

Ghosts: What to Expect

- *Ghosts* was written by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen in 1881 and premiered in Chicago in 1882.
- This production of *Ghosts* opened at Belvoir on Wednesday 18 September 2017 and is directed by Belvoir's Artistic Director Eamon Flack who also adapted the script for this production.
- The production runs for approximately 1 hour 45 minutes with no interval.
- The play is set in 1881 and this production remains faithful to the period.
- The play contains three acts which take place within twenty four hours. All of the action takes place in the one location: a large garden room in Mrs Alving's estate by a large fjord in western Norway.
- There are five actors in the production who each perform one role.
- The actors wear period costumes which have been handmade for this production.
- The set features furniture and set pieces from the period, including a dining room table inspired by a photo of a table in Ibsen's house. The set has a light white wash across it.
- At the play's opening Helene Alving is preparing to host the grand opening of a new orphanage she has had built in memory of her late husband, Captain Alving. The Captain was a widely respected member of the community. Mrs Alving has always concealed the truth about her unhappy marriage and her late husband's true nature. To protect her son from his father's influence, Mrs Alving sent her son Oswald abroad at a young age. Oswald, now in his mid-twenties, has returned home after living as an artist in France.
- When *Ghosts* was first published in 1881, it only sold a few copies with most copies being returned to the publisher. Several countries even banned the play. When *Ghosts* premiered in Chicago in 1882 critics were outraged at the inclusion of taboo topics such as venereal disease, infidelity, incest and euthanasia. Ibsen's perceived attacks on religion and the institution of marriage were also controversial.
- *Ghosts* contains references to relationships between brothers and sisters, extra-marital affairs, drinking to excess, prostitution and euthanasia. During the play, it is revealed that a particular character has been diagnosed with syphilis, and the devastating effects of this disease are discussed.
- *Ghosts* contains haze, the smoking of herbal cigarettes and a pipe, and very occasional use of strong language.
- This production of *Ghosts* features a rain effect, designed and installed by Belvoir's production team. This rain effect uses approx. 900 litres of recycled water per performance. After each performance the water is pumped back into a rain irrigation tank temporarily located at the side of the theatre and used again for the following performance.
- Schools performance tickets are not sent out beforehand, we call schools into the theatre one by one for the daytime school performances – phone our box office on 9699 3444 if you need to check your booking.
- Students need to be briefed about theatre etiquette. Please turn mobile phones off completely and refrain from eating in the theatre. Students need to know that the performance is live and that the actors see and hear them in the audience. We encourage laughter and natural reactions. Taking notes shouldn't happen during performances.
- Schools shows are followed by a Question and Answer session with the cast. Students will have a chance to ask questions about anything they don't fully understand afterwards.