Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Research: Sustainable Scene Design for a Production of
Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy Of The People*

THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Fine Arts
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By

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ABSTRACT

Theatre is a liminal environment between performers and a live audience, and between the past, present and future. Theatre practitioners often bring to life old scripts that have graced the stage many times while highlighting the relevance of key themes and motifs in relation to a modern audience. The work of playwright Henrik Ibsen is produced worldwide because of its modern subjects, despite having been written in the late nineteenth century.

Under the direction of Lesley Ferris, I designed the scenic environment for Rebecca Lenkiewicz’s version of Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* at The Ohio State University. I used a combination of sketches, digital modelling, and a physical white model to communicate my scenic design. By way of reducing, reusing, and recycling, I executed a sustainable scenic environment that complimented the themes of environmental awareness within the play without compromising the aesthetic of the design.
To the women behind walls.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks to my mother, Cheryl Moore, for all of her support, inspiration and love, without which I would not be who I am today.
VITA

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November 2014 ..............................................In Here Out There by Bullock, Chamberlain, Elliott, Harelik, Lopez, M. Mazibuko, S. Mazibuko, Ries, Ware and Wiabel, Scene Design

April 2015 ......................................................Don Giovanni by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Scene Design

May 2015 ..........................................................Spring Awakening by Duncan Sheik, Scene and Costume Design

November 2015 ..............................................An Enemy of the People by Henrik Ibsen, Scene Design

March 2016 ......................................................Stupid Fucking Bird by Aaron Posner, Costume Design
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Theatre

Studies In: Production Design
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CHAPTER 1: THE PRODUCING SITUATION

The production process began when Lesley Ferris shared her director’s concept with the production team on 2 March, 2015. Ferris presented her concept in person one week later, on 9 March, 2015 at the first production meeting. Ten weeks later, on 11 May, 2015, I presented the final scene designs. Scenic construction and load-in occurred over 8 weeks, beginning on 25 August, 2015. *An Enemy of the People* opened on 5 November, 2015 and it ran through 15 November, 2015 with a total of ten performances.

*An Enemy of the People* was performed in Thurber Theatre which is the Department of Theatre’s largest and most well-equipped performance space. Thurber Theatre is a proscenium-style venue that seats approximately 600 people and it is located in the Drake Performance and Event Center. The seating is arranged in a continental style with patron access from house left and right but no central aisles. There is no balcony level in the house, so audience sightlines are limited to lower angles.

The proscenium is 35 feet wide by approximately 21 feet high. The stage is 49 feet deep including an 11-foot-deep apron extending beyond the proscenium. Within this apron is an orchestra pit, approximately 8 feet deep by 33 feet wide that is able to raise and lower to four positions using a hydraulic lift.

Thurber Theatre features a number of elements that were considered for use throughout the design process. For instance, the stage floor is raised 3” to support...
automation. It also has a fly gallery with 35 line sets, 4 of which are dedicated electrics. There is also a large stock of soft goods, including a stock set of black velour legs and borders.

Despite the small size of the scenic studio, only 1,500 square feet, there are many amenities that optimize productivity. Many large tools in the Scenic Studio are mobile so they may be stored out of the way when not in use. Storage of stock materials and scenic pieces is primarily located in the wing space of Thurber Theatre. Storage racks make the most of the vertical space rather than impede the function of the wing space. The same can be said for the second story loft within the Scenic studio, which stores moulding and lumber at one end, and provides a secondary work space at the other. The galley-style layout of the paint room makes the most practical use of the space for both storing and working with paints. There is also a 48-foot-wide paint frame that spans the length of the shop space.

In the Autumn 2015 semester, when construction took place, the Scenic Studio was staffed by one full-time scenic studio manager, one full-time resident technical director, three part-time graduate assistants, one undergraduate properties supervisor, and twenty-eight undergraduate students who worked as a part of their Theatre 2000 course. The work of the Scenic Studio was split among three productions in the Autumn semester: Standing on Ceremony: The Gay Marriage Plays, Good Kids, and An Enemy of the People. The first production, Standing on Ceremony, was produced in promenade style around the building, so it did not utilize any of our traditional performance venues. It opened on 30 September, 2015 and had few construction needs but required more work
from the properties department. *Good Kids* was produced in the Roy Bowen Theatre, opening two weeks before *An Enemy of the People*, and it also involved very little construction. In the Autumn 2015 semester, there were no non-departmental rentals in Thurber Theatre, which allowed for much of the construction process to occur onstage.

During the Autumn semester of 2015, I was assigned an undergraduate assistant scene designer, Elizabeth Myers. Unfortunately, Myers was stage managing the Theatre Department’s production of *Standing on Ceremony*, which left her with limited time to contribute to the early development of the design. However, Myers was a crucial member in the execution of the scene design with major contributions to the scene painting and properties areas after *Standing on Ceremonies* concluded.

*An Enemy of the People* was directed by Lesley Ferris, Arts & Humanities Distinguished Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Theatre. This production was quite unique in the fact that Costume Designer, Sarah Fickling; Lighting Designer, Andy Baker; and I, were all assigned to *An Enemy of the People* as our thesis production for our M.F.A. program. Jake Lavender, the Sound Designer, was the only undergraduate designer on the primary design team. Other members of the larger design team included the Assistant Scene Designer, Elizabeth Myers, and the Assistant Lighting Designer, Justin Miller. Chad Mahan, Scenic Studio Manager and Technical Director for the production, announced budgets to the production team on 27 April, 2015. The scenery and properties budget was $6,500, the costumes budget was $2,530, the lighting budget was $3,000, and the sound budget was $550.
CHAPTER 2: IBSEN, LEINKEIWICZ AND AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

Henrik Ibsen was already an internationally acclaimed playwright by the time An Enemy of the People premiered in 1882. Ibsen’s audience was familiar with his earlier successes, such as Peer Gynt (1867) and A Doll’s House (1879). An Enemy of the People was Ibsen’s response to the public’s disapproval of his 1881 drama, Ghosts, a play that was highly condemned for its open critique on Victorian morality and its inclusion of a myriad of taboo subjects.

In An Enemy of the People, Dr. Thomas Stockmann finds himself in a standoff with the public over the harsh truth behind his work and the public’s willing denial of his findings; a situation very similar to that of Ibsen after the premiere of Ghosts. In act IV, Stockmann warns the people of the town’s blindness to their immorality in a public forum. Regarding his overwhelming disappointment in the degradation of morality in his home town, he states, “No one wants to see his bride turn syphilitic” (Lenciewicz, 77). Through the guise of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Ibsen directly criticized his public’s condemnation of Ghosts. In this monologue, Ibsen openly alludes to Oswald Alving, a character from Ghosts who is suffering the effects of syphilis as a result of his father’s infidelity. It is clear that his continued use of the taboo subject of venereal disease, even after receiving public scrutiny, is demonstrative of his self-confidence as a writer. Ibsen’s
boldly assertive motive for the conception of *An Enemy of the People* undoubtedly contributed to his continued success as a playwright after its creation.

The Playwright and His Work

Henrik Ibsen is perhaps the most influential playwright since Shakespeare. His plays continue to be produced worldwide in a multitude of languages and forms. He is a founder of Modernism in theatre (Moi 67). In fact, Ibsen’s work was extremely influential to many successful playwrights including George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Eugene O’Neill and Arthur Miller.

Henrik Ibsen was born 20 March, 1828 in Skein, Norway. He found his success after travelling abroad, a decision that was likely a combination of a need to sustain his career as well as a reaction to how Norway “did nothing to help Denmark in the war with Prussia over Schleswig-Holstein in 1864” (Moi, 64). Most notably, he spent large amounts of time in Rome, Dresden and Munich between the years 1864-1891. In his time abroad, Ibsen wrote many of his most notable works including *Peer Gynt, A Doll’s House, Ghosts, An Enemy of the People, The Lady from the Sea,* and *Hedda Gabler.* While his writings are primarily set in his native Norway, the influence of Ibsen’s travel is apparent in his writings. For instance, in *A Doll’s House,* Nora dances the Tarantella, a traditional Italian folk dance with its roots as an ancient cure for the bite of a tarantula. Prior to its premiere in Denmark, Ibsen had been living in Rome—a correlation that suggests his inclusion of the hysterical dance, a powerful symbol of Nora’s frenetic state of being, was influenced by his time spent in Italy (Moi, 64).
Ibsen is also known for his depictions of strong female characters in a patriarchal society. While _An Enemy of the People_ has only two female characters, each one exemplifies different strengths. Catherine Stockmann, wife of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, is portrayed as an extremely dutiful wife and mother. Catherine stands by her husband’s choices, yet she possesses the power to question his intent as it relates to familial matters. To a modern reader, such as myself, Catherine’s hesitancy to publicly support her husband’s critique of the government comes across as both jarring and weak at first glance. However, when considering the norms of the period in which the play was written, one can understand the power Catherine is demonstrating by staying bound to her duties as the matriarch of the Stockmann family while remaining supportive behind the scenes. On the other hand, Petra, Stockmann’s adult daughter, is a shining example of a strong, independent woman. Petra’s “excessively free views on a wide range of subjects” (Lenkiewicz, 82), including religion and politics, demonstrate of a nuanced way of thinking.

Though the women of _An Enemy of the People_ exemplify strength and power, Ibsen does not neglect to include dominant male figures as well. In fact, both the protagonist and antagonist of _An Enemy of the People_ are men without whom there would be no story to be told. Ibsen creates individuals who demonstrate both strengths and weaknesses regardless of gender. The relative gender equality of Ibsen’s writing demonstrates feminist themes, regardless of his intent or consciousness of those themes. When one considers the definition of feminism as defined by Merriam-Webster: “the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes,” it is clear that
feminism is abundant within Ibsen’s plays. From Nora’s stride towards economic freedom and overall independence as a woman in *A Doll’s House*, to Petra’s radical political views in *An Enemy of the People*, it is undeniable that Ibsen saw the potential for equality of the sexes. This perspective is one that has continued to mark Ibsen’s work as relevant into the present day.

The Script

*An Enemy of the People* was originally written in Ibsen’s native tongue of Norwegian and has since been translated into numerous languages. The Ohio State University’s Department of Theatre produced Rebecca Lenkiewicz’s 2008 version of Charlotte Barslund’s translation. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the Department of Theatre’s selection process of this specific version. Lenkiewicz is a British actress-turned-playwright and her self-proclaimed “version” of *An Enemy of the People* was first produced at the Arcola Theatre in London and then again on Broadway at the Manhattan Theatre Club in 2012. Some may argue that Lenkiewicz’s script is an adaptation because of her exclusion of the Stockmann’s youngest children, Morten and Eilif. On the contrary, the children’s roles are quite minimal in Ibsen’s original text and the dialogue itself reads as a fairly direct translation. In fact, Lenkiewicz’s omission of the boys leaves their presence very generic in an impactful way allowing the audience to put a face to the names and consider the impact of current politics on future generations. The dialogue of Lenkeiwicz’s translation is very contemporary and some of the verbiage is quite British in nature, such as the use of the word “bloody.”
An Enemy of the People is separated into five acts with no scene breakdowns within the acts. Ibsen set the play in 1882 Norway, present day to its conception. Acts I and II are both set in the Stockmann living room, while the subsequent acts are set in an editorial office at The People’s Messenger, a large hall in Captain Horster’s house, and in Dr. Stockmann’s study.

