



**QUINTESSENCE THEATRE GROUP  
PRESENTS**

**HENRIK IBSEN'S**

**ROSMERSHOLM**

PRESENTED AS PART OF  
*SHOUT INTO THE VOID: A VIRTUAL PLAY READING FESTIVAL*

ADAPTED BY  
**MIKE POULTON**

FIRST PERFORMANCE | JANUARY 17, 1887 | BERGEN, NORWAY  
THIS ADAPTATION | MAY 15, 2018 | ALMEIDA THEATRE, LONDON, UK

**DIRECTED BY  
HASSAN AL RAWAS**



ALL FUNDS RAISED FROM THIS FESTIVAL TO BENEFIT QUINTESSENCE THEATRE GROUP A 501(c)3 NON-PROFIT THEATRE COMPANY

# CAST & CREATIVE

**PEARCE BUNTING** \* AS ULRIK BRENDEL

**J. HERNANDEZ** \* AS PEDER MORTENSGAARD

**MARCIA SAUNDERS** \* AS MRS. HELSETH

**PAUL OAKLEY STOVAL** \* AS DOCTOR KROLL

**EMILY TRASK** \* AS REBECCA WEST

**MICHAEL ZLABINGER** \* AS JOHANNES ROSMER

STAGE DIRECTIONS BY **MICHAEL GAMACHE**

MODERATED BY **MAYA LERMAN, MAGGIE DAVIS & LEE CORTOPASSI**

DIGITAL PROGRAM & DESIGN BY **LEE CORTOPASSI**

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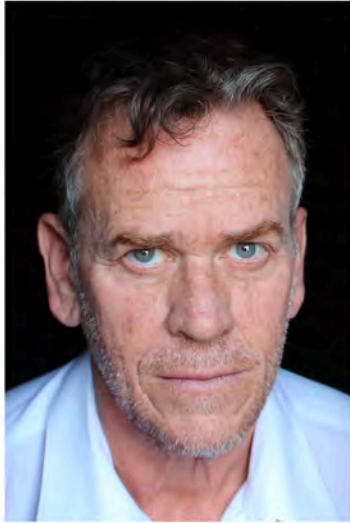
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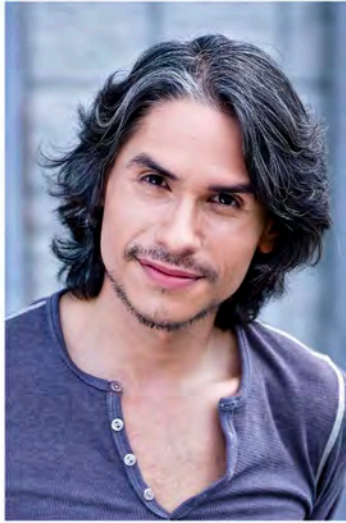
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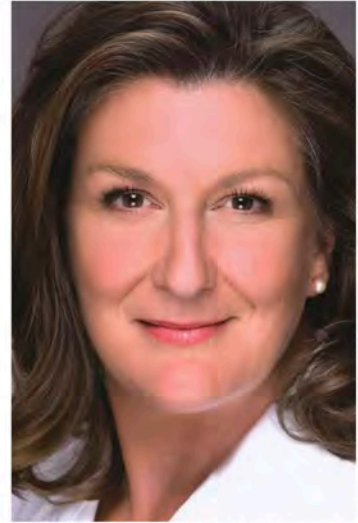
# CAST & CREATIVE



