



**ADELAIDE
FESTIVAL**

28 FEB - 15 MAR 2020

THEATRE / UK

**AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE /
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE**

The Doctor

By Robert Icke

Very freely adapted from Arthur Schnitzler's
Professor Bernhardi

Almeida Theatre

**27 February – 1 March 2020
3 March – 8 March 2020
DUNSTAN PLAYHOUSE
ADELAIDE FESTIVAL CENTRE**

Duration 2hr 45mins, including interval

This Almeida Theatre production is presented by Adelaide Festival by arrangement with The Ambassador Theatre Group & Almeida Theatre, Benjamin Lowy, Glass Half Full Productions, with Fiery Angel and Charles Diamond, in association with Scott Rudin and Sonia Friedman Productions.

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THE ETHICAL DILEMMAS OF PROFESSOR BERNHARDI AND FREUD'S DOPPELGÄNGER

By Rob Bath

In 1912, when 'trolls' merely lurked under bridges and the Holocaust was decades away, a groundbreaking play by a Jewish-Austro-Hungarian dramatist, short-story writer and novelist unleashed a firestorm of controversy uncannily like our 21st-Century debates on religion, race, gender, identity and social-media issues.

Professor Bernhardi, the best known play by renowned Viennese doctor/writer Arthur Schnitzler – described in 1922 by Sigmund Freud as his doppelgänger, a literary double whose literary diagnoses were as insightful as painstaking clinical research – has had a chequered production history. First performed not in Schnitzler's Vienna but in Berlin (and even then, heavily censored), the Viennese premiere took place in December 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire. It was then banned outright by the Nazis during the 1930s and '40s.

Deemed – ironically, perhaps – by its author as a 'comedy of character', the play explores anti-Semitism and Austrian-Jewish identity. Set in 1900 Vienna, where Jewish physician Professor Oskar Bernhardi is director of a private teaching medical clinic, the plot turns on his decision not to allow a priest to give the last rites to a Christian patient who is close to death.

The patient, a woman who, following a botched back-street abortion has no idea that she will shortly be dead of sepsis poisoning, is in a camphor-induced euphoric state. Unaware that she is on the brink of death, she believes herself to be recovering. Summoned by a nurse, the priest, Father Reder, insists that unless he is allowed to see her the woman will die in sin. Bernhardi denies entry to her room as he is convinced that the sight of the priest will surely let the woman know that she is dying. He wants to spare her the anguish of the knowledge of imminent death. The woman dies before the matter is decided – but not before she has been told by the nurse that a priest has arrived. Her death hastened by a grim realisation, she dies in fear.

Outrage follows, in the context of the rampant, vigorously politicised anti-Semitism of pro-Catholic turn-of-the-century Vienna. A press campaign causes public outcry. False testimony and fabrications about Bernhardi inflame the endemic anti-Semitism.

Bernhardi refuses a bribe from a corrupt official enabling him to avoid trial, on condition that he agrees to engage a Christian physician rather than a Jewish doctor based on merit. Father Reder admits privately that Bernhardi acted properly in accordance with his duty, but has stayed silent because of divine inspiration compelling him to protect the church. Bernhardi loses his post in the clinic, is sentenced to two months in prison and loses his licence to practice medicine.

Born into a medical family in 1862, Arthur Schnitzler lived in Vienna until his death in 1931. A doctor-writer, he chose a literary career over a medical career. He was unmistakably influenced by his medical training, and always more interested in afflictions of the mind than in those of the body, an interest, in his words: 'rooted not so much in medicine proper as in their poetic or literary character'.

The original staging of *Professor Bernhardi*, with no 'love interest' and only one moment of dramatic action, confounded expectations. Schnitzler's cause, like that of his title figure, was taken up, in parliament and in the press, by liberal and left-wing groups. Life imitates art.

Professor Bernhardi was produced as a tele-movie in its original tongue in 1987 under the direction of Volker Hesse, but was rarely revived on English-speaking stages through the latter 1900s, until a successful staging in the London Fringe of 2005, followed by its Off-Broadway premiere – in a new translation – by the Marvell Rep in 2012.

Now, Robert Icke's 're-imagining', *The Doctor* (first produced by Almeida Theatre in 2019), thrusts Schnitzler's confronting concept into this century, where the issues are alarmingly similar, but the trolls no longer confine their activities to lurking under bridges.