Act I takes place during the evening in the Stockmann living room. We are introduced to Catherine Stockmann, the Doctor’s wife, and Mr. Billing, an employee of the local newspaper. Peter, the town mayor and brother to Thomas Stockmann, arrives on a visit. We learn that Peter is very conservative in contrast to his liberal-minded brother. Hovstad, the editor of The People’s Messenger, arrives in Thomas’ absence to visit the Stockmann household. The conversation of Peter and Hovstad is quite pointed as a result of their opposite political standings. Thomas arrives from a walk with his sons, bringing with him Captain Horster, a local navy captain. While Catherine entertains the guests in the dining room, Peter and Thomas enter a conversation, which becomes heated and results in Peter’s departure. The guests convene in the sitting room for drinks and Stockmann’s daughter, Petra, arrives from her job as a school teacher. Petra delivers a letter to Thomas, which he has anxiously been waiting for. The letter confirms the results of his research into the contamination of the water in the Baths. Thomas excitedly shares the news with his family and his guests. Hovstad and Billing express interest in supporting Thomas with the potential to publish his findings in The People’s Messenger. Thomas sends his manuscript to the Mayor and the act concludes with a toast to Thomas’ success.
Act II takes place the following morning in the Stockmann’s living room. Peter sent the manuscript back to Thomas with a note indicating he will be visiting later that morning to discuss the baths. Morten Kiil, Catherine’s foster father and owner of a local tannery, arrives having heard news about Thomas’ findings from Petra. Kiil indicated his skepticism of Thomas’ work; however, not being a fan of the town council, Kiil encourages Stockmann to continue his work before quickly leaving. Hovstad arrives to communicate his desire to shed light on the contamination of the baths as an attack on the local government. Aslaksen, the printer and chair of the Property Owners’ Association, arrives to share his support for Thomas and indicates that he has a great deal of sway with the majority of the townspeople. Thomas is thankful for the support of both men; however, he is certain that there will be no issues working collegially with his brother, the mayor. When Peter arrives, he asks for a private moment with Thomas to discuss the manuscript. Catherine and Petra retire to the dining room while Peter reveals his contempt for Thomas’ findings. Peter forbids Thomas from making the manuscript’s contents public and Thomas refuses to obey. Petra, who has been eavesdropping from the dining room bursts in to support her father. Peter calms down and reminds Thomas to think of his family and his reputation when considering publicizing his findings.

Act III occurs later that day in the editing office at The People’s Messenger. Thomas drops off his manuscript for publication because Peter has refused to work to fix the problem. Petra also stops by to return the book Hovstad gave her to translate because she disapproves of its conservative nature. Hovstad reveals that he is helping Thomas because he is romantically interested in Petra. Petra becomes offended and storms out.
Aslaksen arrives with Mayor Peter Stockmann, who came through the back entrance. Peter explains how the town will fall apart if Thomas’ manuscript is printed and he counters with his own document describing his long-term rehabilitation approach. Having just been rejected by Petra, Hovstad changes his allegiance. Thomas returns with Catherine hot on his tail while Peter hides, but he is soon discovered. Thomas quickly learns that he has lost the support of his friends at The People’s Messenger, so he announces his plan to call a town meeting and address his findings. Catherine boldly chooses to support her husband and discounts the fickle nature of the other men in the room.

The exact interval between Acts III and IV is unclear; however, it likely occurs within the same week. Thomas has called a town meeting in the dining hall at Captain Horster’s. The characters file in and Aslaksen is made moderator of the meeting. Peter moves to end the meeting so Thomas cannot slander the baths and the public supports him. Thomas agrees to avoid the topic of the baths so he may proceed with the meeting. Instead of focusing on the contaminated waters, Thomas openly critiques the moral fiber of their community because of their ignorance to the harm they are causing the patients of the spa. The public revolts and Hovstad moves to label Thomas an Enemy of the People. The public votes and it is unanimously passed. Thomas asks Captain Horster to take his family to America on his next voyage. Thomas then announces that he plans to find a way to make his concerns heard, even from afar.

Act V occurs the following morning in Thomas’ office. We learn that after the meeting, the townspeople rioted against the Stockmann family and have damaged their
property. Petra arrives home early having just been fired from her teaching position as a result of the previous night’s meeting. Captain Horster arrives and announces that he has been unassigned from his ship to America because of his alignment with Thomas. The Mayor arrives and asks Thomas to rescind his accusations. When Thomas refuses, Peter admits that he is under the impression that Thomas has gone to all this trouble in order to impress his father-in-law and be a larger beneficiary of his will. Peter leaves and Morten Kiil almost immediately arrives. Morten reveals that he has spent the entirety of Catherine and the children’s inheritance on stocks in the baths in order to convince Thomas to retract his statement. Since revealing the contamination of the baths, the source has been attributed to Morten’s tannery and he now has an awful reputation. Morten asks him to make a decision by 2 o’clock that afternoon and he leaves. Aslaksen and Hovstad arrive looking to help Thomas retract his statement so they can get a cut of the money Morten makes on the stocks. Thomas, feeling defeated, attacks the men with an umbrella, but Horster stops him as the men run away. When Thomas comes to his senses, he announces his plan to stay in the town and work to change the public’s opinion. Horster offers his home for the Stockmann family to live and work out of. Thomas concludes the play by explaining that the strongest man is always alone.

Considerations

The Department of Theatre selected Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* for several reasons. One of the primary reasons was that it fit the needs of the M.F.A. acting students whose program focuses on realism in their first year of study. Period realism also offers great challenges and research opportunities for the M.F.A. designers, four of whom
would be assigned theses in this season. Furthermore, a realistic period piece provided a nice contrast to the productions of recent seasons, which were primarily contemporary and conceptual works.

*An Enemy of the People* also deals with very timely issues including the validity of science, environmental health, and specifically the contamination of water. For example, the process of hydraulic fracturing as a means of extracting natural gas and petroleum has been hotly debated among environmentalists and politicians. There are conflicting studies showing the effects of hydraulic fracturing, many of which demonstrate that the process results in a high rate of chemical pollution in nearby groundwater sources. Furthermore, the recent state of emergency in Flint, Michigan, where local water sources have been contaminated with hazardous levels of lead, is hauntingly similar to the situation Ibsen presents in *An Enemy of the People*. While this controversy had not yet been unearthed when considering this play for production, after our production’s run, the disturbing similarities between the political cover-up in Flint and in *An Enemy of the People* are all too relevant not to mention.

Initially, the production committee had considered Arthur Miller’s 1950 adaptation for production. The committee was concerned that Miller’s adaptation seemed dated and it included the roles of Stockmann’s children, Morten and Eilif, which would create challenges in casting. Rebecca Lenkiewicz’s version was added for consideration and the script was popular for its contemporary language and its exclusion of the young children as characters.
The committee also considered gender distribution in casting for the semester. A majority of students who audition are women, so the ratio of male to female roles is a major factor in the selection process. In the autumn semester of 2015, Naomi Izuuka’s *Good Kids*, which featured a majority female cast, was paired with *An Enemy of the People*, which had a male-heavy cast. The Department of Theatre felt that, between the two shows, there were equitable performance opportunities for all genders.
CHAPTER 3: THE DESIGN CONCEPT

I first read *An Enemy of the People* in late December, 2014, several months before the first production meeting. Having read several of Ibsen’s other works, including *A Doll’s House, Hedda Gabler* and *Ghosts*, I was familiar with the realistic settings of his writing. As a designer, I find myself interested in creating realistic environments, so I was excited to work on one of Ibsen’s plays. I was also aware of the politically charged storyline of *An Enemy of the People* and its focus on environmentalism. Sustainable theatre design is a blooming research interest of mine and I felt the potential to integrate green design practices as a means of supporting the play’s environmental emphasis. My interests in realism and sustainable design began influencing my design process before I had even read the script.

After my initial read of *An Enemy of the People*, I was struck by how relevant the themes and conflicts of the play are to a modern audience. One of the most relevant issues within the play is the power of media sources, particularly with regard to politics. The political stance of *The People’s Messenger* truly is the determining factor that influences public opinion. Had Hovstad remained true to his liberal agenda, there would have been no conflict to drive the plot forward. Instead, we see *The People’s Messenger* shift its political stance to align with Peter Stockmann’s cover-up, which unjustly results in the vilification of Dr. Thomas Stockmann.
The People’s Messenger, while a much smaller forum, can be likened to contemporary media outlets such as The New York Times or The Huffington Post. The similarity lies in the strength of their influence. For the people in Ibsen’s fictitious town, The People’s Messenger is a major news source. Today’s mainstream media outlets may be more abundant; however, it is undeniable that each outlet has a great deal of power to manipulate public opinion in the same manner that occurred in An Enemy of the People.

Environmental matters, such as climate change and water quality, have been in the media’s spotlight in recent years. One topic in particular, hydraulic fracturing or fracking, had a great influence on my design process. The BBC defines fracking as, “the process of drilling down into the earth before a high pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside” (BBC). Despite many conflicting reports of water contamination, there are approximately 100,000 fracking sites across the United States alone (Greenpeace). Fracking fluid is comprised of up to 600 chemicals, many of which are carcinogenic, such as lead, methane, and formaldehyde. These chemicals contaminate the nearby groundwater table, often resulting in extreme concentrations of methane up to 17 times higher than in areas not affected by fracking (Osborn).

The effects of high methane concentrations in drinking water have even been documented by residents, often by images of running water catching fire (Greenpeace). These images and ideas inspired two of my initial research images, which I presented at the first production meeting. The first was an image of a glass of water on fire (see Figure 1). This image served as a metaphor for the unseen contamination of society and the flames capture the conflict and the riot of Act IV.
Figure 1. Initial Reaction Image – Fracking Fire

The second is an image of someone drinking from a glass of dirty water (see Figure 2). I found myself repulsed by the green, sludge-like water in this photo and the feeling was reminiscent to the disgust I felt during my first read of the play. The look, taste and feel of this image would later inform my paint treatments of the Stockmann household.
Perhaps the most politically jarring image I shared was a cartoon of a scientist tied up and gagged with the Earth in his mouth (see Figure 3). I feel a strong personal attachment to this image because of its connection to the closure of science libraries in Canada. Our Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper, cut funding to a lot of scientific research centers, particularly those dealing with environmental science and ecology (Greene, Huffington Post). This is a very literal way of not only silencing scientists, but also suppressing access to their findings. I could not help but associate the character of
Mayor Peter Stockmann with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and, as a result, the subtext of the political cartoon manifested itself in the riot between acts IV and V with the destruction of newspapers, books and eventually the fallen bookshelf.

Figure 3. Initial Reaction Image – Political Cartoon

The visual world really started developing when I discovered the work of a Danish painter, Vilhelm Hammershøi. Hammershøi was famous during the late Victorian era in Scandinavia, where he painted many rural interior settings, some including lone figures. Ferris responded very well to the paintings, particularly the paintings which depicted women facing away from the frame. Hammershøi’s wife, Ida Hammershøi, was often the subject of his art work. I expanded my research to
Hammershøi’s Danish contemporaries, Peter Ilstead, Hammershøi’s brother-in-law, and Carl Holsøe. All three painters had a very similar style to their paintings and subject matter; however, on closer inspection, Holsøe’s work is much more realistic and his subject matter focuses on more well-furnished environments than his contemporaries. Hammershøi and Ilstead, on the other hand, focus their works almost exclusively on rural interiors and they lack the sharpness in both shape and line of Holsøe’s work, providing more of an impressionistic flair to their paintings. Differences aside, all three painters provided excellent examples of architecture and furnishings that were accurate to the time period and geographical location of An Enemy of the People. I was also very drawn to the often monochromatic color palettes of Hammershøi’s interior paintings as they suggest a modest lifestyle, much like that of the Stockmann family. I particularly resonated with Strandgade 30 (see Figure 4) because the sickly green and grey colors are similar to colors found in my inspirational imagery. I presented the work of Hammershøi, Ilstead and Holsøe at the second production meeting. Their artwork became the foundation of realism in the scenic design.
Figure 4. Research Image – *Strandgade 30*, 1908, Vilhelm Hammersøi
The Chorus of Women was a group of female performers, originally imagined to be 5 or 7 in size, developed by Ferris in her director’s concept. These women represented people who suffered from the effects of the contaminated waters and they also provided a more prominent female presence in the male-heavy production. The role of the women was quite unknown until Karen Mozingo, the choreographer, crafted a haunting and domestic presence for the women based upon the women in Hammershøi’s paintings. While these women eventually tied in very closely to the scenic environment, their development did not occur until midway through the rehearsal process, so their presence did not have major effects on my design choices. Ferris was intent on having them blend into the environment, however, so I did keep them in mind when positioning doors and windows. I tried to create frames between scenic units in which these women could exist.

