



HEDDA GABLER: **AUDITION** **INFORMATION**

INC. SYNOPSIS & CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

AUDITIONS

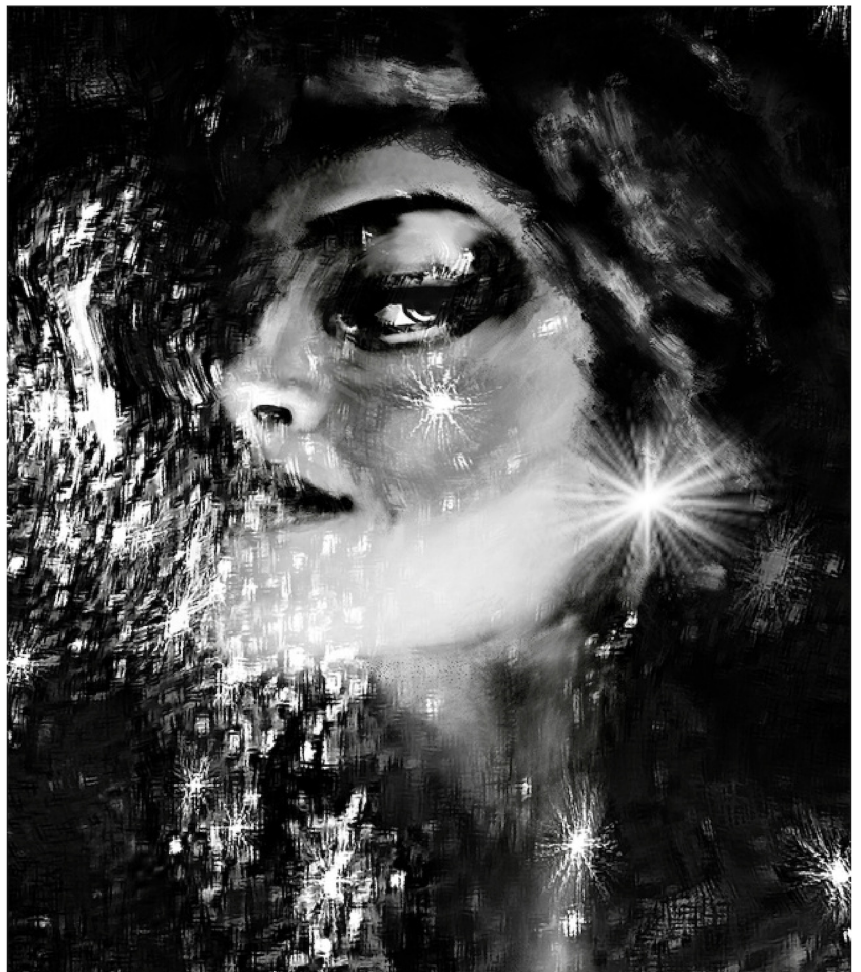
20 JULY 10.30-12.30

**WAKEHAMS GREEN
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

OR

22 JULY 19.30-21.30

**THREE BRIDGES
COMMUNITY CENTRE**



KEY INFORMATION

Auditions: Sat 20 July 10.30am-12.30pm at Wakehams Green Community Centre or Mon 22 Jul 7.30pm-9.30pm at Three Bridges Community Centre. If you are unable to make either of the above sessions, please reach out. You may wish to bring a water bottle with you.

Rehearsals: Two evenings per week (likely Mondays, Wednesdays or Thursdays) from w/c 2 September in Crawley. There will be occasional Sundays afternoon rehearsals closer to the show dates.

Production Week: 18 -23 November at The Hawth Studio, Crawley. Technical and Dress Rehearsals are scheduled from 18 - 20 November.

Performances: Thursday 21 - Saturday 23 November at The Hawth Studio.

PLEASE NOTE!

- No experience necessary, but **participants must be aged 18+**
- Photographs may be taken at auditions to help with casting, or for use in future marketing materials. If you would prefer not to be photographed, please let us know.
- If you have any access requirements, we'd invite you to share these with us in your registration form to help support your visit.

