

# Smith-English produces controversial 19th century play

**JEREMY STALLWOOD**  
Feature Editor

After weeks of hard work, David Smith-English, theater director and instructor, is proud to present Norwegian poet Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, a very controversial production in its day.

The play takes place in 1879 Norway on Christmas Eve, Christmas and the following day. It is the story of a strong woman who has her own ideas, an element very touchy in 19th century theater. Though time has lessened its dramatic shock, the unique view on marital relationships stands out.

Nora, the main character, is an elegant woman with a mind of her own, her husband the typical male figure who likes to remind his wife that he is a "man" and that a

"man" has a specific role in society.

Smith-English and the theater department would like to thank the following individuals for their effort in creating this production: theater tech instructor Chris Whitten for stage design, construction and lighting, Alva Bradford for her costume design and construction and John Renner for selecting the musical score.

Renner has selected music for past productions and, according to Smith-English, does an excellent job.

"I listen to everything I own," said Renner, until he finds something that fits the theme of the play. For the production, he has chosen German Christmas melodies, Tori Amos' version of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and two B-sides entitled



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Character Nora Helmer mothers her children.

"The Pool" and "Song for Eric."

When *A Doll's House* was first published on December 4, 1879 it was "noted as a major event in the development of dramatic literature," according to Yvonne Schafer in her book *Approaches to Teaching Ibsen's A Doll's House*. In Ibsen's lifetime, he was perceived by many as a subversive because his plays threatened the way society was comfortable thinking. In a masculine society, a woman such as Nora is not allowed to be herself. A woman in 1879 is judged by man's law. Ibsen, going against this line of thought, has been called a *folkefiende*, an enemy of the people.

Performances for *A Doll's House* are November 19, 20, 21, December 4 and 5 at 8 p.m. and December 6 at 2:30 p.m. in the McLoughlin Hall Theater.



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(Above) The villainous Nils Krogstad plays an important role in the play. (Below) Nora and Torvald exchange looks.



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(Above) Nora and husband Torvald are very comfortable and fun-loving with each other.



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