Clarifying 'best interests'

Edited extract from *Tough Choices: Stories from the Front Line of Medical Ethics* by bioethicist, barrister and award-winning columnist Dr Daniel Sokol, Bioethics Consultant on Almeida's production of *The Doctor*.

Should we withhold treatment from a newborn with a severe disability? Should we repeatedly inform this woman with Alzheimer's that her husband died ten years ago? Should we respect the confidentiality of this sexually active 14-year-old girl?

'Best interests' is a broader term than *medical best interests* – health is one value among others that may, on occasion, be offset by those others, just as a *bon vivant* might accept the life-shortening effects of eating full-fat brie daily in exchange for the pleasure derived. Overall best interests may differ from medical best interests. The two should not be confused.

Experiential interests concern our sensations of pain and pleasure. Patients in a persistent vegetative state have no such interests. They do, however, have *critical* interests.

These concern the things that give meaning to our lives: friendship, the wellbeing of loved ones, the respect of others, for example. These can be frustrated or satisfied even in the absence of consciousness. Spreading malicious rumours behind someone's back can harm their critical interests even if that person never finds out; so too can failing to discharge a promise to hand over a dead person's savings to her children. Why? Because most people have critical interests in maintaining a good reputation and helping their family to flourish.

Clinicians should attempt to uncover patients' past and present wishes, either by consulting the patients themselves, their relatives, or from written documents. What things are important to this person? How can we respect his or her critical values?

The trick is not to put ourselves in the patient's shoes, but to imagine what it is like for the patient to be in his or her shoes: firstly, by trying to understand the patient's perspective – '*What worries you most about this illness/treatment/operation?*' – then by addressing any concerns and misunderstandings. This may be enough to resolve any initial disagreement about treatment; if not, by trying to persuade the patient to accept medically-indicated interventions; if persuasion is unsuccessful, negotiating a mutually acceptable plan to find common ground, a compromise solution.

If this strategy fails, we must accept the patient's refusal. This approach protects patients from seemingly unwise decisions, while respecting their autonomy.

One of the great tragedies in medicine is when respecting a patient's autonomy has the opposite effect: when it goes against their *critical* interests. Although formally having capacity, we can sometimes be blind to our own good; thus the seropositive 25-year-old declines our outstretched hand at the edge of life's precipice, her judgment clouded by indifferent relatives and the short-lived experiential interests of illicit drugs. Her refusal to be treated signals a premature death. Such is the price of our liberal emphasis on respecting autonomy.

When there is no indication of a patient's values, how should we determine what is best? We can only consider experiential interests. Yet critical interests also play a part, as all human beings share a common core of critical interests, such as the freedom from indignity.

Where lies that indeterminate threshold – below which attempting to prolong survival is no longer in a person's interests?

CREATIVE TEAM

ROBERT ICKE

DIRECTOR

For the Almeida: *The Wild Duck*; *Mary Stuart* (also West End); *Hamlet* (also West End and BBC2); *Uncle Vanya*; *Oresteia* (also West End); *The Fever*; *Mr Burns*; *1984* (co-created with Duncan Macmillan; also Broadway, West End, national and international tours). Other theatre work includes: *Hexenjagd* (Theater Basel); *Orestie* (Schauspiel Stuttgart, awarded Kurt-Hübner-Regiepreis); *Oedipus* (ITA/ Edinburgh International Festival); *The Red Barn* (National Theatre); *Boys*; *Romeo and Juliet* (Headlong). This is Robert's final production as Associate Director of the Almeida. His future work includes *Ivanov* (Schauspiel Stuttgart) and *After Nora* (ITA, 2020). He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, has won the UK Theatre, the Critics' Circle and the Evening Standard Awards for Best Director, and is the youngest ever winner of the Olivier Award for Best Director.

