

Christopher Hampton's new version of
Judgment Day
by Ödön von Horváth



RESOURCE PACK

compiled by
Charlie Payne

ALMEIDA
PROJECTS



Joseph Millson
Photo: Keith Pattison

Welcome to the Almeida Theatre's production of *Judgment Day*.

Judgment Day is the story of one man's journey towards realising that he has done wrong.

Joseph Hudetz has always done his duty, always obeyed orders. Until one day, when the attentions of a young woman on the station platform divert his attention from the oncoming express train and he forgets to change the signal. And so the train does not stop: it collides with a goods train down the line, and just minutes later 18 people are killed. From one small human error comes a great catastrophe; but who is to blame for the dead and injured? Is it the stationmaster for neglecting his duty, or the young woman who deliberately distracted him? Or could it be the stationmaster's wife for locking him in a loveless marriage, leading to him looking elsewhere for attention? Soon the spider's web of blame and responsibility entwines the whole village.

Written and set in 1937, when Ödön von Horváth was in exile from his native Germany and at a time when conscience in central Europe was very much a commodity in short supply, *Judgment Day* explores the no-mans-land between blame and responsibility, innocence and guilt. It tells us that blame very rarely rests with just one person, that society has a part in an individual's guilt.

And in 2009, there is poignancy in a play about conscience and admitting one's faults: when politicians' expenses are laid bare in the press, when the city executives bonuses are revealed as the financial crisis hits households across Britain, and hundreds and thousands of law firms specialise in brokering accident compensation - are we in a society on the brink of a new, dangerous morality? And where might our responsibility lie as an individual in this society? Christopher Hampton's new version of this thrilling play puts Ödön von Horváth's moral questions into accessible modern language.

These are fascinating arguments to explore through theatre, a medium in which one is very much an individual audience member in a collective environment, called to make your own judgment on the play before you. In the classroom, *Judgment Day* too is an excellent springboard for discussion, touching Citizenship, History and Politics, and providing challenging inspiration for improvisation work in Drama.

We hope you find inspiration in the production and this pack, and we look forward to welcoming you to the Almeida Theatre soon.

Charlie Payne, Natalie Mitchell, Anne Langford
Almeida Projects

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by Ödön von Horváth

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About Almeida Projects

Under the artistic directorship of Michael Attenborough, the Almeida Theatre presents an eclectic programme, ranging from redefined major classics to the cutting edge of brand new work.

ALMEIDA PROJECTS

Almeida Projects is the Almeida Theatre's community and learning programme. Inspired by the main-house productions, Projects deliver a range of high quality, innovative activities to make the theatre accessible to young people, inspire them creatively, and encourage an exploration of the power and potential of theatre. By opening up its doors to local young people, Almeida Projects aims to demystify the craft of theatre making and the act of theatregoing.

RESOURCE PACK

This pack aims to provide an insight into our process in taking the production from research stage to performance. We hope you will use it to help you in your own investigations into the play both before and after your visit to the Almeida Theatre.

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS

Before you see the production, one of our Projects Team may be visiting you for a workshop, bringing you insight into some of the techniques explored in the rehearsal room, the challenges the play presents and some questions. The sessions are designed to be practical and participatory so please come energised, ready to work and wearing appropriate clothes and shoes.





Judgment Day

By Ödön von Horváth
in a new version by Christopher Hampton

Cast:

Woodsman/Deputy	Andy Williams
Frau Leimgruber	Sarah Woodward
Salesman/Detective/Platelayer	Jack James
Frau Hudetz	Suzanne Burden
Alfons	David Annen
Ferdinand	Daniel Hawksford
Anna	Laura Donnelly
Thomas Hudetz	Joseph Millson
Policeman	Jake Nightingale
Landlord	Tom Georgeson
Leni	Julie Riley
Kohut/Customer	Ben Fox
Public Prosecutor/Pokorny	Patrick Drury
Child	Lewis Lemereur Palmer
	Thomas Patten

Creative team:

Director	James Macdonald
Design	Miriam Buether
Costume Design	Moritz Junge
Lighting	Neil Austin
Music	Matthew Herbert
Sound	Christopher Shutt
Musical Director	Simon Deacon
Casting Director	Sam Jones
Casting Assistant	Lucy Taylor
Assistant Director	Philip Thorne
Production Manager	Igor
Company Manager	Rupert Carlile
Stage Manager	Laura Flowers
Deputy Stage Manager	Harry Niland
Assistant Stage Manager	Claire Jowett
Costume Supervisor	Poppy Hall
Wardrobe Supervisor	Catrina Richardson
Wardrobe Deputy	Eleanor Dolan
Wig Creation	Linda McKnight
Hair & Make Up Supervisor	Cally Bone
Dresser	Charlotte Damigos
Chief Technician	Jason Wescombe
Lighting Technician	Robin Fisher
Sound Technician	Howard Wood
Theatre Technician	Adriano Agostino
Stage Crew	Ben Lee
	Pradeep Dash
	Adam Smith
Production Carpenter	Craig Emerson
Set built by	Miraculous Engineering
Set Painted by	Charlotte Gainey
	Natasha Shepherd
Stage Management Placement	Elvin Talbot
Wardrobe Work Placement	Rachel Checkley
Production Photography	Keith Pattison
Rehearsal Photography	Bridget Jones

Almeida Projects:

Director of Projects (Maternity Cover)

Anne Langford

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Projects Co-ordinator

Natalie Mitchell

Projects Administrator

Charlie Payne



Joseph Millson and Laura Donnelly
Photo: Keith Pattison

It's just another normal day at a small town railway station where a handful of passengers are waiting for the stopping train. The train is very late - as usual - but it eventually arrives and the waiting passengers embark. Then Thomas Hudetz, the well-liked, well-respected stationmaster is momentarily distracted by a young woman and does not set the next signal in time. Seconds later Express Train 405 rushes through and crashes into a goods train just outside the village. In moments, eighteen people are dead.

Standing in the wreckage of the crashed train, can Hudetz accept the truth that is hurtling towards him, of his responsibility for the accident, or at the very least his part in its circumstances? Yet he believes himself innocent - a man who has always done his duty and followed orders. A tangled web of truth, lies and public opinion follows, with the lines of justice shifting with reputation and public favour. Amidst this fickle and transient state of innocence and guilt, how long can Hudetz postpone his day of judgment?

In his depiction of the petit bourgeois, Horváth depicts a certain type of person with whom fascism struck a particular chord: those prone to follow the powerful and hate the weak; a narrow-minded outlook, closeted jealousy of their neighbours, spying on them and engaging in gossip, yet rationalising this jealousy in moral outrage. 'The Townspeople' in Horváth's play, largely vocalised through Frau Leimgruber and the Landlord, are of one (albeit swinging) opinion, favouring the victor and condemning the downtrodden. 'Justice', the very concept of right and wrong, is a moveable target, and in such a place, can anyone claim to be truly innocent?

Written at a time when fascism was a rising force in Germany and Austria, *Judgment Day* is a vividly characterised portrayal of a society that refuses to take responsibility for its actions.

A detailed plot synopsis follows.



Joseph Millson
Photo: Keith Pattison

SCENE ONE

The platform of a small railway station. It is 9 o'clock on a warm spring evening. Two passengers are sitting on the benches: Frau Leimgruber, the baker's wife, and a woodsman with his tools. The signal bell rings, before quietness returns. A third passenger arrives, a travelling salesman from the city. He knocks on the door of the booking office but there is no answer. The woodsman tells him there will be no answer until just before the train arrives: the stationmaster who lives above the station will only come down then. And the train is over 45 minutes late. It is always late.

The three waiting passengers talk about the stationmaster, Herr Hudetz. They discuss his impeccable reputation and high regard in the village. He is very much a respected member of the community. He is very good and conscientious at his job, despite the poor salary.

The signal bell rings again and the stationmaster Hudetz emerges from his office. The express train hurtles through – it doesn't stop at this small village; Hudetz operates his signal and returns inside.

The travelling salesman is keen to leave the village. He found its inhabitants very apathetic: he sells beauty products and the women were simply not interested. Only one woman took any interest: Anna, daughter of the Landlord of The Savage Inn. Frau Leimgruber reveals that Anna is engaged to a young butcher from out of town.