In her concept, Ferris called for, “a suggestion of the period – selective choices versus full-blown realism… Less is more” (Ferris). In order to create a world that was rooted in realism while meeting Ferris’ desire for “less is more,” I explored sets from various theatrical productions that had elements of realism, yet minimal scenery (see Figure 5). I used these production photos to facilitate discussion about what minimalism meant to Ferris and the production team. Ferris responded well to suggested architecture, like archways, without any physical walls of any sort.
I began my preliminary design work with emphasis on the Stockmann home, which is the most frequented location throughout the play. In the second design meeting, Ferris requested that the Stockmann home be present throughout the entire play as a representation of the family and Norway as a whole. In order to embrace the permanence of the Stockmann home, I decided to set the main playing space in the sitting room only, rather than introduce Dr. Stockmann’s study for Act V. The action of Act V is not dependent on being in the study; however, the script required an entrance to and from Dr. Stockmann’s study at the very least. Therefore, the primary Stockmann home setting became a sitting room with three entrances: one to the dining room, one to the front hall and one to the study.
I presented my first sketches in the third design meeting on 6 April (see Figure 6). These sketches focused only on the Stockmann home and introduced the concept of framing the onstage space with beam structures suspended above the playing space. These sketches also included floating windows framed with curtains and a collection of picture frames suspended in the air that were indicative of a wall. While all of these ideas eventually appeared in the final design, these initial sketches were met with criticism for appearing too solid and for the lack of a world beyond the sitting room. Ferris expressed her desire for a more fragmented and permeable environment that was free of the clutter of objects on the wall or an abundance of furniture.
At this point in the design process, the challenge was to design a space with the suggestion of walls but without the clutter of objects that indicated walls, such as bookcases and floating picture frames. I began to investigate the possibility of using scrim to cover the walls so, with the aid of lighting, the walls would be visually permeable. As I continued to develop the Stockmann sitting room, it was clear that I had to begin considering the development of Acts III and IV in relation to the ever-present Stockmann home.
In her concept, Ferris focused her vision of the play on the climax of Act IV when Stockmann confronts his audience, the townspeople. Ferris quoted Konstantin Stanislavsky, one of the most distinguished performers of the turn of the century, who played Thomas Stockmann in the Moscow Art Theatre production in 1905. He described the experience of audience members literally crossing the threshold of the stage and embracing him as Dr. Stockmann. Ferris then addresses the need for an intimate environment in which Stockmann may directly address the audience. If the aim was to make “the two eras fuse, spill over into each other [and] even explode” (Ferris), then Act IV would be both the act of spilling and the catalyst for the explosive transition into Act V.

It was very clear to me upon my initial reading of the director’s concept that Act IV would need to be placed in the audience itself for maximum impact. Initially, my thoughts turned towards creating a center aisle in the seating to allow the performers to actually enter the audience and use stairs, or something similar, to connect the performers from the stage to the audience level. I met with Chad in this time to discuss the possibility of using the audience and the orchestra pit.

I met with Lesley Ferris on 16 April to discuss the scenic development of Acts III and IV and further clarify her vision of a fragmented and permeable environment. In this meeting, Lesley and I walked through Thurber Theatre to discuss the possibility of staging Act III and IV on the orchestra pit as well as the potential to integrate the audience during Act IV. I had prepared a number of questions that centered on specifying what Lesley would like to see in the offstage spaces and how the different settings work.
with one another. It became very clear that the multiple settings should be able to coexist onstage at the same time in a manner that would allow for seamless transitions between locations. Also, I learned that the rooms beyond the sitting room of the Stockmann home should be developed, though they did not need to be fully realized.

One of the biggest turning points for the scenic design conception was when Ferris provided me with a production photo from Brooklyn Academy of Music’s production of Ibsen’s *Ghosts* clipped from the Entertainment section of the New York Times (see Figure 7). The image depicted a Victorian sitting room with a translucent wall, through which one could vaguely see a dining room with large windows indicated by lit drapes. This production photo was key in the discussion of how scenery might be layered to incorporate pieces of dialogue that occur offstage. Another important aspect of this image was the distortion that occurred when looking through the walls. In fact, I was quite intrigued by how grungy the wall material appeared and was reminded of my visual research of water damaged walls.
After my meeting with Lesley Ferris on 16 April, I was able to much more clearly visualize the environment and how the scene design progressed throughout the play’s duration. I began looking for a texture that could connect the Stockmann home to Acts III and IV, while considering the potential of connecting to a modern environment. In my research, I stumbled across the Therme Vals Spa in Switzerland. Designed by Peter Zumthor in 1996, the Therme Vals Spa (see Figure 8) features seemingly endless horizontal planks of wood in grey tones. The wood texture was extremely modern, yet wholly rustic and aged. I proposed framing the walls of the Stockmann home in a portal painted with this wood texture and the paint treatment would extend into the calipers so to draw the eye across the stage when needed. At this time, I also narrowed down the
number of props necessary for creating the environments of Acts III and IV. I sourced several wonderful images of Victorian era print shops and editorial offices. I was drawn to the cluttered editing tables, and a particular style of gas work light which reflected the horizontality of the woodwork.

Figure 8. Research Image – Therme Vals Spa
Using Google SketchUp, I three-dimensionally modelled several preliminary scenes which utilized both the orchestra pit level and the main stage floor. I lowered the opacity of the walls to imitate scrim and I began placing furniture upstage of these walls. While the details were quite off in this preliminary model (see Figure 9), the overall concepts of space and atmosphere in my design were present. The shape of the walls was quite stale and I explored extending a platform from the orchestra pit into the audience (see Figure 10). The gain from this platform extension seemed minimal and was not worth the labor required to make the adjustments to the seating, so I did not pursue this idea further. This model was the genesis of the upstage room layout. It included, in order from stage right to left, the front hall, Thomas’ study and the Dining room, which was the same order as the final design. The far left and right offstage rooms posed issues for audience sightlines and the layout in relation to the scrim walls was too symmetrical. To fix this issue I began altering the rotation of the walls, which ultimately provided a much more interesting layout.
Figure 9. Preliminary Digital Model - Act I, No Center Aisle

Figure 10. Preliminary Digital Model - Act III, Center Aisle
I found that the Google SketchUp software was slowing the development of my design at this time, so I turned to sketching. Sketching provided me the freedom to quickly adjust my overall vision of the space without becoming hung up on details. I quickly found my footing and produced a preliminary sketch (see Figure 11) that is quite representative of the final design. I angled the walls and added a jog in the center wall to make the space more dynamic. Instead of protruding directly toward the audience, the beams angled upward from upstage right to downstage left, creating forced perspective in the tops of the walls. This addition of sharp angles to the Stockmann home created a strong contrast to the horizontal lines of the calipers and downstage elevator level.
After many edits and the addition of a lot of detail to the digital model, I presented the final designs on 11 May. My design package consisted of an updated PowerPoint presentation of research and renderings, three renderings of the digital model, and three ground plans. The three variations of renderings and ground plans showcased Acts I-II (see Figure 12), Act III (see Figure 13) and Act IV (see Figure 14). The changes between acts centered on the elevator level and its contents, which shifted between acts. While most of the furniture upstage of the scrim walls was finalized, I provided suggested furniture placement downstage of the walls, which was to remain flexible as we began rehearsals. Ferris and I felt that it would be beneficial to see the performers in
the rehearsal space with the furniture before finalizing the placements so we could adapt the furniture to meet the needs of the blocking. For this reason, I planned to attend all of the initial staging rehearsals of each act in the fall. I completed the remainder of my design plates, including one centerline section and 12 design plates, during May Term.

Figure 12. Digital Model - Act I-II

Figure 13. Digital Model – Act III
Before rehearsals began, I created a physical white model as a tool for Ferris and me to use during rehearsals. This model was an extremely effective communication device for us during the initial blocking rehearsals. We were able to easily rearrange furniture in scale to create options which we then tried in full scale in the rehearsal space. I am delighted that Ferris found the model to be such a helpful tool for her own rehearsal process.
Collaboration and the Visual World

One of the most crucial aspects of the design process was the collaboration with my fellow designers. In particular, the strong collaboration between Fickling, Baker and myself early on in the design process was vital to the cohesion of the visual world of *An Enemy of the People*. While we may have lacked formal meetings with each other, we found ample discussion time throughout the work day and especially during our lunch hours.

While his designs remained preliminary throughout my own design process, Andy Baker’s communication of his lighting design ideas, both verbally and through imagery, was quite influential on the final scenic design. Baker presented the idea of visually manifesting the developing contamination and corruption of the plot with changes in
lighting from more realistic looks at the top of show, to a much more broken down and sickly green Act V. Knowing that Baker planned to manipulate the color of the walls throughout the play contributed to the neutralization of my color palette for the Stockmann home walls in particular. This choice allowed Baker more freedom to add color to the walls. Another collaborative element was in the development of the scrim portal. I imagined that the legs of the portal would have a gradient from translucent at the bottom to being completely opaque at the cornice moulding. Baker and I discussed several options, including using the painted wood texture to transition between opacities (see Figure 16). Ultimately, it was our hope that through a combination of light and paint we would be able to create a smooth gradient rather than using the wooden boards as a transition.
Fickling and I produced our designs in the same timeline, producing research and preliminary design work at the same time, so our collaboration was especially important. Like with Baker, Fickling had a strong impact on my final color palette. While my initial visual response to the script led me to the color green, her proposed color palette reinforced my vision. In her early research, Fickling presented a landscape painting (see Figure 17), which she intended to use as an inspiration for her color palette. Her focus was on the rich earth tones in contrast with the blue and purple hues of the sky; however, she did not intend on delving into any of the green tones, which comprised the majority
of the painting. Therefore, I was able to use the green tones I desired for the walls without fear that they might conflict with costumes; on the contrary, with the painting in mind it was clear that our color palettes would be quite complementary. Fickling and I also planned to coordinate the colors of the scenery with the Chorus of Women so that they would blend with the environment.

Figure 17. Research Image – *View Over Hallingdal*, 1844, Johan Christian Dahl

Sustainability and Design

I first expressed my intent to design with sustainability in mind during our first design meeting on 9 March, 2015. Initially, I had looked to the Broadway Green Alliance
as a resource for green theatre practices. Unfortunately, I found that the Broadway Green Alliance was much more geared towards performers and crew members and was almost exclusively active in New York City. In the end, I had to determine my own approach to implementing green theatre practices in the production. I chose to consult the leading sustainable theatre text by author Ellen E. Jones, *A Practical Guide to Greener Theatre: Introduce Sustainability Into Your Production*. Jones’ text is a comprehensive resource covering sustainable theatre practices for all areas of design and technology from organizational tips to tables comparing the sustainability of common products such as types of lumber. I landed on the *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* slogan as a mantra for my work because it was the clearest and effective approach to sustainable design for production. I made every effort to reuse materials from stock when possible. I opted for goods and materials that could either be added to stock or recycled post-production in cases where goods and materials needed to be purchased. With the help of Technical Director Chad Mahan, we planned to greatly reduce the waste produced from construction. This approach was very feasible for our production team and all members welcomed the challenge to produce scenery in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Chad Mahan’s technical direction minimized the amount of materials that needed to be purchased and also reduced the output of waste from the production. Mahan and I sourced scrim from stock during the design process in order to determine whether or not we would need to purchase the scrim required for the walls. Based on our early exploration, we determined that there was enough scrim in stock to reasonably assume we could cover all of the walls; however, the condition of the scrim was questionable and
it was unclear whether there was enough scrim of a single color to cover all of the walls. Mahan factored the purchase of new scrim into the overall scenic budget as a fail-safe in the event that we discovered there was not enough useable scrim in stock when the build began in August.

Other environmentally conscious considerations were apparent in the planning of properties. In light of my “reduce, reuse, recycle” approach, I focused on using props from stock and purchasing lightly used props from sources such as eBay. This approach was quite effective for the majority of the props; however, Ferris desired numerous newspapers from *The People’s Messenger* to be strewn about the stage during the riot. Ephemera props, especially when roughly used, are not very sustainable because of the paper product waste that is produced. To limit the amount of recyclable waste produced and to enact the “reduce and reuse” portions of my approach, I suggested we collect used newspapers of a particular brand that could be recovered to be prints of *The People’s Messenger*. This method would limit the amount of consumed paper and it would make use of recyclable material. Furthermore, I planned to use 100% recycled paper for the printing process.

Aside from the newspapers, many other ideas were explored for creating a wild riot. For instance, the dialogue called for broken windows, so the production team discussed using sugar glass; however, the distance of the windows and the distortion provided by the scrim walls along with the mess and complicity of the sugar glass outweighed the benefits of the effect. The production team determined that sound effects
would provide adequate results for breaking glass. One large effect did make its way from preliminary discussion into the final design.

