

NAXOS
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC
DRAMA**

oneword

Co-produced with
Oneword Radio



Henrik Ibsen
**Hedda
Gabler**

Performed by
Juliet Stevenson
with
Michael Maloney
Philip Voss
Emma Fielding
and cast

Directed by
John Tydeman

NA226512D

Act 1

- Tesman's villa, in the west end of Christiania
- 1 *Enter* MISS TESMAN and BERTA
MISS TESMAN Upon my word, I don't believe they
are stirring yet 4:13
- 2 *Enter* TESMAN and AUNT JULIA
TESMAN Aunt Julia, Dear Aunt Julia. Come all this
way – so early! 2:42
- 3 MISS TESMAN And to think that there you are a
married man, George! 3:23
- 4 TESMAN Well fortunately, Judge Brack has secured
the most favourable terms for me... 3:11
- 5 *Enter* HEDDA
MISS TESMAN Good morning, my dear Hedda! 4:26
- 6 TESMAN What are you looking at, Hedda? 3:03
- 7 *Enter* MRS ELVSTED
HEDDA How do you do, my dear Mrs Elvsted? 5:11
- 8 HEDDA There! We have killed two birds with
one stone. 4:14
- 9 HEDDA What sort of man is your husband, Thea? 5:39
- 10 *Enter* TESMAN
TESMAN There now – the epistle is finished. 7:43

Act 2

- [11] *Enter* HEDDA (with a pistol in her hand)
and JUDGE BRACK
HEDDA So here you are again, Judge! 7:29
- [12] *Enter* TESMAN with a pile of books
TESMAN Ouf – what a load for a warm day –
all these books. 1:58
- [13] BRACK What bonnet were you talking about? 5:20
- [14] *Enter* TESMAN
TESMAN Hedda, has no message come from
Eilert Lovborg? 1:29
- [14] *Enter* EILERT LOVBORG
TESMAN Well, my dear Eilert – so we meet again 5:07
- [16] LOVBORG Hedda Gabler! 6:24
- [17] *Enter* BERTA and MRS ELVSTED
BERTA Mrs Elvsted, madam. 5:38
- [18] MRS ELVSTED Hedda – Hedda – what will come of
all this? 2:03

Act 3

- [19] *Enter* MRS ELVSTED and BERTA
MRS ELVSTED Not yet! Oh God – oh God – not yet! 4:20
- [20] *Enter* HEDDA
TESMAN Hedda? 5:26
- [21] *Enter* BERTA
BERTA Judge Brack is at the door, and wishes
to know if he may come in. 4:21
- [22] HEDDA But tell me now, Judge... 3:10
- [23] *Enter* LOVBORG
LOVBORG And I tell you I must and will come in! 0:59
- [24] MRS ELVSTED Ah, Lovborg! At last! 3:08
- [25] HEDDA So you are not going to see her home,
Mr Lovborg? 2:11
- [26] HEDDA What path do you mean to take then? 2:38

Act 4

- [27] *Enter* MISS TESMAN and HEDDA
MISS TESMAN Yes, Hedda, here I am, in mourning
and forlorn; 2:42
- [28] *Enter* TESMAN
HEDDA Ah, you have come at last! 3:35
- [29] TESMAN Burnt! Burnt Eilert's manuscript! 2:47
- [30] *Enter* MRS ELVSTED
MRS ELVSTED Oh, dear Hedda, forgive my
coming again. 1:17
- [31] *Enter* JUDGE BRACK
BRACK Tesman! 4:30
- [32] HEDDA Oh, what a sense of freedom it gives one,
this act of Eilert Lovborg's. 3:26
- [33] TESMAN Hedda, dear, it is almost impossible to see
under the lamp in the back room. 2:24
- [34] BRACK Well, Hedda – then comes the scandal! 1:51
- [35] HEDDA Well? Are you getting on, George? 3:31

Total time: 2:11:50

Cover picture: At the Window (1881), Hans Olaf Heyerdahl.
Courtesy of Bridgeman Art Library.

Henrik Ibsen

Hedda Gabler

Translated by
Edmund Gosse and **William Archer**

FROM THE INTRODUCTION **by WILLIAM ARCHER**

From Munich on November 20, 1890 Ibsen wrote to his French translator, Count Prozor: 'My new play is finished; the manuscript went off to Copenhagen the day before yesterday... It produces a curious feeling of emptiness to be thus suddenly separated from a work which has occupied one's time and thoughts for several months, to the exclusion of all else. But it is a good thing, too, to have done with it. The constant intercourse with the fictitious personages was beginning to make me quite nervous.' To the same correspondent he wrote on December 4: '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 my desire 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.'