The stationmaster's wife, Frau Hudetz, emerges from her house with her brother, Alfons, the chemist. Frau Leimgruber greets her politely, but shows her lack of respect for Frau Hudetz out of earshot. The travelling salesman has very little interest.

The signal bell rings again and Hudetz re-emerges from his office to operate the signal. About to return inside again, he is surprised to see his wife and Alfons on the platform. The two men exchange a look for a moment before acknowledging each other; Hudetz goes back inside.

Frau Hudetz reveals that her husband hasn't spoken to her for days. She fears he will drive her mad: they fight a lot. Frau Hudetz says she hears voices, but Alfons dismisses this as silliness. He believes Frau Hudetz is simply in a state of emotional overexcitement, due to the frustration in her marriage. Alfons believes their marriage to be like a Gordian knot – and hints that divorce is the only possible solution. Frau Hudetz is adamant that she will not get a divorce. She is 13 years older than her husband – and warned him before they married to think carefully about this fact, but Hudetz said there was nothing to think about. Alfons believes he was lying, that their marriage has never been right.

We switch back to Frau Leimgruber, who reveals that Frau Hudetz, unlike her husband, is very unpopular in the village. People believe that she treats her husband very badly. The travelling salesman is only half listening.

Meanwhile, Alfons urges Frau Hudetz to take a trip away from the village, to visit the seaside for a few days. She insists that she will stay. She does not care what people in the village think. She goes back inside the house and Alfons leaves, lost in thought.

The travelling salesman has noticed Alfons; they met earlier, and he found the chemist an unpleasant character. Frau Leimgruber reveals that he is not popular in the village either. The brother and sister, she believes, are stuck-up and think themselves above the rest of the

Fortunately our stationmaster couldn't be more efficient, he's educated, he's polite, a really hard worker, the sort of upstanding young man you don't come across very often!

Frau Leimgruber
Scene One



Daniel Hawksford and Laura Donnelly
Photo: Keith Pattison

villagers. She claims Frau Hudetz is a disgrace for seducing the upstanding young Hudetz.

Anna arrives hurriedly with her fiancé, Ferdinand, the butcher. But they have not missed the train. Anna confesses to Ferdinand that she bought some cosmetics from the salesman earlier that day.

The signal bell rings once more to announce the arrival of the very late train. The waiting passengers rise, and Hudetz emerges to punch their tickets. Anna and Ferdinand bid their farewells. Frau Leimgruber, the woodsman and the travelling salesman get onto the train. Hudetz gives the signal for departure and the train leaves. Hudetz and Anna are left on the platform.

Anna is flirting with Hudetz. She relentlessly teases him that he will be in trouble with his wife if he's seen talking to another woman. Hudetz replies, saying that people should leave his wife in peace. Anna tells Hudetz that everyone is laughing at him. No one in the village can understand how he can bear to be married to Frau Hudetz: they wonder if the stationmaster is really a man at all! Anna claims to be the only one who defends him. Suddenly, she kisses Hudetz. Hudetz pushes her away tells her to leave. Suddenly the express train passes through the station. Hudetz is aghast: distracted by Anna, he forgot to set the signal for the train to stop. Anna assures him that nothing bad will happen – but Hudetz knows better. He goes back inside his office.

SCENE TWO

On the embankment, where two trains have collided. Express Train 405, which had not been given a signal, collided, not far from the little station, with a goods train. We are at the site of the accident, and can see twisted wreckage. Passengers injured and some dead have already been removed. The track is being cleared by workmen. Local people watch on from the sidelines. Meanwhile, the Public Prosecutor has arrived and has set up at a desk to begin their investigation into the cause of the accident.

Kohut, the stoker of the crashed train appears and the villagers, Leni, the Landlord and a Policeman, question him about the crash. Kohut tells them that he is lucky to be alive, many people have died. The Landlord wants to know right away whose fault it is. The stoker blames the stationmaster, as the driver of the train has always been completely reliable – with 'eyes like a lynx'. The Landlord counters that it would be very unlikely of Hudetz to have made a mistake like this. And if he did, he'd be imprisoned and would lose his job and pension. Kohut says that Hudetz needs a witness – someone who can swear he set the signal in time. But the policeman believes Hudetz was alone, and therefore he is unable to counter the argument, because Kohut can witness that the signal was not missed.