My interest in the public’s attack on scientific knowledge was not only the spark for the scattering of newspapers, but it also served as the basis of a bookshelf being toppled over. Ferris devised that the townspeople would invade the Stockmann home and destroy its contents, and I suggested that a wonderful visualization of their attack on Thomas’ scientific findings was to push over one of the bookcases in his study. Ferris enjoyed the idea, so I began discussing the technical requirements of the effect with Chad Mahan. I was concerned with preserving the books so we did not need to create any unnecessary waste, so I proposed that the bookcase hit Stockmann’s desk mid-fall so the books would fall and not be crushed by the bookcase. This plan also created a much more jarring stage picture because it created yet another strong diagonal line within the Stockmann home. This fallen bookshelf would then be a bold reminder of the riot throughout the duration of Act V. Mahan assured me that we would be able to rig the bookcase and brace the desk in such a way that the effect was possible.
The following chapter will examine the development and execution of each scenic element including the acquisition and creation of all properties, thereby recounting the overall production process of The Ohio State University Department of Theatre’s production of *An Enemy of the People*. This chapter will also examine the major considerations involved in producing an environmentally conscious and sustainable scene design for a theatrical production. The major scenic elements constructed for this production include translucent walls, a translucent portal, a bookcase rigged to be pushed over, several freestanding windows and a door. Many of these scenic elements provided unique technical challenges for the production team, stage crew and performers.

Walls

The most prominent elements of the scene design are the translucent walls and portal which we planned to achieve using scrim. At the beginning of the construction process, we pulled out all of our stock scrim in an effort to find as many usable pieces as possible and prevent having to purchase new scrim, which is amiable to both the budget and the environmentally conscious approach to the set design. There was both natural scrim, which had not been dyed, and black scrim in stock. Each option would provide unique challenges to the scene painting process. Scrim itself is quite difficult to paint because a scenic artist must be careful not to clog the openings in the weave of the scrim,
causing it to lose its translucent properties. The natural scrim accepts color via diluted washes, which pose little threat of clogging the weave; however, it is more difficult to achieve deep and dark colors, such as black, on natural scrim. On the other hand, black scrim has a dark base, but in order to achieve light and bright colors on it, one must apply thick concentrations of paint that pose a greater risk of distorting the translucency of the scrim.

There was not enough of either type of scrim in stock to cover all of the walls, so we were forced to consider using a combination of the two scrim colors, or purchase addition scrim to supplement what we did not have in stock. The final decision was to use natural scrim on the four center stage walls that made up the interior of the Stockmann home and to use black scrim to cover the portal and the two caliper walls. The reason for this choice was that the interior walls were to be painted a lighter green color, which was very achievable on the natural scrim, while the remaining walls were all painted to look like dark wood boards that faded into black, which was more suitable for the use of black scrim. In the end, we used only scrim from stock and we benefitted from the unique properties of each type.

I was also serving as the scenic artist during the Autumn 2015 semester, so I was charged with realizing the paint treatments that I developed first in my digital model and later in my painter’s elevations. My personal investment and insight as the scenic designer definitely had a major impact on my secondary role of scenic artist because I had a deep understanding of the paint treatments and how best to execute them. However, my learning curve was steep because I had not previously painted scrim.
Through the entire conception of the design, in both production meetings and in outside conversations, there seemed to be an air of mystery surrounding how the scrim would physically function when treated with paint and light. In order to clarify exactly how the scrim would function, we scheduled a demonstration. The first step in preparing samples for demonstration was to find large scrap pieces of scrim that could cover pre-existing frames. Chad Mahan devised the demonstration method. We covered two pre-existing flat frames that measured six by ten feet with scrap pieces of scrim—one in black scrim and the other in natural scrim. We then treated these two sample flats with paint as a test for the final paint treatments. Finally, we hung them from a batten for the lighting designer, Andy Baker, to light for the demonstration. Unfortunately, much of the black scrim material had been affected by dry rot, having been in storage for many years. The scrap of black scrim selected for the sample was the largest stretch of fabric that had been least affected by dry rot; however, the scrim encountered several small rips when put under tension for the stretching process.

For the paint test, I sprayed the natural scrim and spattered it with a green wash to match my painter’s elevations. Conversely, I gave the black scrim flat a dry brush technique in linear strokes to create widths of rough wooden boards. Unfortunately, the natural scrim sagged under the weight of being saturated in paint and the black scrim sagged under the pressure of each brush stroke. It was immediately clear that the scrim would need to be sized before receiving paint in order to maintain the rigidity of the stretching process. Sizing is a very important step when creating soft-covered flats because it contracts the fabric, which increases the rigidity of the flat. Sizing aids the
painting process by increasing resistance against the scenic artist’s brush and preventing paint from absorbing into the fibers of the fabric. Furthermore, the increased rigidity of the flat helps limit the amount of movement transferred across the flat when performers interact with the walls, such as when opening and closing doors.

While the test was rather unsuccessful, I learned a great deal. The natural scrim required much more saturated paint colors to achieve the contrast and overall green tone of the painter’s elevations. More importantly, I discovered that because of its dark and absorbent base, the typical wood grain paint treatment that progressively works from dark to light across the steps would not work. Instead, the first coat of paint applied to the black scrim would need to be quite light in value in order to provide enough contrast against the black background to be visible at a distance.

The next step was to determine which method of sizing was most appropriate. Professor and Resident Scenic Designer Dan Gray advised me to use a concentrated starch solution to size the flats. As with painting, the challenge with starching scrim is to not to clog the openings in the weave, which would lower the translucency of the drop. Professor Gray advised that I not only dilute the starch solution with water, but also tint the otherwise transparent starch with a small amount of white paint so I could easily see where I had applied the starch and prevent oversaturating. I applied the starch solution with a hand-pump sprayer, a device that is commercially sold for gardening practices. Typically, on a muslin drop, a Hudson sprayer would be used to apply the starch because of its speed at saturating a large area of fabric; however, I opted for the hand-pump
sprayer because, based on previous experience, I felt it provided a finder level of control over coverage and pressure.

Before I sized the test scrim on the stage floor of Thurber Theatre, I stretched a plastic drop cloth under the two scrim samples which were secured to the floor with staples. One sample was a piece of natural scrim and the other was a piece of black scrim. When I applied the tinted starch solution, I quickly realized that the white tint, while visible on the black scrim, was not enough of a contrast against the natural scrim to clearly see where the starch had been applied. However, the ample work light in Thurber Theatre made it easy to see the color difference between the wet and dry scrim. As a result, I decided that the tinted starch would be used for the black scrim and I could use the transparent when treating the natural scrim.

I had much more success in creating colors that were visible on the black scrim on the sample for the scrim demo. I did attempt to create a gradient of translucency using paint. Knowing that saturating the scrim with paint would clog the weave and reduce the transparency, I attempted to lay in paint heavier at one end of the sample than the other. I quickly found that this method only created a mess of paint on the scrim and would be especially challenging to create a smooth gradient. Baker and I discussed how light might achieve this gradient effect on its own by highlighting the furniture and people at the lower end of the portal leg and that the black masking beyond the top of the scrim pieces would create the illusion of opacity.

The scrim demonstration was scheduled for 14 September. Baker, Fickling, Ferris and I were in attendance along with design advisors and the technical director. The
demonstration was very helpful for most parties. It was a great opportunity for Ferris to actually see the effect of the scrim (see Figure 18) and how it might work in the show’s concept. Fickling was able to test color samples of fabric to match my paint treatment, and Baker was able to see my approach to the paint treatments on the natural and black scrim. I found this demonstration very helpful in determining that using a combination of natural and black scrim was actually the preferred option to using one color of scrim. I also realized that the color on the wall had to be much more saturated to read under light.

After confirming scrim choices, the steel frames of the walls were covered in their respective scrim; interior walls were covered in natural scrim while the portal and caliper walls were covered in black scrim. I then painted the scrim with updated paint before the moulding was applied to the walls.
Moulding and Beams

It had been my intention to avoid the use of any polystyrene products in the execution of the scenic design in order to minimize the negative environmental impact from the manufacturing process as well as the waste it would produce after use; however, polystyrene was used out of necessity in two instances. The lesser of the two uses, was as an end cap to the beams protruding from the tops of the interior walls. The beams were constructed of 1”x12” boards pieced together to create hollow rectangular boxes. The upstage end of each beam was then cut to match the face of the wall, where it would be
secured in place. The downstage end of each beam was designed to look broken away. Because the beams were hollow, there was a need for a material that could be inserted into the ends of each beam and be carved to look like splintered wood. Polystyrene was the most time effective material to use and it was a material with which I had experience carving, so I selected it to cap the ends of the beams. We were able to minimize the amount of polystyrene material used by recessing the cap a mere three inches into the beam, which was just enough material to create depth when carving.

The other instance in which polystyrene was used was in the creation of the cornice moulding on the scrim-covered walls. The technical director and I planned to create the mouldings from materials that we had in stock and/or with new materials that could be reused in the future. Therefore, in my design drawings, I provided only a suggestion of the size and scale of the mouldings and the materials to be used, rather than detailed instructions on how they were to be constructed. The larger-than-life scale of the Stockmann walls necessitated moulding that matched in size. The baseboard was the only piece of moulding which was not comprised of multiple layers of material and matched exactly to the designer drawings. It was simply a one-foot-wide strip of three-quarter-inch-thick medium density fiberboard (MDF) that was cut to each length of wall. The door casing was created by layering a strip of MDF on top of another strip of slightly thicker and wider MDF which we had also shaped with a dado. This created another step in the moulding that added more flourish without using extra material.

The cornice moulding proved to be more complicated than the other mouldings in the set because of its immense depth and overall visual mass. Mahan and I discussed two
primary options for the cornice moulding. The first option was to build them in a similar fashion to the smaller mouldings, by layering MDF in conjunction with existing cornice moulding from stock. This option presented a number of issues. We did not have enough of a single style of cornice moulding in stock, so we would have to purchase additional moulding from a millwork retailer. Not only were the retail options expensive, they all included at least one major cove shape in their profile, which would defy the very linear and geometric world of the set. Additionally, the sheer size of the moulding with all of its layers would also pose a challenge because of its weight on top of the minimally supported soft-covered flats.

The alternative was to use polystyrene cut to a specified profile. There was a potential to design a profile that fit the world of the play exactly and outsource the construction of the moulding to a polystyrene manufacturer. The polystyrene was a much lighter alternative, which is friendly to the structure of the walls. However beneficial this option may have been, I was very reluctant to even consider using polystyrene because of the negative environmental impact. Chad Mahan was a firm supporter of my “reduce, reuse and recycle” initiative with this production, so he was quick to offer an alternative possibility that was much more compliant with the green vision. There was a large amount of polystyrene moulding in stock as a result of a manufacturing error that created the moulding in the wrong scale. This moulding was not the exact size desired for An Enemy of the People; however, it was linear in shape and could be altered to appear larger in scale. The moulding would need to be mounted on a three-quarter-inch MDF base in order to be an appropriate size for the walls, but it would still be more lightweight
than constructing the moulding entirely from wood products. The downside would be the polystyrene waste created post-production; however, the tradeoff was that we were using product that was in stock, so the manufacturing pollution was negligible. In the end, I feel this compromise met both the visual needs as well as the eco-friendly mission of this production.

The moulding, save for the baseboard and door jambs, was installed before the walls were erected. This made the installation easier because one could work with, rather than against, gravity when attaching the moulding to the steel frame. The painting process was also a factor in deciding to install the moulding while it was down. The moulding was more accessible to the painters and the scenic artist’s spatter technique benefited from gravity allowing the spatter to pool and dry rather than running down the length of the moulding, which it would be apt to do if the walls were vertical. The walls were propped up on sawhorses so the reveals of the doors, which extended five inches beyond the steel tube framing, could be installed. This height was also much friendlier to those who installed the door casing and the cornice moulding.