PEARCE BUNTING\*



J. HERNANDEZ\*



MARCIA SAUNDERS\*



PAUL OAKLEY STOVALL\*



EMILY TRASK\*



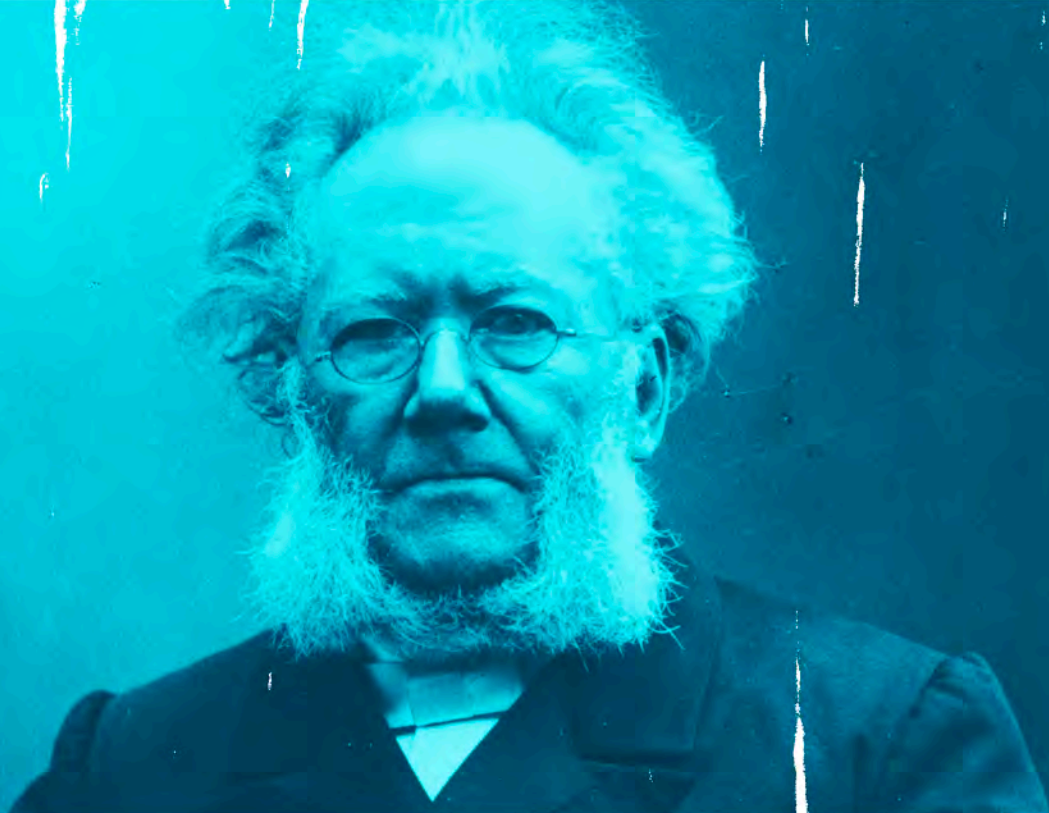
MICHAEL ZLABINGER\*



HASSAN AL RAWAS, **DIRECTOR**



# HENRIK IBSEN



Born in Norway in 1828, Ibsen began his writing career with romantic history plays influenced by Shakespeare and Schiller. In 1851 he was appointed writer-in-residence at the newly established Norwegian Theater in Bergen with a contract to write a play a year for five years, following which he was made Artistic Director of the Norwegian Theatre in what is now Oslo.

In the 1860s he moved abroad to concentrate wholly on writing. He began with two mighty verse dramas, *Brand* and *Peter Gynt*, and in the 1870s and 1880s wrote the sequence of realistic "problem" plays for which he is best known, among them *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Rosmersholm*. His last four plays, *The Master Builder*, *Little Eyolf*, *John Gabriel Borkman* and *When We Dead Awaken*, dating from his return to Norway in the 1890s, are increasingly overlaid with symbolism. Illness forced him to retire in 1900, and he died in 1906 after a series of crippling strokes.

"There is still much to be done in this country before we can be said to have achieved full freedom. But our present democracy scarcely has the power to accomplish that task. An element of nobility must enter into our political life, our government, our members of parliament, and our press. I am of course not thinking of nobility of wealth, or learning, or even of ability or talent. I am thinking of nobility of character, of mind and will. That alone can make us free.

And this nobility, which I hope may be granted to our people, will come to us from two sources, the only two sections of society which have not as yet been corrupted by party pressure.

It will come to us from our women and our working men. The reshaping of social conditions which is now being undertaken in Europe is principally concerned with the future status of the workers and of women.

That is what I am hoping and waiting for, and what I shall work for, all I can."

- **HENRIK IBSEN** (1885) one year before writing *Rosmersholm*

# MIKE POULTON



**MIKE POULTON** (adaptor) is an award-winning dramatist who began writing for the theatre in 1995. His first two productions were *UNCLE VANYA* with Derek Jacobi, for the Chichester Festival Theatre (1996) London's West End and Broadway; followed by *FORTUNE'S FOOL* (1996) with Alan Bates, also at Chichester and on Broadway. Other adaptations include: *THREE SISTERS* (The Birmingham Rep); *GHOSTS* (Theatre Royal Plymouth); *THE SEAGULL*, *THREE SISTERS*, *THE DANCE OF DEATH* and an adaptation of Euripides' *ION* (Mercury Theatre); *THE YORK MILLENNIUM MYSTERIES*; *THE FATHER* (Chichester); *THE CHERRY ORCHARD* (Clwyd Theatr Cymru); *THE LADY FROM THE SEA* (Birmingham Rep); *WALLENSTEIN* (Chichester); *MARY STUART* (Clwyd Theatr Cymru); *THE BACCHAE* (Royal Exchange); *MORTE D'ARTHUR* (RSC); *UNCLE VANYA* (The Print Room); *LUISE MILLER* (Donmar); *KENNY MORGAN* (Arcola Theatre); *WOLF HALL* and *BRING UP THE BODIES* (RSC, West End, Broadway); *FORTUNE'S FOOL* (Old Vic); *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* (Royal & Derngate); *IMPERIUM*, an adaptation of Robert Harris' best-selling Cicero novels (RSC, West End).