Suddenly Anna comes forward, and asks quietly to speak to her father: she says she knows Hudetz wasn't alone when it happened – because she was with him. She tells her father what happened.

The public prosecutor and his Inspector come forward. The public prosecutor tells the Inspector he believes Hudetz might be to blame – he has a funny feeling about how calm he is, and there was no fault with the signal itself. The Detective arrives in a hurry – he has just interviewed Frau Hudetz and he has a funny feeling that she might have something that she is not telling – she looked troubled. The public prosecutor summons Frau Hudetz to the scene and the Detective goes to fetch her. The Public Prosecutor

*Afraid your wife might see
you with a young girl? Aren't
you allowed to talk to me?
...If you talk to me now,
there'll be another huge row
tomorrow, will there?*

Anna
Scene One

*That was express train 405
and I forgot the signal...
There's your joke for you.
I've always followed orders
and done my duty!*

Hudetz
Scene One



Suzanne Burden and Jack James
Photo: Keith Pattison

Look into your heart, Thomas Hudetz. Think of those eighteen poor victims, think of a whole host of seriously injured, lying suffering in hospital. Do you want to lug all that around for the rest of your life, unatoned for? You're a decent man, Herr Hudetz. Why don't you ease your conscience...

Public Prosecutor Scene Two

calls the Stoker forward to give his evidence. He testifies to the reliability of Hudetz, a first-class man who has never in his career missed a signal, and who leaves a wife and three children behind. Hudetz is then called forward. He is calm, masking an inner insecurity, but he sticks with his innocent plea – he has always done his duty and followed orders – that is all he has to say, he has nothing to hide. The Public Prosecutor challenges him with the facts that Kohut the stoker has provided. Hudetz once again restates that he too has never missed a signal in his life. The public Prosecutor urges Hudetz to look into his heart, to think of the dead, the victims, the suffering caused: to think of the burden on his conscience. After a silence, Hudetz says plainly: 'It wasn't my fault.'

The Landlord then comes forward, with news of Anna's evidence; the Public Prosecutor summons her to testify. She tells him plainly that Hudetz set the signal in plenty of time. And so she recounts, as if reciting a school exercise, her tale of what happened on the station platform. She says she waved goodbye to her fiancé before stopping for a few words with Hudetz – asking him why he never came to the Inn anymore. The landlord interjects that of course Frau Hudetz never lets her husband go anywhere. He tells the Public Prosecutor that Frau Hudetz is a shrewish wife and that everyone in the village knows her bad nature. Hudetz defends her, saying that the faults in his marriage are partly his. Hudetz and the Landlord argue, and the Public Prosecutor intervenes: it does Hudetz's integrity good to see him standing up for his wife, but at the moment she is irrelevant. Frau Hudetz has now arrived and watches on, with a malicious expression. Anna finishes her story, confirming that the stationmaster did indeed set the signals at the bells, but then they heard the noise of the train, crashing down the line. Hudetz does not know how to react to Anna's testimony, and merely shrugs his shoulders when asked why he did not mention his witness earlier. Anna confirms this, saying that Hudetz did not know that she had indeed seen everything. Harshly, Frau Hudetz is called forward questions this, and she in turn is called forward to give her account.

Frau Hudetz accuses Anna of trying to provoke her, by flirting with her husband, accusing the Landlord of letting his daughter run wild with strange men. The Landlord is angry – it is clear they dislike each other and her words are not believed. When asked, Frau Hudetz tells the investigators that she has nothing at all to tell them – she will keep what she knows to herself, because she knows they will not believe her anyway. Suddenly she changes her mind and recounts how she saw Anna kiss Hudetz and the signal forgotten. Anna lets fly at her, calling her a liar and berating her for just wanting to make everyone unhappy, and she bursts into violent tears.

