

The Wild Duck

By Henrik Ibsen

Play no. 135

Opening show: 05/12/1954

Hebrew : Yeshurun Keshet

Produced and Designed by: Sandro Malmquist

The Cast

Verlae, merchant and industrialist: Shmuel Rodensky

Gregor Verlae, his sonhorus: Israel Becker

Old Ekdal: Yehoshua Bertonov

Hyamlar Ekdal, photographer: Shimon Finkel

Gyna Ekdal, his wife: Ina Govinska

Hedwig, their daughter: Ada Tal

Mrs. Sorbi, old Verlae's housekeeper: Bat Ami

Relling, a doctor : Ari Kutai

Mollvig, who has been a theologist: Baruch David

Groberg, book-keeper: Yosef Banai

Petersen, butler in the Verlae house: Shlomo Bruk

Jensen, servant hired for the party: Shmuel Atzmon

Kammerherr Flor: Shlomo Bertonov

Kammerherr Bale: Albert Chizkiyau

Kammerherr Kaspersen: Yehuda Rubinstein

Kammerherr : Itzhak Bareket

Kammerherr : Gidon Zinger

Kammerherr : Baruch David

ACT 1

Gregor Verlae returns to the home of his wealthy industrialist father, seventeen years after leaving on the death of his mother. A large party is thrown, presumably in his honour, but actually in honour of Mrs. Sorbi, Mistress of old Verlae who intends to make her a member of the family. At this party we learn that old Verlae had helped Hjalmer Ekdal (son of his former partner who had been imprisoned because of Verlae and whose personality has been entirely destroyed) to study photography and also to marry Gyna Hansen who had once been old Verlae's housekeeper. Gregor knows that between Verlae and Gyna there had at one time been a relationship which had contributed largely to his mother's illness and death. This marriage of Gyna and Hjalmer seems very strange to Gregor. He leaves his father's home determined to tell Hjalmer the truth about his wife.

ACT 2

Gregor rents a room in the house where Hjalmer lives with Gyna, his wife and their fourteen year-old daughter, Hedwig – a weak child with sick eyes. There are two other boarders, Dr. Relling and strange Mr. Hollvig. Old Ekdal who had never recovered from the disillusion he suffered while in prison, lives in a world of dreams and spends all his time with his rabbis and birds and especially with the wild duck – his most precious possession. The sickly

Hedwig is also drawn into the closed world of the old man and in their poverty-stricken lives the wild duck becomes the symbol of freedom.

ACT 3

Here the clash between opposing outlooks becomes evident. Dr. Relling believes that illusion even though based on a lie could mean happiness to the Ekdal family. Gregor Verlae believes that only the truth could heal the family life of the Ekdals and allow his friend Hjalmer to live honourably.

Old Verlae, whose eyesight is falling, comes, as he realizes that his son intends to tell Hjalmer the truth. He informs his son that he is about to marry Mrs. Sorbi and asks him to return home to take over part of the firm. He warns him not to reveal the truth to Ekdal as this could be fatal for the man. Gregor who has faith in his friend's strength of character, does not listen to his father and decides to tell all, come what may. Gregor and Hjalmer go out together for a walk.

ACT 4

Hjalmer returns after talking to Gregor, and compels Gyna to tell him the truth about her relationship to old Verlae. He reacts to the shocking disclosure in the way that old Verlae had predicted.

Mrs. Sorbi appears. She speaks of old Verlae's eye sickness. She then hands over a gift certificate to Hedwig. At this moment Hjalmer suddenly realizes the Hedwig is not his child – that she is the daughter of old Verlae. He leaves in despair.

ACT 5

Gregor tries to convince Hedwig that she must make an effort to win back the love of Hjalmer, her "father". He suggests that she sacrifice for him her most precious possession – the wild duck. Hedwig does not have the strength to shoot the creature. She shoots herself.