The installation of the cornice moulding proved to be perhaps the greatest challenge of the set construction. The top of the walls each had a unique angle based on the desired forced perspective look. Therefore, the top corners of the walls met each other at differing compound angles, which was exaggerated in the depth of the cornice moulding. The differing angles resulted in the lines of the cornice moulding not quite matching up in the corners. Luckily, the angles were similar enough that the distortion of the corners was only visible from a very short distance. There was a miscommunication
early on about how the cornice moulding of the interior walls was to meet the cornice moulding of the portal. This resulted in the portal’s cornice moulding pieces being too short to meet the interior walls, so a small piece of cornice moulding was added on both stage left and right to join the portal and interior walls. After the paint on these two joints was touched up, the seam was invisible from the audience’s view.

The moulding and faux beams had to be installed before erecting the walls because their weight and size would make it extremely difficult to install them while the walls were vertical. The angles cut into the moulding and faux beams had to be precise in order to prevent issues when erecting the walls. Chad Mahan, and the Department of Theatre’s resident Technical Director, Chris Zinkon, worked diligently to make the compound mitered angles accurate. This process extended the installation by approximately one week; however, the tops of the walls connected correctly when the walls were erected. The only alteration that needed to be made during the erection process was that the faux beam on Wall A protruded slightly and needed to be shaved down to meet Wall B.

After the walls were erected (see Figure 19), the final pieces of moulding were applied. The baseboard was attached in place in order to cover any potential gaps in the stage floor. The corners were much less challenging on the baseboard because they did not meet at a compound angle. Vertical strips of moulding were added to all the corners in order to cover the steel frame when the walls were backlit. These pieces of moulding were twelve inch strips of MDF shaped in a similar fashion to the door casing; however, their design was simplified and did not include a second tier of MDF. These pieces of
moulding along with the baseboard were painted in a base coat prior to installation and the remainder of the paint treatment was applied vertically.

Figure 19. Process Photo – Walls, 8 October, 2015

The paint treatment of the mouldings in the set was quite straightforward. The moulding and doors on the onstage four walls were first base coated in a solid coat of sage green paint. Shadow lines were painted on everything that was dimensional in order to reinforce the dimension as well as create a direction of light from a high center source, as if it were coming from the onstage chandelier. The color used for the shadow lines was
a diluted version of the base paint for the caliper and portal wall mouldings. This subtly connected the two spaces while still providing enough contrast to highlight everything dimensional. The final step was a dark chrome oxide green spatter, which was a slightly more saturated version of the green spatter used on the walls. The three windows and the front door received the same treatment; however, after technical rehearsals began and we first saw these scenic elements under light, the colors had to be darkened. Initially, the front door and the three windows appeared to be much lighter in value in comparison to the onstage moulding because of how they contrasted to the black velour masking. Not only did this draw focus upstage, but the painted surfaces caught enough light through the scrim walls that they were still somewhat visible through the scrim at times they were meant to disappear from the audience’s view. Conceptually this was a major concern because the upstage world beyond the scrim walls could never fully be concealed. The colors had to be darkened quite a bit to match the look of the onstage moulding and to diminish how much light they picked up behind the scrim.

Doors and Windows

Two styles of doors were used in the final design. The three onstage doors and the front door were all custom built in the scene shop. The three onstage doors were designed to match the forced perspective of the walls to which they belonged. Custom made moulding, similar to the door casing, was applied to create three panels of each door that also matched the angles of the forced perspective. These three doors were fully painted before being hung. The front door was constructed and installed before being painted in order to make it available for 20 October, the first day of onstage rehearsals. The second
style of door was a thirty-inch-wide, six-panel, pre-hung, hollow-core door purchased locally. These doors were used in the two caliper walls as the entrance to the editing office and the door to the print room of the *People’s Messenger*. The pre-hung door made installation much faster. The doors were installed and received a base coat of paint before erecting the walls. The wood grain texture of the veneer on these doors made dry-brushing a grain texture much easier, though highlights and lowlights still needed to be exaggerated with paint so the lighting would not diminish the dimensions of the paneling.

The final design for the three upstage windows included two built-in stage jacks per window that would give the impression that the windows were suspended in midair. Mahan planned the construction of the steel framing of the windows in such a way that when the windows were struck, the stage jacks could be trimmed from the framing and kept in stock.

Platforms and Floor Treatment

Mahan advised that the platforms over the orchestra pit and in the calipers be designed with stock in mind. In the case of the orchestra pit area, I designed the platform to be a full eight feet so that stock platforms, which are four feet by eight feet in dimension, could be used. I also adapted the two platforms on the sides to match the new width as well as the height of the onstage show deck, with the intent of keeping both platforms in stock post-production.

The low audience sight lines in Thurber Theatre limit the amount of stage floor the audience sees. Therefore, I focused the design of the floor treatment to be more detailed downstage and less defined upstage of the walls. I selected a rustic wood floor
texture from my research and I manipulated the color of the floor in Photoshop so that it coordinated with the rest of the color scheme (see Figure 20). The floor upstage of the scrim walls was black and a layer of green spatter, the same color used for the walls, blended the black into the wood treatment in all of the doorways.

Figure 20. Research Image – Floor Reference (Photoshop-Edit)
While the floor treatment unified the entire set, I used the direction of the floorboards to define playing spaces. In the Stockmann home, the floorboards were parallel to the long center wall. The diagonal lines emphasized the forced perspective of the walls and it looked very dynamic to the audience. The floorboards on the caliper levels and on the orchestra pit ran parallel to the plaster line. The horizontal line of the floor accentuated the long, narrow playing space and helped delineate a change in location from the Stockmann home.

I painted the floor with the help of my assistant, Elizabeth Myers. We were able to paint the floor downstage of the walls before the first tech rehearsal. However, the painting process took longer than expected, so we had to schedule afternoon paint calls during tech week to paint the floor of the calipers and the orchestra pit level.

Properties

Furniture

I attended all of the initial blocking rehearsal for each act so I could facilitate furniture placement and make updates as needed. I provided options for furniture pieces based on discussions with Lesley Ferris. This flexible staging was quite helpful to both the director and I because it allowed us to see how the space worked with performers and we could immediately make changes. My presence in these rehearsals helped me monitor the use of hand props and provide suggestions as needed. Rehearsals were held in a newly acquired space, called the woodshed. The woodshed is used only for rehearsal and storage, so all of the furniture could remain set up in the space throughout the rehearsal process. I also made every effort to provide finalized furniture pieces as soon as they
were available. Exceptions to this included weighty furniture pieces, like Stockmann’s desk, and built pieces, like the bookshelf.

The furniture for *An Enemy of the People* came entirely from stock, as I had planned. I had to purchase table legs for a stock table-top used in *The People’s Messenger*. The upholstered armchairs and the four onstage straight backed chairs were reupholstered using material from stock. The fabrics I chose were all shades of green that worked well with the muted green walls. I also painted a number of tables and chairs too look like a medium wood because they had all been painted in greyscale for a previous departmental production.

**Practical Light Fixtures**

I purchased and rented a number of light fixtures for the show. We only had one appropriate chandelier in stock, so I rented the dining room chandelier from Otterbein University, after a referral from Andy Baker. I purchased two gas-style lamps from E-bay for the hall and Stockmann’s office. The lamp in the sitting room was pulled from stock. Renting and purchasing from E-bay really followed my sustainability goals.

I purchased the two pendant lights and four fall sconces because we did not have any in stock and I was unable to source appropriate fixtures from more sustainable sources. These pieces were then added to stock, so the environmental impact was limited to the waste from packaging. I also designed a gas-style work light from a research image of a print shop (see Figure 20). Aside from the purchase of two lamp shades, this light was constructed entirely from stock parts. The conduit pipe came from remnants in stock, and I pulled gas-style lamps from stock that no longer had globes and used the light.
socket and friction fit globe-holders to hold stock hurricane globes. The vertical pipe was shortened so the light fixture could closely tuck up against the lighting truss in its out position. Chad Mahan and I developed a strategy to rig the light from two points near the light sockets and under the lamp shades so the safety lines would be less visible to the audience. Mahan and Chris Zinkon rigged this light and the two pendant lights to fly in and out over the orchestra pit when operated from the fly gallery.

![Image](image_url)

Figure 21. Research Image – Late Nineteenth Century Print Shop

Bookcases

I designed two large bookcases for Dr. Stockmann’s study. They were built in shop and painted with a faux-wood treatment to match the desk. Elizabeth Myers, assistant scene designer, and properties supervisor, Kelsy Sedmak, pulled a large collection of books from stock and dressed the shelves. I assisted with dressing the stage.
left bookcase because it was rigged to be pushed over, so the spacing of the books was important. Chad Mahan joined the bottom front edge of the bookcase to the stage floor with a large hinge and he attached a safety stop to the back so the bookcase could be secured in place. I planned for the bookcase to be carefully pushed over by performers and hit the desk, which stopped the bookcase at an angle and the books fell from the shelves. This was a wonderful addition to the riot between Act IV and V, and it was coordinated with the sound design to provide maximum impact to the audience. The only issue we ran into was during the archival photo run when one performer failed to control the bookcase during its fall and the resulting force from the fall ripped the bookshelf from the hinge.

Hand Props

Elizabeth Myers, was most involved with overseeing the tracking of hand props and updating the props list accordingly. Myers attended numerous rehearsals with me, which was very beneficial to keeping the props list accurate and up to date. Rehearsal props were provided at the beginning of the rehearsal period and final show props were generally added as they became available with the exception of glassware. For rehearsal purposes, glassware was replaced with plastic and acrylic drink ware. In fact, all of the final glassware was non-breakable acrylic, except for the glass mugs for hot toddies.

While most final props were available before tech week, I withheld ephemera props such as the final newspaper covers until the beginning of tech week. My intent was to save on the waste produced in order to remain as sustainable as possible. Part of this effort was in the execution of The People’s Messenger newspapers, which were merely
paper sleeves covering recycled *New York Times* newspapers. The sleeves were printed on recycled paper and we withheld mass production until we were able to accurately estimate the number required to replace covers destroyed during the riot.

Another way I was able to reduce waste in the show was in the creation of stacks of newspapers for Act III. The *New York Times* papers used in the riot contained many pages with color images that were not period appropriate. While the riot was a collision of Victorian and modern eras, I felt the color images would look more like a mistake than a design choice, so I chose to have the pages with images sorted out of the papers. I found a way to use these color pages by using them as filler for the newspapers that were stacked and bound in the editing room of *The People’s Messenger*. These newspapers were never strewn about so there was no worry of the color images being exposed to the audience. This saved on having to collect extra newspaper to fill these pages only to be recycled at the end of the run.

Karen Mozingo, worked with the chorus of women to develop unique movements based around domestic activity. Each of the four women were assigned a prop to work with including fabric, a tea cup and saucer, a book, and a copy of a letter to Dr. Stockmann. Because these women were visually and physically tied to the Stockmann home, I wanted their props to reflect their surroundings. I found neutral cream colored props for each woman and I found ways of staining them with the same green that stained the walls of the set. For instance, there was green paint dripping down the sides of the teacup and the book had green drips in the same shape as the water damage on the walls. While I was extremely happy with the execution of these props, the props were not
prominently featured and often appeared upstage of the scrim. However, I do believe that the visual of these props really unified the scenic environment and the fact that they blended with the surroundings met the intended goal.

**Food Props**

The use of food props was not finalized until the props walkthrough on 12 October. My hope was that the distance from the dining room to the audience would be enough to mask the lack of actual food. Furthermore, the expressionistic nature of the scenic design allowed for a suggestion of food, without the necessity of actual food. However, the rehearsal process revealed that the dining room scenes involved a lot of cutting and drinking to fill the space because there was little dialogue delivered from the dining room. The action of cutting with silverware on an empty plate resulted in a lot of noise, which exposed the lack of food on the plate. As a result, I sourced loaves of black Russian bread that, when sliced, looked like pork chops at a distance. Food props were integrated on second dress.