The public prosecutor warns Frau Hudetz that her statement is very damaging to her husband. The landlord chides her too – how can she implicate him so definitely when Hudetz is always defending her – she doesn't deserve this, and Hudetz confirms this, that his wife is lying, and that she is not quite herself. Hudetz knowing that if his word goes against his wife's he will win out in public favour, states that if a wife tries to incriminate her husband, he is within his right to get rid of her. But the Public Prosecutor is obliged to take Hudetz into custody nonetheless, until the trial. The scene ends with Frau Hudetz, very calm, asserting her truth.

SCENE THREE

The bar of the Savage Inn. Autumn, but the sun is still shining. Four months have passed since the train crash. The whole room is decorated, and Leni, the waitress, is hanging a banner saying



Thomas Patten and Joseph Millson
Photo: Keith Pattison

I'm telling you, it's all over for Frau Hudetz, she's a thing of the past, she no longer exists. She'll be getting the divorce papers soon - Goodbye, amen, over and out!

**Dale
Scene Seven**

'Welcome'. There is one customer present, eating. He rudely asks Leni to bring him more beer, as she is distracted by the preparations for a celebration party, which will welcome back Hudetz, after his four months in prison. The landlord appears, and tells the customer that Hudetz was deemed innocent at his trial and this afternoon walked away free, totally rehabilitated. The customer remarks that this is unusual, in a time when not many people walk free. The Landlord sees this as proof of the prevailing power of justice. Hudetz is tonight to be welcomed back into the village as a hero and a pillar of society. The customer leaves and the Landlord and Leni look ahead to the evening's celebration – whether Frau Hudetz will dare to turn up. Leni wonders what Frau Hudetz will do now, but the landlord is unsympathetic, believing her a thing of the past, that she will be divorced and gone very soon. Leni wonders if Hudetz will remarry.

Ferdinand enters, and the Landlord is surprised to see him, as he was not expected. As Leni goes to fetch Anna, the Landlord talks to Ferdinand about his hopes for their marriage, that they will keep the family business, The Savage Inn, running when he is gone. Anna appears and greets her fiancé. Ferdinand shows her a copy of the local newspaper, which has a picture of Anna on the front page, as 'star witness' at Hudetz's trial. It was Anna's evidence on the stand that secured Hudetz's freedom. Anna seems distant and strange, and turns very pale as Hudetz's arrival is announced. She drinks a large glass of wine and it is clear all is not well with her.

The others meanwhile are very excited. The procession arrives, with many of the villagers, including Frau Leimgruber, the woodsman and the policeman. Hudetz enters, with a fixed smile, and bows gratefully in each direction. The crowd cheer, and the landlord gives a speech about how much the town respect him, that they never lost conviction in his innocence, and how wonderful it is to see justice prevail.

Hudetz suddenly becomes aware of Anna. They greet each other formally; everyone is watching them. Hudetz, embarrassed and then decisive, raises three cheers for his 'guardian angel' Anna. As the party moves into the restaurant, leaving Leni in the bar alone. Alfons enters, and Leni, upon seeing him, is horrified. She cannot believe he has dared to show his face at the celebration, for he will surely be thrown out. Alfons however has decided to 'disown' his sister, Frau Hudetz, and he does not fear the response of the townspeople. However, he is taken back by the sheer volume of the cheer, and hurries away before anybody else sees.

Anna and Hudetz enter hurriedly. Their conversation is fast and they seem oppressed. Anna says she needs to talk to Hudetz, away from the village. She has so much to say. Hudetz believes it would be best for them not to see each other at all. It is clear Anna is consumed with guilt. She believes herself to be 'going under' with the weight of her conscience. She pleads Hudetz to have pity on her and hear her out. Hudetz agrees, and they arrange to meet the following day, at nine o'clock in the evening, below the viaduct. Anna leaves, just as Alfons returns.

Alfons is taken aback at seeing Hudetz, but Hudetz greets him calmly and kindly. Alfons tells him that Frau Hudetz is dead to him, after what she did to her husband. Alfons says he is not afraid any more, that he wants to make a public announcement that he's broken with his sister. The landlord enters and orders Alfons to leave, and is joined by Frau Leimgruber and the woodsman. However Hudetz interjects, and tells them that Alfons has broken from his sister. The townspeople do not believe him, but Hudetz insists, asking them to



Joseph Millson and Laura Donnelly
Photo: Keith Pattison

*If I was to die, Herr Hudetz,
I'd still belong to you - we'll
never stop seeing each
other...*

Anna
Scene Four

leave Alfons in peace.