# CAST BIOS

## ROSMERSHOLM

### **PEARCE BUNTING\*** - ULRIK BRENDEL

Pearce is a long time Philly actor who now lives in Minneapolis. He's worked with Theatre Exile, The Wilma, PTC, The Arden, People's Light, Big House, Philly Fringe, Interact, The Walnut Street, and and and... In Minneapolis, he's a member of Theatre Novi Most and has performed at The Open Eye Figure Theatre, The History Theatre, Ten Thousand Things, Theatre Latte Da, Park Square and CTC. Internationally, Pearce has performed with the Jo Strømgren Kompani, at Vienna's English Theatre, in the Czech Republic and at the Edinburgh Fringe. He's appeared in *Mamma Mia* (Broadway/National tour), on television in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*, and he's delighted to be making his Quintessence Theatre Group debut!

### **J HERNANDEZ\*** - PEDER MORTENSGAARD

Quintessence: *Lucky in Waiting For Godot* (Barrymore nominated performance), *Edmund in King Lear*. Other companies he's worked for around town include Philadelphia Theatre Company, Lantern Theater Company, Delaware Shakespeare, Arden Theatre Company, Commonwealth Classic Theatre, Hedgerow Theater, Philadelphia Shakespeare, Revolution Shakespeare, and InterAct Theatre Co. Regional work includes Texas Shakespeare, North Carolina Shakespeare, Ash Lawn Opera, and the Shakespeare Theatre Co in DC. BLM. Siempre resistir.

### **MARCIA SAUNDERS\*** - MRS. HELSETH

Marcia is delighted to be returning to QTG after appearing as Mrs. Sowerberry and Mrs. Bedwin in their production of *OLIVER!*. Marcia was most recently seen this past January as Hazel in People's Light and Theater's production of *THE CHILDREN*. She is beyond happy to be working again since the theaters closed down in March. Big thanks to you all that are making this happen at Quintessence!!

## **PAUL OAKLEY STOVALL** \* - DOCTOR KROLL

Paul is a multi-hyphenate artist and activist based in Chicago. He is currently playing George Washington in the first national tour of *HAMILTON: An American Musical* by Lin Manuel-Miranda. While performing on tour, his KernoForto Productions (KFP) has completed three projects. The first, a short film entitled *BUFFALO*, has been selected to L'Age D'Or Arthouse Film Festival, Kaleidoscope LGBTQ Film Festival, Cine-Maniacs in Germany, and is a nominee for the Pigeon D'Or in Kolkata. It has also recently been selected to Prague, Madrid, Montreal and aGLIFF, an LGBT festival in Austin, TX. The second, a web series pilot called *COLUMBUS*, just won best web series at the Big Apple Film Festival in NYC, and scored five awards at the LA Independent Shorts, including Best Sci-Fi, Best Thriller and Best Original Story. It has also been selected to Montreal. Ep102 is in post production. Other projects in the hopper include *FATHERS AND SONS*, a messy dramedy about interracial intersectional LGBTQ parenting in a post Obama era; *ADVANCE*, a political thriller; *THREE STORIES HIGH*, where *Twilight Zone* and *Black Mirror* copulate with *Dear White People*; *THE TRANSMANAUT CHRONICLES*, four black teenage best friends on an epic road trip set in 1970s California; and two comedies, *GOOD TIMES TALENT* and *INCOGNEGRO*, about a black talent agency, and a black detective agency, respectively. Mr. Stovall was also a staff writer for season 4 on the STARZ network hit comedy *Survivor's Remorse* (Mike O'Malley - showrunner, Ali Leroi - EP) starring NAACP award recipient Tichina Arnold. As a playwright he is a Steinberg, Jeff, and GLAAD award nominee for his play *Immediate Family*, which has been directed by Phylicia Rashad at Goodman and Mark Taper Forum. His musical *CLEAR* was chosen for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights/ Music Theatre Conference and subsequently his play *THE HUNTED* (co-written with Evan Linder) was a 2017 Finalist. As an actor, he has appeared off-Broadway at Second Stage in Tony winner Mary Zimmerman's *Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* and at Lincoln Center in the world premiere of *Dessa Rose* directed by Graciela Daniele. Other NYC work includes *.22 Caliber Mouth* at Ohio Theatre directed by Tony winner Diane Paulus, and assistant director to Phylicia Rashad for the Signature Theatre production of Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen Adly Guirgis' *Our Lady of 121st Street*. Regionally, Mr. Stovall has appeared in Chicago at Steppenwolf in the world premiere of *The Qualms* by Tony winner Bruce Norris and directed by Tony winner Pam McKinnon.