**Tech Week**

The tech week for *An Enemy of the People* was one of the smoothest I have been a part of. This was largely because of the strong collaboration between areas throughout the process and their ability to be fully prepared to begin tech rehearsals with all major elements complete. For me, it was extremely beneficial that all of the major paint notes were complete, aside from the Orchestra pit floor, before tech began. As a result, I was free to focus on fine details of the design throughout the whole tech process. This led to a much more refined scene design with very little for me to critique in hindsight.
Much of the focus of tech week, especially at the beginning of the week, is to train and integrate the run crew. The scenery run crew consisted of four undergraduate students. Most of the Scenery crew’s workload was pre and post show. There were numerous food props to set and the bookshelf had to be set before the house opened and struck after the show. There was one major scene shift during intermission. The stage crew, with help from the assistant stage managers, struck the Act III furniture from the elevator and replaced it with chairs, crates and two sets of stairs for Act IV. Some of this scene shift was executed by performers at the top of Act IV. These townspeople were dressed in stage blacks to appear like stage hands in order to link the past and the present on stage. There were also several pieces of scenery that moved during the performance and at intermission. The elevator lift is the most prominent piece of moving scenery. The lift was operated by one assistant stage manager when it rose between Acts II and III, and during intermission, one assistant stage manager operated the lift while the other stood in the house to keep the audience clear as the lift descended. The other moving scenery included the three flown lights from the truss. These three lights were operated by one of the scenery run crew. The most complicated move for her was to fly in the work light for Act III smoothly and in time with the lift rising. This move proved to be challenging for the operator throughout most of the tech process; however, she was able to operate it well by opening night.

One of the biggest challenges of the tech process was finding the most effective way to use the scrim. I was not involved in paper tech when Andy Baker and Lesley Ferris determined that the scrim would be translucent for the duration of the play, so I
was taken aback at the first tech rehearsal. The flow of focus between rooms created by changes in opacity of the scrim was a crucial element of the storytelling from the scene design’s conception. The segregation created by the opaque walls was meant to gradually develop into a very open, translucent environment as a visual representation of political transparency in the town. For example, in Act I, Thomas is the only person who knows of the contamination, so his office is only visible to the audience when he is in it, whereas in Act V when the whole town knows about the contamination of the baths, the entire Stockmann home was to be translucent. When I expressed my concern at the tech table that night, Baker and Ferris agreed to try finding opportunities for opacity in the second tech.

While most scenic notes were very minor at first dress, there were several larger notes that I tended to the following work day. The windows and front door appeared to be much lighter in value compared to the onstage doors even though the paint color was the same. This was likely because the windows and front door immediately backed onto a black background thus creating higher contrast and ultimately the illusion that the onstage doors were a darker color. This problem was solved by repainting the windows and front door a much darker shade of the moulding color. The other major note was to move the dining table further onstage so that Catherine would be visible to more of the audience at the top of the show.

After seeing the first two acts on stage and under light, it became apparent that several props were not as effective as they had been in the more intimate rehearsal hall setting. Ferris added three toys early on in the rehearsal process that included a train, a
puppet and a horn, as a visual representation of the Stockmann children. The horn was provided by Ferris and it was the one toy that remained unchanged through the tech process. At tech table on first tech, Ferris noted that the vintage train and the knit puppet I purchased for the show were far too small and unrecognizable on stage. Under the direction of Brad Steinmetz, Justin Miller built and painted a larger train engine that was implemented on the first dress rehearsal. I replaced the puppet with a small teddy bear on the fourth tech and it was an effective solution.

In the second tech we began working Acts III and IV. These acts produced very few notes, mostly emphasizing on the need for stage crew to rehearse the work light flying in and the need for more clutter on the editor’s desk. The riot transition between Acts IV and V was a large technical undertaking for sound and lighting, so it was left for third tech along with Act V. Fortunately, the week of on-stage rehearsals allowed time for stage management and performers to adjust to the space, particularly when it came to throwing the newspapers during the riot. This ultimately lightened the scenic load when rehearsing the riot with tech. The one major challenge on third tech was coordinating the bookcase falling over. Mahan instructed performers, Joe Kopyt and Alex Wilson, on how to safely guide the bookcase to its fallen position. I worked with stage crew and stage management to set the books on the shelves using a photo of the finished arrangement so that it was a repeatable process for the stage crew’s preset.

In the fourth tech, Baker updated most the lights for Act I and II in an attempt to create a flow of opacity as performers moved through the rooms of the set. Unfortunately, Baker was not in attendance at the second tech due to an illness. The updates he made
solidified the need to find times of opacity; however, the updated lighting looks did not match the flow of performers and there were several instances where the walls appeared solid when in fact they should have been translucent to reveal people in other rooms. Again, at tech table I advocated for the importance of finding balance between opacity and translucency, so Ferris agreed to continue developing the flow of light at the first dress rehearsal. At this point in the process, my notes became limited to minor details such as making sure the dining room door was opened to its spike mark to allow for maximized sight lines.

First dress was one of the most magical moments of the entire production process for me. It was the first time we saw all of the design elements come together and I was truly overjoyed with the result. While the design team had coordinated color palettes, it was still surprising to see how clear the color story was once all of the elements came together. This is obviously the design team’s goal; however, it is a rare occurrence that the entire design is so well coordinated at first dress. The only element that seemed to be out of place was the white blouse Petra wore because of how bright it was in comparison to the surroundings. Fickling first dip-dyed the blouse to a grey color in hopes of lowering the brightness; however, after finding the blouse was still too bright, she updated the top half of Petra’s costume to a purple blouse and corset that better fit the color story.
CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION

On the whole, the scenic elements of *An Enemy of the People* were a successful part of the final product. The design effectively created multiple scenic environments that were unified and that transitioned seamlessly between locations. The world of *An Enemy of the People* was both realistic and expressionistic at times, breaking barriers literally and metaphorically. Most of all, the scene design worked in tandem with the script and the director’s concept to amplify the connection to the audience.

The scrim walls were extremely effective in the storytelling of the play. In hindsight, it would have been beneficial for me to have attended the paper tech to ensure all parties were on the same page about the composition of opacity throughout the show. The final composition was a progression and flow of opacity that allowed the audience to follow the focus of the scene whether it happened to be offstage in the dining room or on stage in the sitting room. In the first two acts, the scrim was quite cinematic, offering the audience a glimpse into a more fully realized, realistic interior (see Figure 22).
Figure 22. Production Photo – Act I, Stage Right
Upon returning to the Stockmann home in act V, the convention of the scrim changed and became almost entirely transparent, serving as a metaphor for the transparency of information in the town after Thomas’ speech the previous evening. Also, through the use of less realistic color and texture, the lighting design made the world seem more expressionistic than realistic, which proved to be an appropriate shift after the jarring clash of past and present in the riot.

Acts III and IV very successfully departed from the Stockmann home. The transition choreography from Act II to III was simple yet effective, the elevator rising and the work light descending all while Hovstad prepared his workspace in silhouette. This transition, much like the scrim, provided an element of stage magic, which was not only visually interesting, but it was also extremely effective at focusing the audience’s eye to the new playing space of the elevator platform (see Figure 23). Furthermore, the intermission change in combination with Ferris’ adaptation of the townspeople as stage hands was yet another element of surprise that helped the audience adjust to the collision of time periods and the break of the fourth wall. The intimate setting of Act IV also created a dynamic composition with the placement of the chorus of women in the Stockmann home under dim light.
Overall, the paint treatments on the scenery were quite successful. The green scrim walls adapted well to light and were able to seem very realistic at times, yet more grungy and conceptual at others. The horizontal boards painted on the black scrim created a nice frame for the Stockmann household and also a great backdrop for the other locations. The horizontal boards drew the eye inward to the center of the stage, while visually connecting the caliper space to the rest of the world.

We learned early in the technical process that the black scrim appeared to be far more translucent than the natural scrim. There were several contributing factors to the difference in transparency. The orientation of the walls affected the opacity the most.
When looking directly at the weave of the scrim, as was the case with the two legs of the portal, it is much easier to see through the weave than it is when the scrim is viewed from an angle and the weave becomes foreshortened. Thus, because the four natural-scrim-covered walls were set at an angle to the audience, the weave of the scrim was foreshortened resulting in what appeared to be a higher opacity. Lighting also played a crucial role in unifying the opacity across the walls. Achieving a high opacity with scrim involves a great deal of front light with little to no back light, but, because of scrim’s open weave, some light does filter through the scrim. This light, in conjunction with the angled walls, highlighted the furniture upstage of the walls, thus making it visible through the portal.

The integration of the two walls in the calipers was one aspect of the design which worked less well than I had hoped. Like the rest of the walls, these walls were covered in scrim and were translucent at times. However, the larger, more open sections of walls crossed the threshold of the proscenium and therefore limited the space in which performers could be lit in full view of the audience. This did not affect Act III where the caliper walls were primarily used; however, the chorus of women were introduced behind these walls during Act I. After trying positions on the upstage and downstage sides of the doors, the women were placed on the upstage side facing the audience. Unfortunately, there was not enough room for both actors to be seen by the majority of the audience. In hindsight, it would have been more beneficial to have the doors either further upstage or downstage to create a larger portal to position the women behind. However, given that the women’s blocking, as well as their role in the story telling, was largely unknown until
long after the finalized designs were due, I believe the choice to center the doors offered
the most opportunity for staging.

The success of the visual world of *An Enemy of the People* can largely be
attributed to the cohesive collaboration of the design team. Not only was the quality of
work produced in each design area very strong individually, it was clear that all three
visual designers shared a clear vision of the end result. This shared vision manifested in a
cohesive and complementary color palette. Fickling and I coordinated our color palette in
a way that set boundaries between the people and the places of the play. The secondary
and supporting characters fell into a much more neutral palette, similar to the grey and
brown tones of the set. On the other hand, the Stockmann family, dressed in more
saturated colors, stood out against the neutral green and grey-toned backdrop of the set.
This complementary scheme drew focus to the principal characters and metaphorically
suggested their nuanced outlook on the world and how they have outgrown their
surroundings. These contrasts and connections were further emphasized by Baker’s
lighting. For instance, his bold evening tones of blue and purple within the Stockmann
home created cohesion between the environment and the members of the Stockmann
family, while the transparency created by light beyond scrim in Act V negated the
connections founded in Act I.

In particular, the collaboration between the scene design and the lighting design
was extremely powerful. Andy Baker created a fluidity to the Stockmann home by
seamlessly adding and subtracting light upstage of the scrim walls to alter the opacity of
the walls. The transition between the opacity of the walls during the pre-show look to the
transparency of the walls at the top of show surely seemed magical to the unsuspecting audience. Furthermore, when we departed the Stockmann home for Acts III and IV, lighting further defined the scenic environment and heightened the focus on the new locations. For example, the lighting of Act III emphasized the horizontal layout of the playing space. In turn, the upstage environment of the Stockmann home receded from focus and nearly disappeared entirely.

One of the most gratifying responses to the scenic design came from Richard Sanford, a freelance writer for Columbus Underground. Sanford writes, “Joshua Quinlan’s jaw-dropping set designs – walls that (with the aid of lighting designer Andy Baker) are opaque one minute and transparent the next help underscore how much of life is lived in little boxes and simultaneously create the impression of a wider, greater world all around. It’s the kind of theatre magic that makes jaws drop in the service of the heart of the text, not by selling it out.” As a theatre practitioner, one’s highest priority is to serve the text and aid in the story telling. I am absolutely humbled by Sanford’s comments and I feel determined to continue to find equally unique and supportive means of visual storytelling in all of my future projects.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the scene design for An Enemy of the People is that a majority of the set itself will be reused. I am absolutely thrilled that Professor Dan Gray chose to adapt the four walls that were the Stockmann home in his scene design for The Coast of Illyria (see Figure 24), which opened on 14 April, 2016. This production was a premiere of a new adaptation by Jennifer Schlueter with Cece Bellomy. The play itself focused on Charles and Mary Lamb as they adapt Shakespeare’s works for children.
Gray found inspiration in the theme of adaptation in this production as he transformed the Stockmann home into the Lamb’s apartment. Gray was also very aware of my sustainable movement, so this pairing of design approaches seemed serendipitous. The fact that my design will be recycled truly brings my sustainable vision full circle.

Moving forward, I plan to continue using green theatre practices whenever possible. In March, 2016, I had the pleasure of attending the United States Institute for Theatre Technology’s national conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. I attended several panel discussions on sustainable theatre topics, which were very informative. I was pleased to meet so many individuals with similar goals as me; however, it became clear that, especially as a freelance designer, we sustainably-minded individuals often have little control over anyone’s environmental footprint other than our own. That being said, one can choose either to work with like-minded people or to make their sustainable goals clear wherever they work. I firmly believe in the importance of making theatre as sustainable as possible and I know that sometimes it can be as easy as following the three “R’s” – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.
Figure 24. Scenic Sketch – *The Coast of Illyria*, Scene Design by Dan Gray
WORKS CITED


APPENDIX A: DIRECTOR’S CONCEPT
Preliminary Director’s Concept by Lesley Ferris

Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* (1882)

A version by Rebecca Lenkiewicz (2008)

From a literal translation by Charlotte Barslund

March 2, 2015

*An Enemy of the People*—or the story of a Stand Alone Man.