SCENE FOUR

The following evening, under the viaduct, at the foot of a canyon. The policeman is doing his rounds. Suddenly he stops, seeing Hudetz. They greet each other, and the policeman politely asks what Hudetz is doing out of the village in the dark. Hudetz replies that he's just taking a walk, and the policeman, reassured, asks him to take care to watch out for gypsies and riff-raff. The policeman remarks how the party the previous night went on till 6am. Hudetz did not sleep: he has not been sleeping well lately. The policeman expresses polite sympathy and leaves to continue his rounds.

Anna arrives, and starts visibly at seeing him. She is on edge, and has crept out, not wanting anyone to know of their meeting. A train rattles on the viaduct overhead. Hudetz asks Anna what it is she wanted to talk about and Anna begins. She says she hears voices in her head, and is torn with a desire to shout out and admit that she perjured herself. Hudetz hushes her down. She asks Hudetz what he would do if she told people she lied. He says he wouldn't kill her but Anna says she does not want to go on living. Hudetz reassures her that she did her duty. The signal bell rings above and Anna is haunted – she can hear it in her head and believes the ghosts of the dead are coming for her.

Hudetz talks about the hours he spent listening to his inner voice when in solitary confinement in prison – it told him that he is innocent. Anna cannot believe that he can be making it so easy for himself. Hudetz denies this, and says he should have given Anna a good smack in the first instance, that fateful day on the station platform. Anna asks him to strike her now. She is serious and disturbed, wanting to punish herself. Hudetz is anxious about Anna, she is very pale and behaving oddly. Anna keeps picturing Hudetz, she knows him better than anyone in the world after testifying for him, even after she dies she will belong to him – it's a debt that can never be repaid. Hudetz stops her with a kiss and they hold each other.

SCENE FIVE

Three days later. The Savage Inn. All the decorations from the previous scene have disappeared and it is raining outside. Leni is sat at a table reading a newspaper. Hudetz enters. He orders a carafe of wine and sits down. Hudetz asks Leni if there have been any developments, and it is revealed that it is three days since Anna disappeared – she has not been seen since the evening she met with Hudetz at the viaduct. Anna's father offered a reward today for any useful information, but Leni has a gut feeling that she is not even alive. Leni notices a scratch on Hudetz's cheek, and he dismisses it as an accident with a rusty nail. Leni tells him that his wife has arrived back in town, the night before; Hudetz and Frau Hudetz are getting a divorce. Frau Hudetz is currently living with Alfons, the chemist, even though he publicly broke with her not that long ago. Leni comments on how fickle people in the village are – nobody liked Alfons before, but as soon as he broke with his sister suddenly he was treated with great respect.

Hudetz asks Leni why she thinks Anna is not alive. Leni believes she has killed herself. She continues that since Anna disappeared, people have begun to doubt the truth of her testimony – that Anna chose death because of her guilt at her falsehood. People are starting to believe that Hudetz is indeed guilty and did not set the signal in time. Hudetz laughs, then suddenly become serious. Leni



Julie Riley and Joseph Millson
Photo: Keith Pattison

Since poor Anna has disappeared, people have stopped believing her - they're even saying, it wouldn't be such a terrible thing for Herr Hudetz, if Fräulein Anna wasn't around to talk any more...

They're saying, Anna chose death, because the voices in her head gave her no peace.

Leni Scene Five

asks him what he will do; Hudetz reasserts his innocence of the crime.

The policeman enters, and asks to speak to the landlord: Anna's body has been found down by the viaduct, and she has been murdered. The policeman asks Hudetz if he saw anything suspicious that night: he looks closely at Hudetz. Suspicion is rising. Hudetz gets up to leave. Leni suddenly shouts at him, asking him what he was doing there. He tells her he was getting engaged to Anna, and quickly leaves.

