represented Norway at the opening of the Suez Canal. Brand was followed by his last play in verse, Peer Gynt, written in 1867 and produced in a revised stage version, with incidental music by Grieg, in 1876.

His following four plays are realistic portrayals of ageless and universal parochialism set in the small town life of Ibsen’s own day: Pillars of Society (1877) is a study of public life based on a lie; A Doll’s House (1879) of the insidious destruction of domestic life by another lie; Ghosts (1881) of the lingering poison in a marriage based on a lie; An Enemy of the People (1882) of a man of truth in conflict with the falsity of society.

As well as attacking social conventions as destroyers of life and happiness, Ghosts touched on the forbidden subject of hereditary venereal disease. The London Daily Telegraph called the play “an open drain; a loathsome sore unbandaged; a dirty act done publicly; a lazar house with all its doors and windows open.”

All four plays have the structural economy and simplicity of a skilled writer at the height of his powers and all, in thought and technique, have exercised an immense influence on the development of contemporary theatre. Ibsen’s later plays, in which symbolism plays an increasingly large part, include The Wild Duck (1884), Rosmersholm (1886), The Lady from the Sea (1888), Hedda Gabler (1890) and finally The Master Builder (1892), which is concerned with the dual nature of the man and the artist, Little Eyolf (1894), a study of marital relations, John Gabriel Borkman (1896), a study of unfulfilled genius in relation to society, and When We Dead Awaken (1899), Ibsen’s last pronouncement on the artist’s relation to life and truth.

The last years of Ibsen’s life were clouded by mental illness and he died in Christiania in 1906.
ON THE PLAY

“The title of the play is Hedda Gabler. My intention in giving it this name was to indicate that Hedda as a personality is to be regarded rather as her father’s daughter than as her husband’s wife.

“It was not really my intention to deal in this play with so-called problems. What I principally wanted to do was to depict human beings, human emotions, and human destinies, upon a groundwork of certain of the social conditions and principles of the present day. When you have read the whole, my fundamental idea will be clearer to you than I can make it by entering into further explanations.” (letters)

In the summer of 1889, when he was 61, Ibsen was on holiday in a South Tyrolean village. He met an 18 year old Viennese girl called Emilie Bardach and fell in love. He’d dedicated himself to his art like a monk, for “the power and the glory”, and he’d renounced spontaneous joy and sexual fulfilment. Emilie became the “May sun of a September life”. She asked him to live with her; he at first agreed but, crippled by guilt and fear of scandal (and perhaps impotence as well), put an end to the relationship.

Emilie, like Hedda, was a beautiful, intelligent, spoilt, bored upper-class girl with “a tired look in her mysterious eyes”, who wanted to have power and was thrilled at the possibility of snaring someone else’s husband. The village in which they met in the Tyrol – Gossensass – was mentioned specifically in an earlier draft of the play when Hedda and Loevborg are looking at the honeymoon photographs in the second act, and fragments of dialogue in Ibsen’s notes from the play appear to be derived directly from his conversations with Emilie.

“Everything that I have written is most minutely connected with what I have lived through, if not personally experienced; every new work has had for me the object of serving as a process of spiritual liberation and catharsis; for every man shares the responsibility and the guilt of the society to which he belongs. That is why I once inscribed in a copy of one of my books the following dedicatory lines: ‘To live is to war with trolls in heart and soul. To write is to sit in judgement on oneself.’”

“...to draw a clear distinction between what one has merely experienced and what one has spiritually lived through; for only the latter is proper material for creative writing.” (letters)
ON WOMEN

‘Hedda really wants to live the whole life of a man’.

I must disclaim the honour of having consciously worked for women’s rights. I am not even quite sure what women’s rights really are. To me it has been a question of human rights...Of course it is incidentally desirable to solve the problem of women; but that has not been my whole object. My task has been the portrayal of human beings.

(speech to the Norwegian Society for Women’s Rights 1898)

There are two kinds of moral laws, two kinds of conscience, one for men and one, quite different, for women. They don’t understand each other; but in practical life, woman is judged by masculine law, as though she weren’t a woman but a man...A woman cannot be herself in modern society. It is an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint.

(first notes for A Doll’s House 1878)

OTHER PLAYWRIGHTS ON HEDDA GABLER

WILDE
I felt pity and terror, as though the play had been Greek.

SHAW
The tragedy of a Hedda in real life is not that she commits suicide but that she continues to live!

There is not one of Ibsen’s characters who is not, in the old phrase, the temple of the Holy Ghost, and who does not move you at moments by the sense of that mystery.

OSBORNE
Hedda is a victim. She is not tragic but desperately needs to get the minimal rewards of life...The idea of being made pregnant - by anyone, even Lovborg - is repellent to her. Her tragedy, if it can be called one, is that of being born bored and that is what is fascinating about her in the annals of dramatic literature. The very concept was unique at the time. She is a loser, whereas Mrs Elvsted is an odds-on favourite.

ON WRITING

“Before I write down one word, I have to have the character in mind through and through. I must penetrate into the last wrinkle of his soul. I always proceed from the individual; the stage setting, the dramatic ensemble, all of that comes naturally and does not cause me any worry, as soon as I am certain of the individual in every aspect of his humanity. But I have to have his exterior in mind also, down to the last button, how he stands and walks, how he conducts himself, what his voice sounds like. Then I do not let him go until his fate is fulfilled.

