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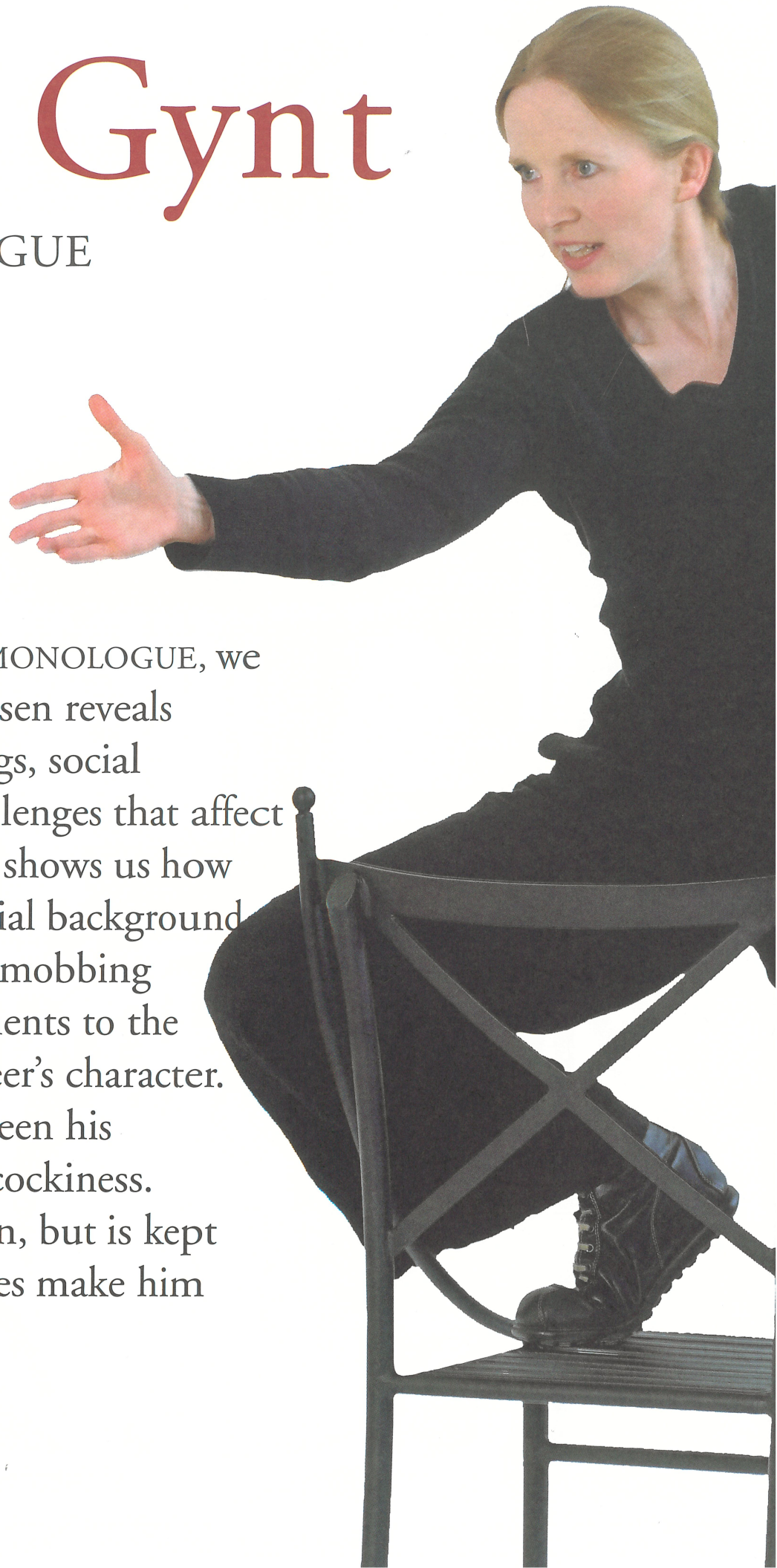