Henrik Ibsen = Dr. Stockman = history is important to understanding the play

Unlike his previous works—*A Doll’s House* (1879) and *Ghosts* (1881)--- that focused on households in crisis, this play examines a controversy that claims an entire town. Ibsen criticized the engrained belief in his society that the community was an honorable, moral institution that could be trusted. *An Enemy of the People* challenges this by exposing not only the conservatives but the liberals; both ends of the social spectrum are portrayed as equally self-serving.

The play responded to the wide-spread rejection and censorship of *Ghosts*. Both *A Doll’s House* and *Ghosts* were scathing commentaries on the moral bankruptcy in society. *Ghosts* exposed this through the story of a son dying from venereal disease passed on to him from his philandering father. Taken aback by the vehemence, the censorship of this
work, and the scandal that followed, Ibsen broke from his characteristic work habits and wrote *An Enemy of the People* with a fury of energy in six months.

…I firmly believe that an intellectual pioneer can never gather a majority around him. In ten years the majority may have reached the point where Dr. Stockman stood when the people held their meeting. But during those ten years the doctor has not stood stationary; he is still at least ten years ahead of the others. The majority, the masses, the mob, will never catch him up; he can never rally behind him. I myself feel a similarly unrelenting compulsion to keep pressing forward. A crowd now stands where I stood when I wrote my earlier books. But I myself am there no longer, I am somewhere else—far ahead of them—or so I hope. [Ibsen in a letter to his friend Georg Brandes, who rebuked him for isolationism and not putting his shoulder to the progressive wheel, June 12, 1883; in Meyer, 509].

“*An Enemy of the People* is an attack, not merely on those who lead people by the nose, but on those who allow themselves to be thus led.” [Meyer, 510]

**The Plot:** The story takes place in a vacation spot whose primary draw is a public bath. The town’s doctor discovers that the water is contaminated by the local tannery. He expects to be acclaimed for saving the town from the nightmare of infecting visitors with disease, but instead he is declared an 'enemy of the people' by the locals, who band
against him, throwing stones through his windows. The play ends with his complete ostracism from his community.

**Genre:** Is it a comedy? What is it?

"I am still uncertain as to whether I should call it a **comedy** or a straight drama. It may [have] many traits of comedy, but it also is based on a serious idea." [Ibsen writing to a friend; source tbc]

“Ibsen’s view seems to have been that a mixture of wisdom and folly was to be found among the best of men. Even his admiration for his embattled hero’s sentiments is qualified by mordant awareness of the complexity of human motivations and a **comic appreciation** of Stockmann’s boyish naiveté and boisterous over confidence.” [John Gassner, intro to the play in *Four Great Plays by Ibsen*, 1971, p.129]

“I have enjoyed writing this play. . . Dr. Stockman and I got on so well together; we agree on so many subjects. But the doctor is a more **muddle-headed person** than I am; and because of this and other peculiarities of this, people will stand hearing a good many things from him, which they perhaps would not have taken I good part if they had been said by me.”

[Ibsen to his published quoted in *Six Plays by Henrik Ibsen*, translated and introduction by Eva Le Gallienne, 1957, xxi]
Le Gallienne describes Dr. Stockman as a “*comedy-character part*” and later she explains how Ibsen was “disgusted and disappointed by the attacks the so-called Liberal Press had hurled against *Ghosts*; he had expected abuse from the Conservatives, but he had confidently looked to the Liberals for support. Now in *An Enemy of the People*, he retaliates, and heaps contempt and ridicule upon the liberal newspapers of the time through his hilarious caricatures of the editor, report and printer of *The People’s Monitor*. It was never wise to invoke Ibsen’s anger. These portraits are as vivid and as full or **sardonic rage as Daumier’s drawing** of the law courts. The dart of Ibsen’s vitriolic pen must have drawn blood from many a contemporary journalist. “ [xxi—xxii]

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**Thinking about design and production**

The play was produced in 1888 at the Court Theatre in Meiningen, where, William Archer noted, “the fourth act was naturally found to offer a superb opportunity for the Meiningen methods of stage-management.” [Meyer, 204; Note: stage management meant directing in 1888—the concept of directors as we know them did not exist until the late 19th century and the Duke of Meiningen is often credited as being the so-called ‘first’ director.]

One cannot think about producing Ibsen without considering his own thoughts on his work:
Anyone who wishes to understand me fully must know Norway. The spectacular but severe landscape which people have around them in the north, and the lonely, shut-off life—the houses often lie miles from each other—force them not to bother about other people, but only their own concerns, so that they become reflective and serious, they brood and doubt and often despair. In Norway every second man is a philosopher. And those dark winters, with the thick mists outside—ah, they long for the sun!


**Lesley’s voice:** While I was working on developing my preliminary thoughts I read a piece in *The New York Times* on Feb. 27, 2015 entitled “Noted Climate-Change Skeptic Is Linked to Corporate Funding.” The piece explores a contemporary example—not of a Dr. Stockman-like character, but a current event that links to current debates over the environment and social conscience: do we strive to save the planet for those who come after? Or do we expend our resources now to fill the pockets of corporate powerhouses? Such contemporary social and political issues are the center piece of Ibsen’s play.

I am still thinking through the design issues but do have some early thoughts:

**Scenic/Lights/Costume/Sound:** A suggestion of the period—selective choices versus full-blown realism. A Thurber stage that is mobile, shifting and has the ability to adapt to a new setting or act quickly. Less is more. Can the edge of Thurber stage serve as a
liminal space between the Ibsen’s narrative and the spectators who exist in 2015? The play is a merging of 1882 Norway and 2015 Columbus/USA. Can the two eras fuse, spill over into each other, even explode?

Such an explosion occurs in the famous Act Four of the script—the hall in Captain Horster’s house where the town meeting takes place and the townspeople gather to hear Dr. Stockman speak.

It is this scene that ignited a certain theatrical mayhem and lead to political action by members of the audience in Paris, Barcelona, and Petrograd. When the play was staged in Paris at the Théâtre de L’Oeuvre in 1893 outbursts from the audience gave the theatre notoriety as ‘the center of anarchy’. In Barcelona the play was chosen for production in order to organize labor opposition to the established order. And in 1905 when Stanislavsky played the role of Dr. Stockman in Petrograd “the entire audience rose from its seats and threw itself toward the footlights.” Stanislavsky wrote that “I saw hundreds of hands stretched towards me, all of which I was forced to shake. The younger people in the audience jumped on the stage and embraced Dr. Stockman. It was not easy to establish order and to continue with the play. That evening I found out through my own experience what power the theatre could exercise.” (quoted in Meyer, p. 509 from Stanislavsky’s My Life in Art. This emotional response was linked to the Kazansky Square massacre that took place the same day.) The line of Dr. Stockman’s that set this
off is in the last act of the play when he notices his coat is torn: “One must never put on a new coat when one goes to fight for freedom and truth.” (Meyer p. 508)

As one critic says about An Enemy of the People: this play was “the first political debate which succeeds in remaining a great play.” (quoted in Meyer, p. 509)

Act Four: This act would be performed as far towards the house as possible. (Yes, I know lighting positions might be an issue.) Dr. Stockman addresses the audience, our audience. Some of our actors are embedded in the front rows—they come forward to the edge of the stage. Others (crew?) come from back stage and join those in the house. All of these ‘towns people’ are in contemporary dress—blacks fro crew members, regular 2015 clothes—owned by the actors. This is a clash of two eras: the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 21st.

Captain Horster’s house transforms to Stockman’s study of Act Five. This transition is choreographed, fully visible as an uprising of the people, an attack on the Stockman household, the windows are smashed with rocks. As the stage directions read: “The room is in chaos.” (p. 81)

These are merely beginnings of my thoughts on this production. I will develop this much further once I have time to engage and collaborate with the design team.
Figure 25. Research Image – Hammershøi, *Interior*, Unknown Date
Figure 26. Research Image – *Girls At Window*, Circa 1900, Peter Ilstead
Figure 27. Research Image – *Mother and Child in Dining Room*, Carl Holsøe
Figure 28. Research Image – Late Nineteenth Century Printer at Work
Figure 29. Research Image – Water-Damaged Wall Texture
Figure 30. Research Image – Green Water Drip on Wall
Figure 31. Research Image – Ruined Library: Bookcases
Figure 32. Research Image – Ruined Library: Window
Figure 33. Research Image – *Ghosts*, Brooklyn Academy of Music
Figure 34. Research Image – *Ghosts*, Brooklyn Academy of Music
Figure 35. Research Image – *Ghosts*, Brooklyn Academy of Music
Figure 36. Research Image – Therme Vals Water Reflection on Walls
APPENDIX C: DESIGN DRAWINGS
Figure 37. Design Plate Q1 – Act I-II Ground Plan
Figure 38. Design Plate Q2 – Act III Ground Plan
Figure 39. Design Plate Q3 – Act IV Ground Plan
Figure 40. Design Plate Q4 – Center Line Section
Figure 41. Design Plate Q5 – Platforms
Figure 42. Design Plate Q6 – Wall Elevations
Figure 43. Design Plate Q7 – Wall Elevations
Figure 44. Design Plate Q8 – Portal Elevations
Figure 45. Design Plate Q9 – Caliper Wall Elevations
Figure 46. Design Plate Q10 – Beam Elevations
Figure 47. Design Plate Q11 – Beam Elevations
Figure 48. Design Plate Q12 – Door Elevations
Figure 49. Design Plate Q13 – Front Door Elevations
Figure 50. Design Plate Q14 – Window Elevations
Figure 51. Design Plate Q15 – Bookcase Elevations

NOTES

- NON-COMPLIANCE FROM STOCK
- UNIT IS SHOWN WITH LUCITE SHELVES, SWING, LOWER FRAME AND ENDS ARE CLEARLY INDICATED.
- LOWER SHELVES ARE CLEARLY INDICATED.
- DOOR PANELS ARE A HUNKY DETAILS.
- ONE BOOKCASE WILL BE MOUNTED TO TOPPLING AND EIGHT NO ANGLE MEETING THE SPECIFICATION.
- MAKE THE DEPRECATED PARTS, THERE ARE NO UPPER SHELVES.
- CREAM HANDLES FROM STOCK.
Figure 52. Design Plate Q16 – Properties Elevations
Figure 53. Paint Elevation – Interior Walls
Figure 54. Paint Elevation – Portal/Caliper Wall
APPENDIX D: FINAL PROPS LIST
### Properties List

*The Ohio State University - Department of Theatre*

**Furniture Properties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Working Notes</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armchair</td>
<td>upholstered, coordinating, wood accents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Sitting Rooms</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting chair</td>
<td>upholstered seat, wood structure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Sitting Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Table</td>
<td>wood, with drawers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Sitting Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Table</td>
<td>wood, 3 drawers, black</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Sitting Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp</td>
<td>On side table, wood, black, turned</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Sitting Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half table</td>
<td>long, wood, with a lamp</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Frames</td>
<td>arranged above half table, suspended in air</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pull and Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp</td>
<td>On Hall table</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crate Rack</td>
<td>wood, black</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Table</td>
<td>wood, table, chair footrest in passageway</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Dinner Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining Chairs</td>
<td>wood, upholstered seat, 2 armchairs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Dinner Rooms</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sideboard</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Dining Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shower Curtain</td>
<td>hanging on a rod across each DR window</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Dining Rooms</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Front</td>
<td>entire of table, remains all of the show</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Dining Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk</td>
<td>large, many drawers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Dining Rooms, Hall 1</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamps</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookcase</td>
<td>see design-hanging for space, filled with books</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtains</td>
<td>lace, red and cream valance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globe</td>
<td>antique, in wooden stand, satin high</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Table</td>
<td>wood, covered in paper and print shop dressing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>People's Messages, Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stools</td>
<td>wood, black, height</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>People's Messages</td>
<td>More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small table</td>
<td>small, table height, for wine bottle and glasses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>People's Messages, Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>People's Messages, Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtains</td>
<td>wood, matching, includes PM chairs to make 6 total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>LI</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>People's Messages, Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtains</td>
<td>wood, matching, includes PM chairs to make 6 total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull and Build</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1.V</td>
<td>People's Messages, Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Figure 55. Props List – Page 1
## Properties List