HILDEGARD BECHTLER

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

For the Almeida: *Three Sisters*; *Hamlet* (also West End); *Mary Stuart* (also West End); *Oresteia* (Olivier Award nomination; also West End); *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (also West End); *Richard III*; *Uncle Vanya*; *Rosmersholm*. Other theatre work includes: *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Consent*; *Waste*; *A Taste of Honey*; *Scenes from an Execution*; *After the Dance*; *Harper Regan*; *The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other*; *The Hothouse*; *Therese Raquin*; *Exiles*; *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Evening Standard Award nomination); *The Merchant of Venice*; *Richard II*; *King Lear* (National Theatre); *Primo* (National Theatre/ Broadway); *Consent* (National Theatre/ West End); *Oedipus* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam and Edinburgh International Festival); *Roots* (Donmar Warehouse); *Mood Music*; *Cause Celebre*; *All About My Mother*; *Richard II* (Old Vic); *The Seagull* (Royal Court/ Broadway); *Now or Later*; *Krapp's Last Tape*; *Terrorism*; *Blasted* (Royal Court); *My Name is Rachel Corrie* (Royal Court/ New York); *The Crucible* (RSC/ West End); *Electra* (RSC); *Good People*; *The Sunshine Boys*; *Old Times*; *The Misanthrope*; *Hedda Gabler*; *The Master Builder* (West End); *Top Hat* (Olivier Award nomination; West End/ World Tour); *Arcadia* (West End/ Broadway). Opera includes: many productions around the world, and most recently: the world premiere of *The Exterminating Angel* for Salzburg Festival, the Royal Opera House and The Metropolitan Opera, New York; *The Damnation of Faust* for English National Opera, also at the Berlin Staatsoper (South Bank Show Award); and *La Traviata* for Glyndebourne. Film includes: *Hamlet*; *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Primo*; *Krapp's Last Tape*; *Richard II*; *Hedda Gabler*. She received an Olivier Award for her design of *After the Dance*, and also won the Australian Green Room Award for Best Opera Design for *Lady Macbeth*.

NATASHA CHIVERS

LIGHTING

For the Almeida: *Hamlet*; *Oresteia*. Theatre includes: *The Deep Blue Sea*; *The Chalk Garden*; *The House They Grew Up In* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *We Are Here* (La Mama New York); *Allelujah!* (Bridge Theatre); *The American Clock*; *Sylvia* (Old Vic); *Oedipus* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam); *The Duchess of Malfi* (RSC); *Belleville* (Donmar Warehouse); *The Cane*; *Bad Roads*; *Mistress Contract*; *Fireworks* (Royal Court); *1984* (West End/ Broadway); *Strapless* (Royal Ballet); *Sunset at the Villa Thalia*; *Statement of Regret* (National Theatre); *Happy Days* (Sheffield Crucible); *Green Snake* (National Theatre of China); *The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning* (National Theatre of Wales); *Macbeth* (Broadway); *27*; *The Wolves in the Walls*; *Home* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Sunday in the Park with George* (West End). Natasha's awards include a UK Theatre Award 2011 for *Happy Days* (Best Design); Olivier Award 2007 for *Sunday in the Park with George* (Best Lighting Design).

TOM GIBBONS

SOUND AND COMPOSITION

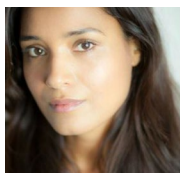
For the Almeida: *The Wild Duck*; *Hamlet* (also West End); *Oresteia* (also West End); *Mr Burns*; *1984* (also West End/ Broadway). Other theatre work includes: *The End of History*; *Pah-La*; *The Woods*; *Love Love Love* (Royal Court); *Our Town* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *All About Eve* (West End); *Hexenjagd* (Theater Basel); *The Madness of George III* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Home*; *I'm Darling* (National Theatre/ Theatr Clwyd); *Oedipus* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam); *Fanny and Alexander*; *The Lorax* (The Old Vic); *Hedda Gabler*; *Sunset at the Villa Thalia*; *The Red Barn*; *People*; *Places and Things* (National Theatre/West End); *A View From the Bridge* (Young Vic/ West End); *Life of Galileo*; *Happy Days*; *A Season in the Congo*; *Disco Pigs* (Young Vic); *Les Misérables* (Wermland Opera, Sweden); *The Crucible* (Broadway); *Anna Karenina* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *The Moderate Soprano*; *Elephants* (Hampstead Theatre); *White Devil*; *As You Like It* (RSC); *Translations*; *Plenty* (Crucible Theatre); *The Absence of War*; *Romeo and Juliet* (Headlong); *Lion Boy* (Complicité); *Henry IV*; *Julius Caesar* (Donmar Warehouse); *Grounded* (Gate Theatre); *The Spire* (Salisbury Playhouse); *London*; *The Angry Brigade*; *Wasted* (Paines Plough); *Roundabout Season* (Shoreditch Town Hall/ Paines Plough); *The Rover* (Hampton Court Palace); *Dead Heavy Fantastic* (Liverpool Everyman). Tom received the 2016 Olivier Award for Best Sound Design for *People, Places and Things*. The sound design is inspired by and includes samples of Low and Ryuichi Sakamoto.