Hedda Gabler was published in

Copenhagen on December 16, 1890. This was the first of Ibsen's plays to be translated from proof sheets and published in England and America almost simultaneously with its first appearance in Scandinavia. The earliest theatrical performance took place at the Residenz Theater, Munich, on the last day of January 1891. Not until February 26 was the play given for the first time in Norway, where it has always ranked among Ibsen's most popular works. The production of the play at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, April 20, 1891, may rank as the second great step towards the popularisation of Ibsen in England, the first being the production of *A Doll's House* in 1889, which play it has subsequently come to rival in worldwide popularity. It has been suggested that Ibsen deliberately conceived *Hedda Gabler* as an 'international' play, and that the scene is really the 'west end' of any European city. To me it seems quite clear that Ibsen had Christiania (later called Oslo) in mind, and the Christiania of a somewhat earlier period than the 'nineties. The electric cars, telephones and other conspicuous factors in the life of a modern capital are notably

absent from the play. There is no electric light in Secretary Falk's villa. It is still the habit for ladies to return on foot from evening parties, with gallant swains escorting them. This 'suburbanism', which so distressed the London critics of 1891, was characteristic of the Christiania Ibsen himself had known in the 'sixties rather than of the greatly extended and modernised city of the end of the century. Moreover Lovborg's allusions to the fiord, and the suggested picture of Sheriff Elvsted, his family and his avocations, are all distinctively Norwegian. The truth seems to be very simple – the environment and the subsidiary personages are all thoroughly national, but Hedda herself is an 'international' type, a product of civilisation by no means peculiar to Norway.

We cannot point to any individual model or models who 'sat to' Ibsen for the character of Hedda. But the fact is that in this, as in all other instances, the word 'model' must be taken in a very different sense from that in which it is commonly used in painting. Ibsen undoubtedly used models for this trait and that, but never for a whole figure. If his characters can be called portraits at all, they are composite portraits. Even when it seems pretty clear that the initial impulse towards the creation of a particular character came from some individual, the original figure is entirely transmuted in the process of harmonisation with the dramatic scheme. We need not,

therefore, look for a definite prototype of Hedda; but two of that lady's exploits were probably suggested by the anecdotic history of the day.

Ibsen had no doubt heard how the wife of a well-known Norwegian composer, in a fit of raging jealousy excited by her husband's prolonged absence from home, burnt the manuscript of a symphony which he had just finished.

Again, a still more painful incident probably came to his knowledge about the same time. A beautiful and very intellectual woman was married to a well-known man who had been addicted to drink, but had entirely conquered the vice. One day a mad whim seized her to put his self-mastery and her power over him to the test. As it happened to be his birthday, she rolled into his study a small keg of brandy, and then withdrew. She returned some time afterwards to find that he had broached the keg, and lay insensible on the floor. In these two anecdotes we cannot but recognise the germ, not only of Hedda's temptation of Lovborg, and the burning of his manuscript, but of a large part of her character.

Out of small and scattered pieces of reality Ibsen fashioned his close-knit and profoundly thought-out works of art.

Of all Ibsen's works, *Hedda Gabler* is the most detached, the most objective – a character study pure and simple. It is impossible – or so it seems to me – to extract any sort of general idea from it. One

cannot even call it a satire, unless one is prepared to apply that term to the record of a 'case' in a work of criminology. Reverting to Dumas's dictum that a play should contain 'a painting, a judgment, an ideal', we may say that *Hedda Gabler* fulfils only the first of these requirements. The poet does not even pass judgment on his heroine: he simply paints her full-length portrait with scientific impassivity. But what a portrait! How searching in insight, how brilliant in colouring, how rich in detail! (Grant Allen's remark, above quoted, was, of course, a whimsical exaggeration); the Hedda type is, mercifully, not so common as all that, else the world would quickly come to an end! But particular traits and tendencies of the Hedda type are very common in modern life, and not only among women. Hyperaesthesia lies at the root of her tragedy. With a keenly critical, relentlessly solvent intelligence, she combines a morbid shrinking from all the gross and prosaic detail of the sensual life. She has nothing to take her out of herself – not a single intellectual interest or moral

enthusiasm. She cherishes, in a languid way, a petty social ambition; and even that she finds obstructed and baffled. At the same time she learns that another woman has had the courage to love and venture all, where she, in her cowardice, only hankered and refrained. Her malign egoism rises up uncontrolled, and calls to its aid her quick and subtle intellect. She ruins the other woman's happiness, but in doing so incurs a danger from which her sense of personal dignity revolts. Life has no such charm for her that she cares to purchase it at the cost of squalid humiliation and self-contempt. The good and the bad in her alike impel her to have done with it all; and a pistol-shot ends what is surely one of the most poignant character-tragedies in literature. Ibsen's brain never worked at higher pressure than in the conception and adjustment of those 'crowded hours' in which Hedda, tangled in the web of Will and Circumstance, struggles on until she is too weary to struggle any more.

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

GRIEG PIANO MUSIC VOL. 8

8.553394

Lyric Pieces Op. 12

Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, Piano

GRIEG PIANO MUSIC VOL. 2

8.550882

Norwegian Folk Songs and Dances

Music programming by Nicolas Soames

oneword

Oneword Radio is the first national commercial station exclusively dedicated to spoken word entertainment.

Our programming covers a wide variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, from the UK and overseas. The full schedule offers listeners a compelling mix of books, plays, comedy and discussion. We feature current bestsellers; modern and established classics; children's favourites; features; biography; journalism and letters; cult fiction and set texts from the National Core Curriculum.