### Hand Properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Napkin cloth</td>
<td>Build Billing/Preset various states of use (fold/cut, etc)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost Setting</td>
<td>Ghost, silverware, 3 place settings have leftover food, 3 are clean</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Preset Prentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steak</td>
<td>Steak of beef</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Buy</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine bottle</td>
<td>One no label, 2 Pull</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Preset Prentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasses</td>
<td>Acrylic wine glasses</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Preset Prentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick</td>
<td>Acorn, black/white accents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tote</td>
<td>Totes, some hold 2 maps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorator</td>
<td>Decorator for wine and spirits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Preset Prentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass Maps</td>
<td>Clear glass maps for Hosts/sellers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Buy</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing Needles</td>
<td>Sewing Needles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarn</td>
<td>Yarn (bulk, partially tassled already, simple roll)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlepoint</td>
<td>Needlepoint</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Schoolbooks, Workbooks, Notebooks, Textbooks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pull/Build</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Letter to envelope, from Bette Comerford</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovel of Papers</td>
<td>Shovel of papers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envelope</td>
<td>Envelope Comprise Peter's response and the manuscript</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintings/Costume box</td>
<td>Paintings/Costume box</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Glazed</td>
<td>Water Glazed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival, Scripted</td>
<td>Archival, Scripted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull/Buy</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Addiswell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistor</td>
<td>Whistor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Buy</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colored paper</td>
<td>Colored paper</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colored paper</td>
<td>Colored paper</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift wrap</td>
<td>Gift Wrapping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Letter to costume, opened</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume</td>
<td>Gifts from Peter/Stockman/character, official</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet</td>
<td>Sheet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pull</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card</td>
<td>Blank paper, master/note on it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Master/Stockman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes
- UPDATED 12 October, 2015 by Joshua Quinlan

**Figure 56. Props List – Page 2**
APPENDIX E: PRODUCTION REVIEWS
Theatre Review: OSU Theatre’s An Enemy of the People Puts a New Coat of Paint on a Tragically Timeless Story

Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*, published in 1882, is an anguished look at the cost of standing outside society to make a stand for what someone believes in, the subtle ways in which we’re all infected by hypocrisy, and the uneasy shifting of alliances of blood and friendship. It’s as important, vital, and gut-churning today as it’s ever been and it’s been given a nimble, vibrant revival by OSU Theatre under the direction of Lesley Ferris using Rebecca Lenkiewicz’s lithe 2012 adaptation.

The play is set in a series of tiny rooms around a Scandinavian tourist town whose economy orbits around their therapeutic baths. We meet Catherine Stockmann (Ambre Shoneff) as a series of town intellectuals including the town newspaper (The People’s Messenger) editor Hovstad (AJ Wright), his sub-editor Billing (Joe Kopyt), and a sailor Captain Horster (Isaiah Johnson), arrive at their family’s home for an informal salon/drinking party to discuss the issues of the day. While they wait the arrival of her husband, Thomas Stockmann (Zack Meyer) the door is darkened by his brother, Peter (Blake Edwards), the mayor. As Dr. Stockmann finally arrives home, a ball of nervous energy, we see long-standing tensions rise between he and his brother, amidst relatively light-hearted banter occasionally weighted with the ballast of talk about abstract comments about morality, aided by the arrival of the Stockmanns grown daughter Petra (Mandy Mitchell), a school teacher.

Shortly thereafter, the source of the nervousness becomes apparent: Stockmann’s discovered that the baths are not only not restorative, they’re actually harming people. There is specific discussion of a typhoid outbreak but soon the baths are viewed as a more literal cancer on the town and the countryside, soaking up the corruption of politicians (who rejected Dr. Stockmann’s earlier advice to build the baths with pipes placed higher and routed differently) and the sins of the previous generations (by way of the tanneries who are directly polluting the water and soil). The doctor is certain he’ll be viewed as a hero and high on I-told-you-so hubris so rushes to the newspaper to have his report printed the next day as well as roping in the printer Aslaken (Gabriel Simms) who also heads the Property Owners Association and his father-in-law Morten Kill (Benito Lara).

As his brother the mayor tries to offer compromises that seem clear to make everyone else sick, Stockmann watches his hopes of being viewed as a hero crack and
curdle. In denying Aslaken’s nudgings toward moderation, he burns that bridge. Morten Kill realizes the “fact” of his tannery being the worst of the polluters makes a mockery out of everything he and three generations before him worked to build. It doesn’t take much, if any, disinformation to make people less concerned with the health of tourists and outsiders when an economy could be crippled taking food out of their own children’s mouths. And it’s as understandable how they rise to hate the man who presents these decisions in black and white strokes and ignores their humanity as it is understandable how the mix of ego and reason pushes Dr. Stockmann to entrench further even at his own children’s risk and his family’s world burns around them (in an astonishingly literal, slow-motion ballet of destruction that’s one of the most striking things I’ve seen on a stage all year).

An Enemy of the People uses Stockmann as a thinly veiled stand-in for Ibsen, a white-hot rebuke to the detractors of his earlier masterpiece Ghosts and it’s no surprise Stockmann is one of the richest male leads in the theatrical canon. Zack Meyer does a fantastic job as the hero who’s self-aware enough to know how much he’s hurting the people he knows but all-seeing enough to stay focused on the greater good, whose hypocrisies are minor compared to the other men. Blake Edwards’ Peter, as his main adversary, is a masterful portrait of the other side of that coin, an almost identical personality but with pragmatism as his tin god instead of reason.

Wright and Kopyt’s Hovstad and Billing are a delightfully weaselly pair, on the verge of giving lie to Mencken’s line about going broke underestimating the public. The greatest rage from Ibsen’s pen in this work is reserved for the press – there’s an understanding that being The People’s Messenger means a combination of snake oil sales and sucking up, telling the mob what they want to hear while still thinking you’re better than they are and cowering under the almighty dollar.

Shoneff and Mitchell do a stunning job, with Shoneff as the rock and Mitchell as the light, making real characters out of a play that (while helped in the adaptation some) takes a very dim view of women in general. Mitchell’s interaction with Hovstad when their paths diverge is electrifying even as I cringed all the way down. The adaptation and direction also help to even this out in the climactic public meeting by placing the townspeople directly in the audience and making several of the strongest, unrelenting voices women (most notably Natalie Davis and Kelsey Catherine Frustere), as a trick it’s breathtaking and helps in some small way to redress the imbalance in the text. A less successful way to show women as the underclass being ground down by the other decision making is the silent chorus of women who appear on the stage in what feels like arbitrary times, usually accompanied by an underlining effect of running water that everything else in this production is too good for.

The adaptation of the play is a very loud, bold colors, knives out at all times read on the play. That volume makes the line between humor and tragedy even harder to walk, but the cast with a couple exceptions of going too broad handle this very well. And the
direction keeps an emotional reality grounded without slipping into some soggy realism that might have sunk the metaphorical elements. Ferris’ finely tuned direction is aided greatly by Sarah Fickling’s costumes and Joshua Quinlan’s jaw-dropping set designs – walls that (with the aid of lighting designer Andy Baker) are opaque one minute and transparent the next help underscore how much of life is lived in little boxes and simultaneously create the impression of a wider, greater world all around. It’s the kind of theatre magic that makes jaws drop in the service of the heart of the text, not by selling it out.

While it’s not a perfect production, Lesley Ferris, OSU Theatre, and the cast are to be commended for reminding the world of this story that desperately needs told. It’s a complicated, difficult script given complicated, rich, intense life. A classic refurbished with the kind of care it needs to again shake you by the lapels.
We all like to think we’d do what is right when faced with a situation involving safety, but Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* puts forth a situation that has dire consequences no matter the decision. Though first performed in 1882 and set in a coastal Norwegian town, this story about a doctor standing up to show that the lucrative tourist-heavy town baths are cesspools of disease has a lot to say about commerce and health even today in the fine production being performed by the Department of Theatre at The Ohio State University.

Zach Meyer plays Dr. Thomas Stockmann, the man who has proof that the town baths are toxic, with a kind of verve that is admirable. Mr. Meyer is jovial and likable at the beginning, and he is terrific at expressing confusion that others don’t see the correct course of action to take – or even that there is an option. His Dr. Stockmann isn’t afraid to stand alone, even when his wife and some friends have their doubts. Mr. Meyer doesn’t fall into coming off like a sanctimonious martyr, a danger in this material; he’s a doctor and a man of science and wealth – but he’s also quite human and sensitive to the health of the community.

Mr. Meyer is paired against Blake Edwards as Peter Stockmann, the brother who wants to silence Dr. Stockmann’s report as closing the baths would mean financial ruin for the town. Mr. Edwards has some of the best lines in the piece, and so many are delivered with fire and conviction. “The world doesn’t revolve around your science,” he snarls to his brother, “It’s about money!” Mr. Edwards ostensibly plays the villain of the piece, but he isn’t all bad, really. He makes plenty of good points, even though they are morally and ethically questionable. What he says isn’t far off from what I have heard during some of our presidential debates. Mr. Edwards walks and talks with real authority, and one can understand why he tends to get his way. When his brother asks him how he expects the public to respond if he recants his statements as requested, Mr. Edwards responds simply, “The public is like a woman: fickle.” The audience groans, but don’t we all know people similarly sexist?

Aside from the excellent performances by Mr. Meyer and Mr. Edwards, the impressive set by Joshua Quinlan is reason enough to see the show. Constructed of high panels that zigzag across the stage to represent doorways and walls within the Stockmann home, the set is a real beauty, the panels translucent depending on the lighting to allow us
to see action going on in other rooms. Lighting designer Andy Baker is also to be commended for illuminating just the rights spots to direct our attention to important action happening in other areas of the sprawling stage.

Director Lesley Ferris does a marvelous job of taking a play written over a hundred years ago and making it feel relevant in today’s world (in no small part aided in this adaptation by Rebecca Lenkiewicz, with dialogue that sounds current but not out of character with the setting). Ms. Ferris ingeniously even transports the audience at the beginning of the second act into being a part of the action as part of the stage descends and the audience is plunged into a town hall meeting. Planted actors in the audience stand up and shout as part of the play, and it’s a thrilling moment that serves to engage spectators environmentally in an unexpected way.

The only part of this production that rubbed me the wrong way was the use of a chorus of women that often appear in shadow around the set or dimly lit behind scrims. All they do is stand and stare clad in rags, and their presence is not acknowledged. It feels too “arty” to me to have this chorus of women (that’s how they are billed in the program) hiding under chairs and standing in corners, especially during the final scene. Perhaps they are representing the oppressed workers that are being made to suffer by working at the town baths, or do they represent the poverty of the past and the impending future? None of it was clear, and perhaps it shouldn’t be – but in a play with so many strengths and impassioned scenes, this kind of interpretive element I found distracting.

Enlightened the People is the kind of play – and this the kind of production – that inspires debate and discussion. So much of it is relevant today, and we can see techniques of public discourse and the twisting of facts demonstrated here going on in our current political battles. That such a talented group of students are a part of such a thought provoking production – one that doesn’t attempt to update the source with cell phones and other anachronisms – gives me hope for the future of theatre.

*** out of ****

An Enemy of the People continues through to November 15th in the Thurber Theatre at the Drake Performance and Event Center on the Ohio State University campus at 1849 Cannon Drive in Columbus, and more information can be found at

http://theatre.osu.edu/events/enemy-people
APPENDIX F: PRODUCTION PHOTOS
Figure 57. Production Photo – Act I, Full Stage
Figure 58. Production Photo – Act I, Stage Left
Figure 59. Production Photo – Act II, Full Stage
Figure 60. Production Photo – Act II, Center Stage
Figure 61. Production Photo – Act III, Center
Figure 62. Production Photo – Act IV, Full Stage
Figure 63. Production Photo – Act IV, Center
Figure 64. Production Photo – Act V, Center