CAST



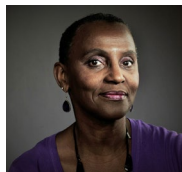
**CHRIS
COLQUHOUN**

COPLEY



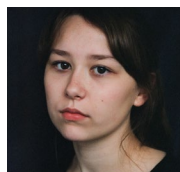
**SHELLEY
CONN**

FLINT



**ANNI
DOMINGO**

CYPRIAN



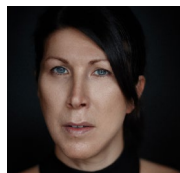
**LIV
HILL**

SAMI



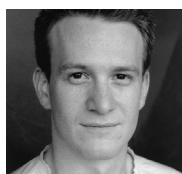
**HANNAH
LEDWIDGE**

DRUMS



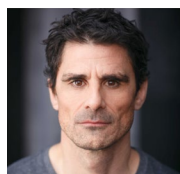
**MARIAH
LOUCA**

ROBERTS



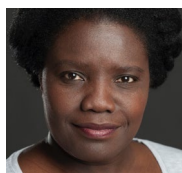
**JAMIE
PARKER**

FATHER



**DANIEL
RABIN**

MURPHY



**JOY
RICHARDSON**

CHARLIE



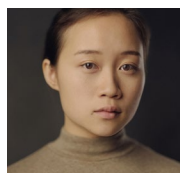
**JULIET
STEVENSON**

RUTH WOLFF



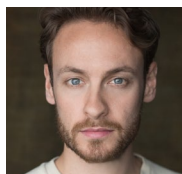
**NAOMI
WIRTHNER**

HARDIMAN



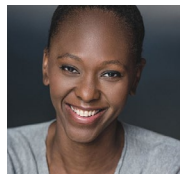
**MILLICENT
WONG**

JUNIOR



**JACK
HARDWICK**

JUNIOR / MURPHY
/ ROBERTS
UNDERSTUDY



**SABINA
CAMERON**

COPLEY /
CYPRIAN / FLINT
UNDERSTUDY

CREDITS

Director Robert Icke

Design Hildegard Bechtler

Light Natasha Chivers

Sound and Composition Tom Gibbons

Casting Julia Horan CDG

Additional composition Hannah Ledwidge

Associate Director Anthony Almeida

Resident Director TD Moyo

Associate Costume Designer Deborah Andrews

Associate Lighting Designer Nic Farman

Associate Sound Designers Johnny Edwards,
Andrew Josephs

Assistant Set Designer Ella Callow

Production Manager Matt Towell

Costume Supervision Megan Doyle

Company Stage Manager Wyn Williams

Deputy Stage Manager Kim Battistini

Assistant Stage Manager Beth Cotton

Head of Sound Johnny Edwards

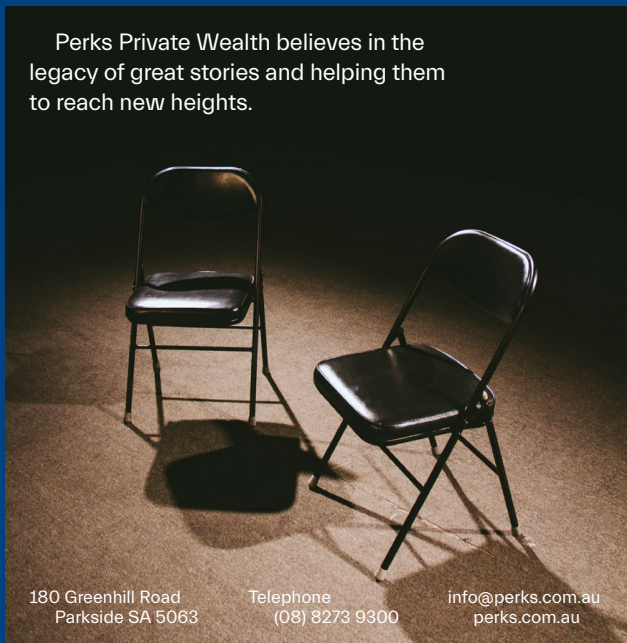
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