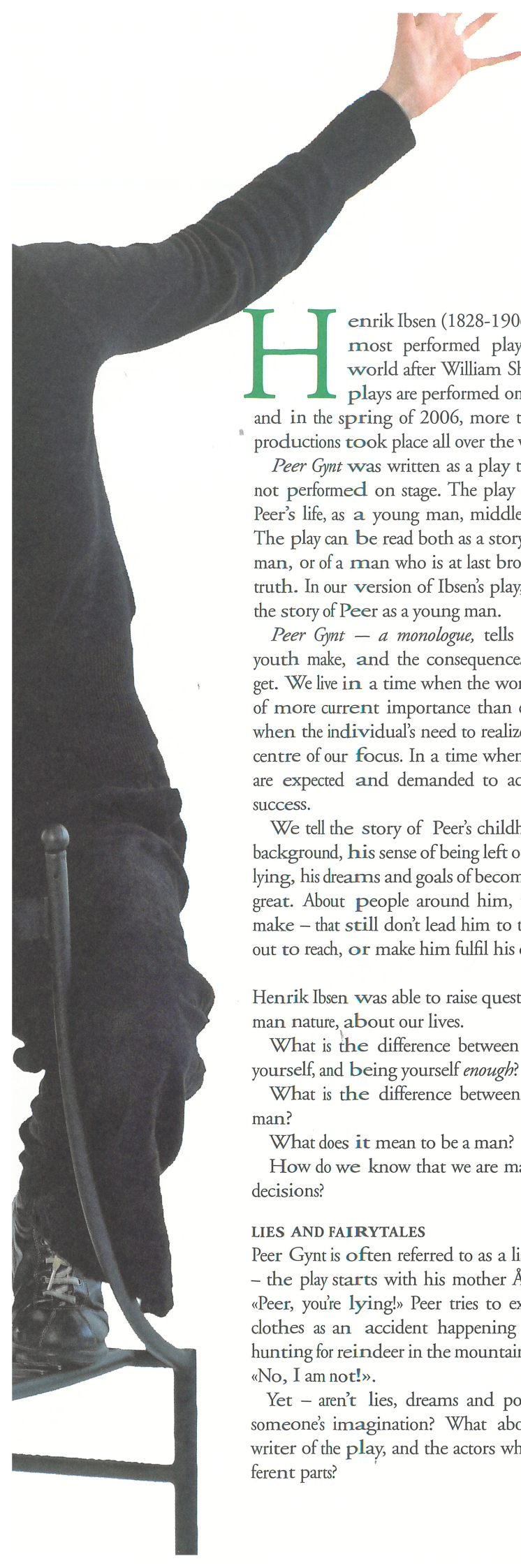


# Peer Gynt

– A MONOLOGUE

In PEER GYNT – A MONOLOGUE, we experience how Ibsen reveals people with feelings, social problems and challenges that affect all of us. The play shows us how his childhood, social background and the following mobbing are all crucial elements to the development of Peer's character. He is shaped between his vulnerability and cockiness. He wants to join in, but is kept outside. His choices make him go astray.





**H**enrik Ibsen (1828-1906) is the second most performed playwright in the world after William Shakespeare. His plays are performed on all continents, and in the spring of 2006, more than 140 Ibsen productions took place all over the world.

*Peer Gynt* was written as a play to be read only, not performed on stage. The play describes all of Peer's life, as a young man, middle-aged and old. The play can be read both as a story of a fortunate man, or of a man who is at last brought to see the truth. In our version of Ibsen's play, we emphasize the story of Peer as a young man.

*Peer Gynt — a monologue*, tells of the choices youth make, and the consequences these choices get. We live in a time when the words of Ibsen are of more current importance than ever. In a time when the individual's need to realize himself is the centre of our focus. In a time when young people are expected and demanded to achieve personal success.

We tell the story of Peer's childhood, his social background, his sense of being left outside, the bullying, his dreams and goals of becoming something great. About people around him, the choices he make – that still don't lead him to the goals he set out to reach, or make him fulfil his dreams.

Henrik Ibsen was able to raise questions about human nature, about our lives.

What is the difference between being true to yourself, and being yourself enough?

What is the difference between a troll and a man?

What does it mean to be a man?

How do we know that we are making the right decisions?