Pitchy Breath is a **free-to-play** theatre company. Unlike other local societies and amateur dramatic organisations, we do not charge annual membership fees, audition fees or performance fees. This is part of our commitment to keep the arts accessible, and is a core part of our collaborative style of working. In return, we may ask you to provide simple pieces of costume from home, bring along your own make-up, or help source props for the production. At the end of the show we can each see the impact we've made on the production as a whole, and it feels great! We're all in it together.

**If you have any questions or queries, please reach out to us!
We look forward to seeing you at the audition!**

**www.pitchybreath.co.uk
pitchybreath@gmail.com**

THE TEASER

Hedda is used to getting her way. As the daughter of the esteemed General Gabler, she grew up in the lap of luxury, her every whim indulged. But now the honeymoon is over, literally, and Hedda is trapped. Having impulsively married George Tesman, a kind but dull academic, Hedda finds herself imprisoned in a life of genteel poverty. She is bored and, as the saying goes, 'an idle mind is the devil's workshop'. Battling her wild urges, Hedda craves the sinister thrill of manipulating the lives of those around her.

Can she stop herself before she goes too far? Does she want to stop? Or is the allure of controlling someone's destiny too seductive? Time is running out.

TRIGGER WARNING The play deals with themes that could be triggering for some people, including bullying, alcoholism and suicide.

THE DIRECTOR

The production will be led by Carolyn Chinn, who some of you might recognise as Prospero from last year's production of 'The Tempest'. Carolyn has been involved with theatre for over 30 years as an actor, writer and director. Recent directorial efforts include 'Proof' by David Auburn, 'The Hollow' by Agatha Christie, 'The Odd Couple' by Neil Simon, and 'Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead' by Tom Stoppard. She is absolutely thrilled to finally be getting her hands on Hedda Gabler, one of her favourite plays.

THE PRODUCTION

The play will be set in the 1950s, inspired by the aesthetic of pulp noir and Alfred Hitchcock films of that era. The set will be minimalistic, lighting dramatic, and costumes stylish. The performance will be haunted by strains of melancholy jazz cello. The overall feeling will be dark, edgy and dangerous.

THE SCRIPT

We will be using the 'ready to perform' version of Hedda Gabler, released by Unfettered Classics with a running time of 90 minutes. This version is based on the 1909 translation by Edmund Gosse and William Archer, which is now out of copyright. There are many 'free' pdf versions of Hedda Gabler available online. Please note that translations vary with some running about 2 ½ hours! Cast members will be given a free copy of the script upon casting.

THE PLOT

It is an early autumn morning, and Miss Julia Tesman pops in to welcome her nephew George and his new bride, Hedda, back from their 6-month honeymoon. While aboard, George overstretched his finances to purchase a grand mansion as a surprise for Hedda, who is accustomed to such luxury. Aunt Julia has a gossip with the family servant, Berta, who is worried that the new mistress doesn't like her. When the couple appear, there is a frostiness between the women which dissolves when George hints that Hedda is pregnant. Hedda privately regrets her decision to marry the nice, but dull George, and feels trapped.

After Aunt Julia's departure, the couple are visited by a former classmate of Hedda's, Mrs Thea Elvsted, who has run away from her aged husband to be with Eilert Lovborg, an academic rival of George (and the former lover of Hedda). She begs the Tesmans to keep an eye on Eilert, who is a recovering alcoholic. Eilert has wasted his talent until now, but under the watchful eye of Thea, shows signs of rehabilitation and has just published a bestseller. Later that morning, Judge Brack, a family friend, warns George that the critical success of Eilert's book makes him a competitor for the university professorship George had been anticipating.

That evening, Eilert Lovborg calls upon the Tesmans. He reassures George he has no interest in the professorship. Rather, he is about to publish a new book - his masterpiece - a sequel to his bestseller. Jealous of Thea's influence over Eilert, Hedda plots to come between them. In spite of his alcoholism, she encourages Eilert to attend a party with George and Judge Brack. When George returns home later that night, he reveals to Hedda that he found Eilert's new manuscript (the only copy), which the latter lost while drunk. George is then called away to his aunt's house, leaving the manuscript in Hedda's possession.

