

GHOSTS
By Henrik Ibsen, a new version written by Mark O'Rowe
**A Landmark Productions
and Abbey Theatre Co-production**

**Audio Description Programme Notes
for the performance in the Abbey Theatre**

Welcome to the audio description introduction of a new version of Henrik Ibsen's **Ghosts**, written and directed by Mark O'Rowe.

The Set Designer for this production is Francis O'Connor, the Costume Designer is Joan O'Clery, the Lighting Designer is Sinéad McKenna and the Sound Designer is Aoife Kavanagh.

ABOUT THE PLAY

'Didn't you say there isn't anything you wouldn't do for me?'

After several years abroad, Helena Alving's son has returned home. He carries with him a terrifying secret.

Ibsen's **Ghosts**, one of the greatest plays ever written, is a devastating moral thriller in which ideas of love, duty and family are mercilessly put to the test.

This spectacular new version, written and directed by one of Ireland's leading playwrights, Mark O'Rowe, grabs you by the throat from the outset and refuses to let go – all the way to its electrifying climax.

ABOUT THE SET

The play is set in an uncluttered Victorian salon which we might call a living room nowadays. At the back of the salon is a glass conservatory which spans the width of the stage and is about 2 metres in depth. It has thin

window mullions between the tall glass panes. Through the glass slightly to our right are the masts of tall ships, from a certain angle they could be mistaken for Christian crosses. Also through the glass we can hazard a guess at the time of day as the sunlight travels behind a mostly cloudy sky. There are double doors in the centre of the conservatory that lead outside, tufts of grass are evident when they are open. There is an unseen orphanage outside the conservatory to our left and a harbour to our right. In the conservatory tucked into the right hand corner are an array of plant pots with lush green foliage planted in them. To our left of the conservatory a handwoven rattan white circular terrace table with two matching armchairs tucked in either side. Upon the table is a white embroidery hoop resting on a sewing box. A couple of hard back books perch on the shelf underneath the table.

The set is open plan, the salon where it meets the conservatory is defined by ornate black marble pillars either side of the room and charcoal grey wood flooring that reaches across the entire stage.

The spacious salon has walls to our far right and left decorated with wallpaper of printed leaves and flowers in royal blue. Black double doors with brass nobs are set in the walls either side of the room. To our right through the doors is an unseen dining area and servants quarters. To our left the unseen hallway that leads to the rest of the house.

At the back of the salon in the corner to our left is a lit black cast iron wood stove, the flames are evident through the window at the front of it. Nestled beside the stove is a basket of chopped wood.

To front of the salon to our left placed by the wall is a table with an ornate bronze ink stand with stamp and ink pen, a black writing block painted with gold edging and gold, red and blue roses and poppies painted in the centre. A small green wide leafed plant in a copper pot sits to the back of the table. Just behind this desk on the wall hangs a cobalt blue bell pull to ring for the servants. It is decorated with oak leaves and acorns that have been embroidered in golden thread.

As we move further into the room to our left of centre is a rosewood tea table dressed with a plum coloured velvet table cloth that hides the legs. A white linen and lace table cloth laid over it finishes the table décor, a couple

of well thumbed books sit upon it. Two dining chairs are tucked into the table.

To our right of centre a more comfortable sitting area - an armchair with a foot rest tucked under it, a rosewood Victorian sofa. The armchair, foot rest and sofa are upholstered in a vintage patterned ivory beige. Between the armchair and the sofa, a small rosewood octagonal writing table. Some papers and a couple of books rest upon it.

Moving over to the right wall now to the front of it, a single fern plant in a copper pot sits upon a small side table. At the back of the wall to our right an oval mirror hangs on the wall, with two candlesticks set into it. Under the mirror tucked into the furthest corner of the wall where it meets the pillar, there is a taller rosewood writing table with a bench chair tucked under it upholstered with a brocade fabric. On the table a white lace doiley centrepiece, a fern plant and a couple of books.

ABOUT THE CAST AND COSTUMES

Regina Engstrand played by **Simone Collins** is the young maid of the house. Her dark hair held away from her youthful face in a tight bun. She wears a maids uniform of light grey that rests at her ankles revealing black button up boots. Her grey dress has a white collar and cuffs. Over the dress she wears a crisp white apron. She walks stiffly upright with dignity and purpose.

Jacob Engstrand her father played by **Lorcan Cranitch** is a middle aged man. He wears a black sailors cap over his dishevelled hair and sports a moustache and stubble on his chin. He wears a grubby white shirt with a tie, a waistcoat with a pocket watch and black jacket with dark worn trousers over which he wears a dark workmans heavy duty wool coat and boots, he walks with a limp and has a leg brace on his left boot.

Pastor Manders played by **Declan Conlon** arrives in a black overcoat, wearing a black wide brimmed priest's hat, clutching a black leather document case. He wears a pastor uniform of blacks – trousers, double breasted waistcoat, with pocket watch, a black pastors bib and white collar under which he wears a mostly unseen white shirt. On his feet he wears

black chelsea boots. He wears a gold signet ring. Manders is also a middle aged man, his hair and trimmed beard almost completely grey.

Helena Alving played by **Cathy Belton** the woman of the house is of a similar generation to these men, her honey blonde hair pinned up tightly away from her face highlights her pale chiselled facial features. Her long skirt that hides her black lace up boots and jacket are made of a deep red and black brocade material. Her waistline pinched tiny by her unseen corset. The back of her skirt is padded as was the fashion of the time. The jacket of her dress outfit has a black waistcoat set into it and her shoulders are well defined by the angular design where it meets the tightness of her sleeves.

Oswald Alving Helena's son played by **Calam Lynch** is an artistic young man and dresses accordingly in a soft grey cardigan over a dark blue waistcoat and white shirt. He wears a black cravat, camel coloured trousers and black chelsea boots. Oswalds dark hair is styled in a foppish short back and sides.

That concludes the audio description introduction for **Ghosts**. It was prepared by Mo Harte. Audio description at the Abbey Theatre is provided by Arts & Disability Ireland with support from The Arts Council.

For updates about audio described and captioned performances, text **ACCESSARTS** to **51444** or head to **www.adiarts.ie** for more information.

Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.