But Oneword's not just about catching up on your reading. There is also comedy, both read aloud and in performance, regular slots dedicated to drama, and special features, as well as a daily half-hour author interview show in which we talk to the biggest names in literature from around the world about their life and work.

And if that wasn't enough, we broadcast dozens of short programmes every day – poems, anecdotes, comic songs, famous soliloquies, children's rhymes and counting games, odd facts – a cornucopia of the unexpected. We broadcast 7 days a week on Sky Digital TV, the Digital One Network and stream live on the Internet at www.oneword.co.uk.

Oneword Radio Limited
Landseer House
19 Charing Cross Road
London WC2H 0ES
Tel: 020 7976 3030
info@oneword.co.uk



Juliet Stevenson has worked extensively for the RSC and the Royal National Theatre. She received an Olivier Award for her role in *Death and the Maiden* at the Royal Court, and a number of other awards for her work in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. Other film credits include *The Trial*, *Drowning by Numbers* and *Emma*. She has recorded *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *To The Lighthouse*, *Persuasion*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Michael Maloney's many Shakespearean roles on the London stage include Edgar in *King Lear*, the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Prince Hal in *Henry IV Parts 1 & 2*; on film he has appeared in Branagh's productions of *Hamlet* and *Henry V*, as well as in Parker's *Othello*. Other notable films include Minghella's *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. He frequently performs on radio and TV. He has been involved in other Naxos AudioBooks productions including *King Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Poets of the Great War*.



Philip Voss is an associate of the RSC. The roles he has played for that company include Prospero, Malvolio and Shylock. On film he has appeared in *Alive and Kicking*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Octopussy* and *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*. He plays the Lord of the Nazgul in the BBC recording of *The Lord of the Rings*.



Emma Fielding trained at RSAMD. She has worked for the Royal National Theatre and the RSC, most notably in John Ford's *The Broken Heart* for which she won the Dame Peggy Ashcroft Award for Best Actress and the Ian Charleson Award. She has also appeared in numerous radio plays for the BBC and performed the parts of Desdemona in *Othello*, Ophelia in *Hamlet* and the title role in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, as well as reading *Jane Eyre* and *Fanny Hill* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Robert Glenister's varied theatre credits include *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest* and *Little Eyolf* for the Royal Shakespeare Company; *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* and *Hamlet*. His television credits include *Heartbeat*, *Midsomer Murders*, *A Touch of Frost*, *Bramwell*, *Prime Suspect*, *Only Fools & Horses* and *Soldier Soldier*.



Brenda Kaye trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Her extensive repertory experience includes Sheffield Playhouse, Liverpool Playhouse and Bristol Old Vic. For the Royal National Theatre she has performed in *Hamlet* and *Plunder*. West End credits include *Night Must Fall* for Theatre Royal, Haymarket. She is a former member of BBC Radio Drama Company, with over 200 broadcasts including *The Woman's Hour Serial*, *Poetry Please* and *With Great Pleasure*.



Melinda Walker has performed in countless radio plays and theatre nationally. As well as narrating TV documentaries, she was the voice of the daily quiz show *100% Gold*. She devises and performs poetry and song events, and read in a commemorative edition of Radio 4's *Something Understood* for the Princess of Wales. Melinda writes for the theatre with her husband.



John Tydeman played a key role in BBC radio drama for nearly four decades, as producer, Assistant Head and then Head of Radio Drama. During that time he directed most of the major plays in the classical repertory, from Greek drama to Shakespeare, Chekhov and Shaw. He was also active in contemporary theatre, directing works by Osborne, Stoppard, Albee, Pinter and many others. Directing for television and the stage has been a regular feature throughout his busy career. He directed the recording of *King Lear* with Paul Scofield for Naxos AudioBooks. Other Naxos AudioBooks recordings are *Just So Stories* and *Wind in the Willows*.

Henrik Ibsen Hedda Gabler

Hedda Gabler, a deceased General's daughter, marries dull George Tesman and foresees a life of middle-class tedium stretching ahead when they return from honeymoon. Increasingly, she is drawn into the clutches of her admirer, Judge Brack, who seeks to establish a ménage à trois. Then a former flame arrives in the brilliant but dissolute Eilert Lovborg to rival her husband for an academic post. This new audio production, with Juliet Stevenson giving an unforgettable performance as the passionate Hedda, brings this classic drama to life.

Cast List

Hedda Gabler	Juliet Stevenson
George Tesman	Michael Maloney
Judge Brack	Philip Voss
Mrs Elvsted	Emma Fielding
Lovborg	Robert Glenister
Aunt Juliana	Brenda Kaye
Berta	Melinda Walker

Director	John Tydeman
Producer	Nicolas Soames
Studio Manager	Peter Novis
Recording Engineer	Mike Etherden

CD ISBN:
978-962-634-015-8

View our catalogue online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com



oneworld
Co-produced with
Oneworld Radio

Total time
2:11:50

Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London
Recorded and Edited by Mike Etherden
Studio Manager: Peter Novis
Translated by Edmund Gosse and William Archer

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS
PROHIBITED.
© 2002 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd. © 2002 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.