As a rule, I make three drafts of my dramas which differ very much from each other in characterization, not in action. When I proceed to the first sketch of the material I feel as though I had the degree of acquaintance with my characters that one acquires on a railway journey; one has met and chatted about this or that. With the next draft I see everything more clearly, I know characters just about as one would know them after a few weeks’ stay in a spa; I have learned the fundamental traits in their characters as well as their little peculiarities; yet it is not impossible that I might make an error in some essential matter. In the last draft, finally, I stand at the limit of knowledge; I know my people from close and long association - they are my intimate friends, who will not disappoint me in any way; in the manner in which I see them now, I shall always see them.”

At the moment of conception one must be on fire, but at the time of writing, cold.

(in conversation)

I can only speak freely through the mouths of characters in a play.

(letter 1889)

ON ACTING

The language must sound natural and the mode of expression must be distinctive for every character in the play; one human being does not express himself like another...The effect of the play depends greatly on the audience feeling that they are listening to something that is actually happening in real life.

(letter 1883)

People have not fully appreciated that a passionate writer needs to be acted with passion, and not otherwise.

(in conversation)
Almeida Projects draws on the expertise of some of the best theatre artists in the UK and brings them together with our community partners, promoting innovative creative exchange between the Almeida and Islington.

We continue our work with secondary schools, colleges and youth centres across Islington working alongside playwrights, actors, directors, actors and designers on a range of workshops and residencies inspired by our productions.

Following the course of the current season, we’re focusing on Hedda, Thea, Berthe and Aunt Ju Ju as part of our ongoing exploration of each of the plays from the point of view of the female characters. From Rose, the unwitting child-bride of Brighton Rock via artists’ muse, wife and mother Jane Morris, via women in war - Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff to the Bride in Blood Wedding, we’re investigating the role of the wife on stage. “This little hand” culminates in an original piece of theatre later in the year.

Our first collaboration with Almeida Opera and the Islington Arts and Media School follows the mirrors the process of development of new piece of operatic work. 60 young performers are receiving mentoring from opera singers, a writer, musicians, designers and choreographers to create their own original pieces working from the same starting point as our new opera for 2005. The results will be staged at the Almeida to an invited audience in July.

Visit our new website: www.almeidaprojects.co.uk for updates and to engage in the debate.
The Almeida Angels have also continued to work alongside the theatre’s Marketing Manager to produce an alternative advert campaign for the production of Macbeth. Working with Graphic Designer - Sarah Hyndman - a new image was photographed (see left) and posters were created using the new concept and revised tag line “Murder...you can’t wash it away”.

The Angels next project will focus upon a marketing campaign using tv, radio and outdoor spaces for Blood Wedding.

Watch this space for more details or see our page on www.almeidaprojects.co.uk.

The Almeida Angels newsletter is a Freshstart/Almeida collaboration. For more information see www.freshstartonline.org.uk

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**Assisted Performances**

**Hedda Gabler**
Thursday 5th April 05
- Captioned Performance by STAGETEXT
Thursday 14th April 05
- Sign Language Interpreted Performance by Jeni Draper
Saturday 23rd April 05
- Audio Described matinee by Vocaleyes

**Blood Wedding**
Wednesday 25th May 05
- Captioned Performance by STAGETEXT
Wednesday 11th June 05
- Audio Described matinee by VOCALEYES
Thursday 16th June 05
- Sign Language Interpreted Performance by Jude Mahon

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For more detailed information on access, to book for assisted performances or for a large-print version of this brochure please call 020 7288 4999, email access@almeida.co.uk or visit www.almeida.co.uk.
Almeida Past Productions

The Lady from the Sea
“The Islington Powerhouse opens with this tremendous production... electrifying ... leaves you reeling ... boasts a great star performance from Natasha Richardson.”
Daily Telegraph

I.D.
“A riveting production ... full of wonderful theatrical invention ... a rich and shameful period of history and how memorably it is evoked.”
Daily Mail

The Mercy Seat
“Attenborough’s production has a high voltage charge that never dips for a moment. This play plumbs the depths and deserves to be seen.”
Daily Telegraph

Five Gold Rings
“Bold, elegant, lyrical, finely wraught verse ... gorgeously staged and beautifully performed.”
Time Out

The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?
“Some theatregoers will hate this play. Many more will love it. None, I suspect, will ever forget it.”
Daily Telegraph

2004

Almeida Opera - Who put Bella in the Wych elm?, The Girl of Sand Genesis Opera Project - Sirius on Earth, Thwaite, The Eternity Man
“No one knows who put Bella in the wych elm, but Simon Holt has taken her out, put flesh on her bones and brought her to vivid life in his new music-theatre piece”
The Independent
Brighton Rock
“An intelligent, edgy, adult musical which gives you something to think about ... Hooray for that”

Daily Express

Whistling Psyche
‘Intense, haunting and beautiful...two remarkable performances... marvellously rewarding’ Mail on Sunday

Festen
“Electrifying, shocking and profoundly moving ... such talent, such skill, such humanity. Something to celebrate.”

Sunday Times

The Earthly Paradise
“You must not miss it ... a quite exceptional play”. Guardian

Almeida Opera - IO Passion, Man and Boy: Dada
“Rapturously intense... the performances are wonderfully precise” Guardian

Macbeth
“The most powerful, chilling, evil – feeling Macbeth since McKellen and Dench.”

The Times

2005
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