Eilert visits Hedda, distraught that he has lost the manuscript which he and Thea worked so hard on. He lies to Thea, saying he destroyed the manuscript on purpose, leaving her devastated. After Thea departs, Hedda suggests to Eilert that he commit suicide, giving him a pistol that had belonged to her father. She then burns the manuscript and tells George she destroyed it to secure his future.

News comes that Eilert has killed himself. George and Thea are determined to reconstruct the book from Eilert's notes, which Thea has kept. Hedda is shocked to discover from Judge Brack that Eilert's death (in a brothel), was messy and humiliating - not the "beautiful and free" end that Hedda had imagined for him. Worse, Brack knows the pistol belongs to Hedda and uses this as a way to have power over her. Rather than lose her freedom, Hedda kills herself.

AUDITION INFORMATION

- Auditions will take place Saturday 20 July and Monday 22 July and will be conducted in a group audition style.
- We are looking to cast 7 speaking roles and 2 non-speaking roles.
- Video auditions will be accepted for those who cannot attend either audition date.
- Audition pieces will be emailed to attendees in advance. You are not expected to memorise the script for the audition, but it is helpful if you familiarise yourself with all of the pieces, in case the director asks you to read for additional parts.
- Suggested 'playing ages' are listed, but there may be some flexibility. Please ask the director for guidance if you aren't sure about a role.
- We welcome gender neutral casting for some characters. These are indicated with both m/f listed in the description below.
- Rehearsals will start the first week of September and run 2 evenings per week, with the occasional Sunday afternoon session.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

1. Hedda Tesman: (f, playing age 30s)

Hedda is the beautiful but dangerous daughter of General Gabler. She is accustomed to a life of privilege and finds her new life married to George Tesman suffocating. She is like a caged animal and finds amusement in toying with those around her. She is described as having "eyes that express a cold, unruffled repose".

2. George Tesman: (m, playing age 30/40s)

George is a kind, but dull academic, who would prefer to rearrange his library over socialising at the club. He is described as having a cheerful face and demeanor, and is blind to Hedda's devious nature.

3. Miss Julia Tesman: (f, playing age 50s+)

Julia is George's aunt, who raised him since childhood. She is sweet and modest, and utterly amazed that her George has married the beautiful Hedda Gabler – society's most eligible bachelorette.

4. Mrs. Thea Elvsted: (f, playing age 30s)

Thea is an former classmate of Hedda, who comes to ask the Tesmans for a favour - to keep her 'special friend' Eilert Lovborg away from temptation (women and booze) while in town on business. She is described as pretty, but humbly dressed with an abundance of wavy hair (of which Hedda is jealous).

5. Judge Brack: (m, playing age 50s+)

Brack runs in the same social circles as the Hedda and her father (i.e. upper class). He and Hedda share a bond and love to gossip cruelly about those around them. He is described as having an aristocratic profile, and impeccable style.

6. Eilert Lovborg: (m/f*, playing age 30/40s)

Eilert is a brilliant, but tortured intellectual. They easily succumb to temptation which has derailed their professional reputation. Currently sober, Eilert has written a groundbreaking book with the help of Mrs. Elvsted and is on the cusp of critical and financial success. But will Eilert's past relationship with Hedda be their undoing? They are described as charismatic and attractive, but worn out.

7. Berta: (m/f*, playing age 50s+)

Berta has been a servant for the Tesmans since George was a child. However, all is not well, and Berta is worried that they are not in their new mistress's favour. Sweet and bumbling, Berta is described as having a plain, countrified appearance.

8. Two servants: (m/f*, playing age any)

We are looking to cast two non-speaking roles who are servants working with Berta in the Tesman household. These actors will assist with set changes and bringing props on/off stage in character. These roles do not appear in the script, but the actors will be given some character training and silent acting moments on stage.

