



Theatre & Dance

A Doll's House, secret location, London — review

Ibsen's drama is performed and improvised in a real household



Fix&Foxy's domestic staging of 'A Doll's House' © Per Morten Abrahamsen

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by: **Sarah Hemming**

Immersive theatre reaches a whole new level with Fix&Foxy's innovative staging of *A Doll's House*. The Danish company stages Ibsen's groundbreaking classic inside ordinary homes — a different household each time. They are currently in London, through the support of Chelsea Theatre and Theatre in Europe.

But Pelle Nordhøj Kann's production doesn't just surround the audience with the trappings of a live relationship as many an immersive staging might do. It goes further and embeds the story in its new home, entwining the fictitious story of Nora and Torvald Helmer with the real experience of the hosting family. To describe the technique in detail would be to undermine the spontaneity that is essential to each performance, but the result is remarkable, revealing and somewhat unsettling.



Audience members queue to see 'A Doll's House'

It takes an act of daring from all the participants: the hosts, who open their door to a group of strangers and expose their relationship to scrutiny; the actors (Cassie Raine, Ben Samuels and Jamie Zubairi), who have to improvise with whatever they find, sight unseen; and the audience (of about a dozen), who step into a delicate situation and a show of unproven quality. The uncertainty lends an edge to proceedings, as everybody crowds into the living room as if for some curious, impromptu party.

But as the story unfolds, adapted to fit the circumstances, the experiment becomes fascinating. We may think of Ibsen's play as a period piece — as a society, we have moved on since Nora famously slammed the door on her toy union. But seeing the drama at such close quarters, hearing it analysed in tandem with live experience, you realise to what extent the intimate essentials still hold. Financial pressures still impact on marriages, habit can still be perilous, and, above all, trust is at the heart of every relationship.

These are very sensitive issues, and the show raises uncomfortable ethical questions about prying into other people's lives. But there is also something tender and benevolent about it: certainly the night I saw it, the candour of the hosts was touching and the support of the audience palpable. And while this is unlikely to be the finest production of *A Doll's House* you will see, it lends a compelling new twist to the realism of Ibsen's play and brings the



uk/), [fixfoxy.com](http://www.fixfoxy.com/) (<http://www.fixfoxy.com/>)

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