#### LIES AND FAIRYTALES

Peer Gynt is often referred to as a liar. No wonder – the play starts with his mother Åse exclaiming: «Peer, you're lying!» Peer tries to explain his torn clothes as an accident happening when he was hunting for reindeer in the mountain, and answers: «No, I am not!».

Yet – aren't lies, dreams and poetry results of someone's imagination? What about Ibsen, the writer of the play, and the actors who play the different parts?

#### A TROLL WITH THREE HEADS AND A BOY WITH THREE GIRLS

As surroundings change, we easily slip into a role that will fit the present situation. We do not speak in the same manner to our friends, teachers or strangers. Instead we adapt to each individual, especially when there's something we would like to gain. It may be easy to change one's identity and present oneself as something else to strangers, but in time, this new image will be hard to maintain.

#### ARE WE AT OUR STRONGEST WHEN WE'RE ALONE?

When Henrik Ibsen's close friend Camilla Collett read about Solveig, she got furious. She considered Solveig to be the most unbearable, passive female character in the entire world's literature. Imagine wasting your life by just sitting still, waiting for a man who constantly goes from one adventure to the next! Another female author, Sigrid Undset, had the opposite opinion. Solveig left her family and home village and set out to find Peer Gynt in the wilderness. To Sigrid Undset, Solveig was the greatest heroine of them all.

#### I AM ME FROM HEAD TO TOE

In the play, Ibsen tries out the possibilities for human activity. Peer tries his best to gain success in the world. His moral standard is low; he sells both slaves and bibles. As long as he's successful and wealthy, there are few limits.

#### AT THE FINAL CROSSROAD – THE END IS NEAR

Who are you, and how many personalities are you capable of having? The choices are many, and no one wants to limit their possibilities by acting inappropriate.

We are marked by the choices we make, and new possibilities await us every day. Do you want to continue your education or not? Do you want to get married and have children or not? The most insignificant choices can be of just as great importance as the major ones.

However, Ibsen did not consider it his task to give answers: «I am only asking...», he said.

Erik H. Edvardsen

«I am always writing about something I have lived through – but not necessarily experienced myself»

### About the poet Henrik Ibsen and his dramatic universe

Let's not mistake Henrik Ibsen for Peer Gynt, and yet similarities can be found. Ibsen left Norway in 1864 to try his luck abroad. He owed money and had received terrible reviews from the press, in particular for his play called *Love's Comedy*. As he left the country, Ibsen had the customs officials name his title *doctor philos*, yet it was not true. Maybe he considered his possibilities abroad as greater if he carried a title like that?

Peer Gynt claimed to be the daughter of the Dovre King and that he was son of a queen, that his mother's name was queen Åse, and that his farm at home was a castle. Peer Gynt kept the dream of becoming crowned as emperor alive, yet to succeed he had to leave his country.

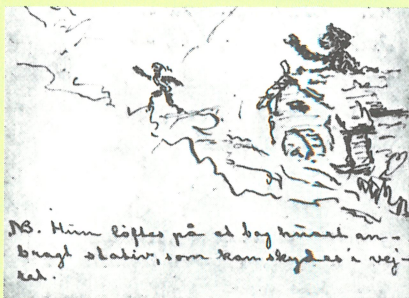
Peer Gynt and Henrik Ibsen both set out with ambitious goals in life. During his work with Peer Gynt, a friend told Ibsen that his toils would all be forgotten in hundred years.

Ibsen then reacted furiously, screaming: «Take your metaphysics and leave me. If you rob me of eternity, you rob me of everything.»

*Erik H. Edvardson*



*Henrik Ibsen in his study*



*Ibsen's own scene direction explains how he imagined Åse should be placed on the mill-house roof.*

### Henrik Ibsen and Sigmund Freud

Through his entire authorship, Ibsen was concerned with the way that people get shaped during their adolescence. The famous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, was an eager reader of Ibsen's works. Freud's theories show how the development of our personality is strongly influenced by our childhood. Freud may very well have considered Peer Gynt as a model for his theories. Peer Gynt was written about 25 years prior to Freud's path-breaking research on our childhood's significance to our adult life.