**PAUL OAKLEY STOVALL\* (cont.) - DOCTOR KROLL**

More recently he has appeared as Belize in Tony winner David Cromer's production of *Angels in America* at KC Rep. National tours include *RENT* and *Once On This Island*, and he starred in the world premiere of Seito Ren-San's political drama *Otonari No Dasso Hei* at Kunikuniya Hall in Tokyo. Film credits include Robert Altman's *THE COMPANY*, John Cameron Mitchell's *SHORTBUS*, and a starring role in Danish film director Bjarke de Koning's LGBT film *RENOVERING (Renovation)* which has been seen internationally in Durban, China, India, Uganda, Serbia, Copenhagen and beyond. TV: *Empire* (Fox), *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Shameless* and *The Chi* (Showtime). Outside of entertainment, Paul served as a press advance associate for President Obama and subsequently served as a media logistics coordinator and advance staff lead for First Lady Michelle Obama, representing the Obama administration across the nation and overseas in Sweden, Turkey, Kosovo, South Korea, Canada, Egypt, South Africa, Ghana, Ukraine, Denmark, Chile and the UK among others.

**EMILY TRASK\* - REBECCA WEST**

Emily Trask is an award-winning actor, director, dramaturg, and teacher. She has had the good fortune to work in film, television, voice-over, commercial, and new media, and with theaters all across - from New York's Lincoln Center, to Baltimore Center Stage, the Milwaukee Rep, the Folger Theatre, and as a company member with The Alley Theater and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Emily previously had the pleasure of collaborating with Quintessence as a teaching artist, dramaturg, and in the special event performance of *An Iliad* (a highlight of her career). She is currently a Resident Artist and the Literary Associate at the Pacific Conservatory Theatre on California's Central Coast where she lives with her husband, Michael Brusasco. Thank you to Alex, Lee, Maggie, and Hassan for the opportunity, and to Quintessence for finding new ways of making theatre in this time. Please Vote!



**MICHAEL ZLABINGER\*** – JOHANNES ROSMER

Michael was last seen at Quintessence in the title role of *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. Off-Broadway: *Desperate Writers* (Union Square Theatre), *The Subtle Body* (59E59), *Like Money in The Bank* (Theatre Row).

International: European premiere of *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (Vienna's English Theatre, dir. Pam MacKinnon). Regional: Iago in *Othello*, Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* (NC Shakes); Torvald in *A Doll's House* (NC Stage); *Sleuth* (Fulton); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Dante Hall); world premiere of Lee Blessing's *A View of the Mountains* (NJ Rep); also performed at Long Wharf, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Baltimore Centerstage, Pioneer, Geva, among others. Television includes: "Evil," "Elementary," "Madam Secretary," "Unforgettable," "Person of Interest," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." [www.michaelzlabiner.com](http://www.michaelzlabiner.com)

**HASSAN AL RAWAS** – DIRECTOR

Hassan Al Rawas hails from Beirut, Lebanon but was raised in Kuwait City, Kuwait. In 2019, Hassan completed the MFA in Directing program along with a PhD Certificate in Middle East/North African Studies at Northwestern University. Favorite directing credits include "The Orange Garden" by Joanna Garner, Stephen Karam's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard", "Sylvia" by A.R. Gurney, and "Les Miserables", to name a few. Hassan was the assistant director on the world premieres of "Witch" by Jen Silverman at Writer's Theatre (dir. Marti Lyons) and "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" at the Lookingglass Theatre (dir. David Catlin). Hassan has also been named as the associate director on the new Broadway-bound musical "The Devil Wears Prada", directed by Tony Award winner Anna D. Shapiro.

Hassan holds a Master of Arts in Theatre Performance from Northwestern University (2003) and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Performance Studies from Xavier University (2000).

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