*these roles can be played as male or female performer

AUDITION PIECES

1. Hedda

- Hedda & Thea (Act 1, Sc 1 / p16-p19): Hedda "Was it not as housekeeper that you first went to Mr Elvsted?"; Mrs Elvsted "Oh yes! Yes. For heaven's sake".
- Hedda & Judge Brack (Act 2, Sc 1 / p.27 - p29): Judge Brack "Let us have a cozy little chat, Mrs Hedda" ; Hedda "And on goes the train."
- Hedda, Thea & Eilert Act 3, Sc 1 / p57 - p59: Mrs Elvsted "Lovborg. At last"; Mrs Elvsted "I don't know. I see nothing but darkness before me."
- George & Hedda (Act 4, Sc 1 / p64-p66): Hedda "Your Aunt Rina's death..."; George "To think what will become of poor Eilert."
- Hedda, Eilert & George (Act 2, Sc 1 / p38 - p39): Hedda "Care to look at some photographs..."; Hedda "Hush".

2. George Tesman

- George & Aunt Julia (Act 1, Sc 1 / p4-6): George "Fancy Auntie, I had the whole of that suitcase..."; Aunt Julia "Yes, it was your library I was thinking of."
- Hedda, Eilert & George (Act 2, Sc 1 / p38 - p39): Hedda "Care to look at some photographs..."; Hedda "Hush".
- George & Hedda (Act IV, Sc 1 / p64-p66): Hedda "Your Aunt Rina's death..."; George "To think what will become of poor Eilert."
- George, Hedda & Judge Brack (Act 1, Sc 1 / p21-p23): Judge Brack "There is something that I want to speak to you about, my dear Tesman"; George Tesman "Goodbye my dear Judge. You really must excuse me."

3. Aunt Julia (Miss Tesman)

- Miss Julia Tesman & Berta (p2-p3): Miss Tesman “So, you’ve got a new mistress now..”; Berta “Yes, that’s what I understood - from the mistress. Master George the doctor - he said nothing.”
- George & Aunt Julia (Act 1, Sc 1 / p4-6): George “Fancy Auntie, I had the whole of that suitcase...”; Aunt Julia “Yes, it was your library I was thinking of.”

4. Mrs Thea Elvsted

- Hedda & Thea (Act 1, Sc 1 / p16-p19): Hedda “Was it not as housekeeper that you first went to Mr Elvsted?”; Mrs Elvsted “Oh yes! Yes. For heaven’s sake”
- Hedda, Thea & Eilert Act 3, Sc 1 / p57 - p59: Mrs Elvsted “Lovborg. At last”; Mrs Elvsted “I don’t know. I see nothing but darkness before me.”

5. Judge Brack

- George, Hedda & Judge Brack (Act 1, Sc 1 / p21-p23): Judge Brack “There is something that I want to speak to you about, my dear Tesman”; George Tesman “Goodbye my dear Judge. You really must excuse me.”
- Hedda & Judge Brack (Act 2, Sc 2 / p.27 - p29): Judge Brack “Let us have a cozy little chat, Mrs Hedda”; Hedda “And on goes the train.”

6. Eilert Lovborg

- Hedda, Thea & Eilert Act 3, Sc 1 / p57 - p59: Mrs Elvsted “Lovborg. At last”; Mrs Elvsted “I don’t know. I see nothing but darkness before me.”
- Hedda, Eilert & George (Act 2, Sc 1 / p38 - p39): Hedda “Care to look at some photographs...”; Hedda “Hush”.

7. Berta

- Miss Julia Tesman & Berta (p2-p3). Miss Tesman “So, you’ve got a new mistress now..”; Berta “Yes, that’s what I understood - from the mistress. Master George the doctor - he said nothing.”

These extracts will be available to download from www.pitchybreath.co.uk prior to the auditions. Copies will be available on the night or you are welcome to bring along your own copy if you prefer.

We look forward to seeing you at the auditions!

If you have questions, either about the audition process or the production itself, please let us know: pitchybreath@gmail.com