#### IBSEN'S PLAYS:

- CATILINE (1850)
- THE BURIAL MOUND (1850)
- ST. JOHN'S EVE (1853)
- LADY INGER OF OESTRAAT (1855)
- THE FEAST AT SOLHAUG (1856)
- OLAF LILJEKRANS (1857)
- THE VIKINGS AT HELGELAND (1858)
- LOVE'S COMEDY (1862)
- THE PRETENDERS (1863)
- BRAND (1866)
- PEER GYNT (1867)
- THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH (1869)
- EMPEROR AND GALILEAN (1873)
- PILLARS OF SOCIETY (1877)
- A DOLL'S HOUSE (1879)
- GHOSTS (1881)
- AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE (1882)
- THE WILD DUCK (1884)
- ROSMERSHOLM (1886)
- THE LADY FROM THE SEA (1888)
- HEDDA GABLER (1890)
- THE MASTER BUILDER (1893)
- LITTLE EYOLF (1894)
- JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN (1896)
- WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN (1899)



– A MONOLOGUE

Åse, a farmers's widow  
 Peer Gynt, her son  
 Solveig, daughter of a pair of settlers  
 The bridegroom Mads Moen  
 A Woman in Green  
 The Dovre King, king of the trolls  
 The Bøyg  
 Monsieur Ballon, a travelling investor  
 Anitra, daughter of a Beduin chief  
 Dr. Phil Begriffenfeldt, director of the madhouse in Cairo  
 A chef..... AGNETE G. HAALAND  
 Hardanger fiddle and viola..... SYNNOVE S. BJØRSET/ GRO MARIE SVIDAL

SCRIPT: HENRIK IBSEN. EDITED BY: METTE BRANTZEG AND AGNETE G. HAALAND. DIRECTOR: METTE BRANTZEG.  
 MUSIC: SYNNOVE S. BJØRSET. DESIGN CONSULTANT: INGHILD KARLSEN. THE PLAY LASTS 55 MINUTES.  
 We deeply thank The National Theatre Company of China for presenting *Peer Gynt – a monologue* during The Ibsen Festival in Beijing in september 2006.

Photo: Trygve Schönfelder



AGNETE G. HAALAND has made great international success with her monologues. Her play *Florance Nightingale – woman at war*,

received outstanding reviews and has been touring Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, England, Spain, Chile and USA for years. She has played major parts in a number of TV-dramas in NRK, the Norwegian National Broadcasting. She also plays Nora in Wu Xiao Jiang's widely acclaimed production of *A Doll's House* at The National Theatre Company of China. She is the president of Norwegian Actor's Equity Association.

Photo: Kari Lovas



SYNNOVE S. BJØRSET has received a number of awards as a fiddler, and in 2003 she won the *Spellemannsprisen* (The highest Norwegian

music award) along with the group *Majorstuen*. She graduated from the Norwegian Academy of music in 2004.



METTE BRANTZEG won the award *Scenario -89* for best single act play with the play *The Nine thousand city*, which she both

wrote and directed. She has directed 12 monologues. Other plays include *Kalevala* and *Via Dolorosa*. She has been a member of Sampo Teater for 9 years and artistic director of Sogn og Fjordane Teater.



GRO MARIE SVIDAL graduated from the Ole Bull Academy in Voss with top marks. She has won many competitions and

received a number of awards for her magnificent talent as a musician. She is now studying at the Norwegian Academy of Music.



*Daughters of Thalia* was established by Agnete G. Haaland in 1990. *Peer Gynt – a monologue* is the company's ninth production. Former productions include:

- *Florence Nightingale – woman at war* (directed by Anne-Karen Hytten)
- *Mozart and Salieri* (directed by Hilde Andersen)
- *Two girls and a piano* – A musical cabaret
- *11 days* – A story about human rights told by four musicians and one actor
- *The blue flower of the North* – a musical encounter with Karin Boye (directed by Anne-Karen Hytten)
- *Die Flagstad* – A monologue about Kirsten Flagstad, produced in cooperation with Agder Teater (directed by Bentein Baardson)
- *The Monkey Girl* – A play for children based on the Chinese story about the Monkey king. (directed by Anne-Karen Hytten). *The Monkey Girl* has also been made into a beautiful book for children written by Anne-Karen Hytten and Agnete G. Haaland.

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