SCENE SIX

Three days later, late in the afternoon. At the chemist's, just before closing time. Frau Leimgruber is telling Alfons about Anna's funeral. A vast amount of people attended, including newspapers and many photographers. Alfons did not attend. She reveals how the tables have turned and now it is Hudetz who is vilified by the townspeople, while Alfons and Frau Hudetz have the public sympathy. Frau Leimgruber asks after Frau Hudetz – she says people are feeling a bit ashamed. Alfons dismisses this, but wishes instead no terrible deed had been committed. Frau Leimgruber chides him for being high-minded – if he is too noble about it, people will turn against him again. Frau Leimgruber retells the public perception of the whole incident, and reveals yet new untruths in gossip. Alfons queries how she knows all this, he is not interested in supposed scandal and second-hand information. Frau Leimgruber wonders that Alfons doesn't believe in anything – even God. Alfons rebuts this, questioning the shifting morality of the villagers. Frau Leimgruber exits, very much put out.

Frau Hudetz enters with supper for them both. She asks Alfons if he has been defending Hudetz to the customers again, displeased. They sit to eat. Frau Hudetz ponders the fickle nature of public opinion – of whose crimes they should be atoning for, when they haven't committed any. Alfons knows that it does not matter whether you have actually committed the crime, if people insist on finding you guilty.

Frau Hudetz believes it was a crime of hers to keep holding on to Hudetz in a loveless marriage, yet she didn't kill him. In Alfons' eyes, all the crimes are connected – blackmailing a husband into remaining married, the train crash, the lies at Hudetz's trial. Frau Hudetz screams at her brother: she cannot accept responsibility for Anna's death.

Suddenly, a knock at the door, and Hudetz appears. He looks dishevelled and his stationmaster's uniform is dirty and crumpled. He does not look at the pair as he enters. He takes a bread roll and begins to eat, apathetically. Frau Hudetz asks if he has taken leave of his senses to come back here; Hudetz hushes her, suspicious lest he be followed. He had been hiding in the woods until today, and crept back without being seen. He asks them to give him a suit, so he can get away unrecognised.

Frau Hudetz is angry and asks him to leave them in peace – at least they are trying to live in peace and do the right thing. Alfons asks Hudetz to look into his heart and find remorse, he cannot admit his guilt, still proclaiming his innocence. Frau Hudetz suddenly laughs: Hudetz is no better than Frau Leimgruber. She sits and weeps. Hudetz asks them both to believe that he got engaged to Anna out by the viaduct, and didn't mean to kill her – he doesn't know how it happened, but repeats that he has always done his duty.



Joseph Millson and Patrick Drury
Photo: Keith Pattison

Judged himself? Well, that's not good enough. I'm not having that! What's he think he's doing? Kill my child and then just simply...? No, that's just too easy!

Landlord
Scene Seven

The main thing is not to have to find yourself guilty or innocent...

Hudetz
Scene Seven

Hudetz picks up the memorial booklet from Anna's funeral and reads its contents. He smiles and reads the verse on its reverse: a warning to beware of the Day of Judgment. Frau Hudetz brings him a suit, but Hudetz is lost in thought. He leaves, without the suit, ready for his own last judgment.

SCENE SEVEN

On the embankment, where once the two trains collided. It is the middle of the night. The signal is set at green for 'GO'. The policeman enters, followed by the Landlord and Ferdinand, both armed with hunting rifles. They are looking for Hudetz.

The Landlord fears that Hudetz will have gotten away already, but the policeman reassures him that the village is surrounded – there is no possible escape route. We discover that the entire neighbourhood is looking for him. Ferdinand is distraught, and drinking, feeling he should have protected Anna.

Alfons appears and the three men stop. They greet him with hostility. Alfons has come to report that Hudetz visited him that evening for help. The Landlord asks where Hudetz is now, and Alfons tells them he was last seen heading for the viaduct. They suspect he is going to jump from it. They are angry that Hudetz has judged himself and plans to commit suicide as a result – he should be locked up and have the people cast judgment. They hurry off towards the viaduct.

The ghosts of the dead train driver, Pokorny, and a Platelayer appear, as the signal turns to red. They talk about their death and how they have appeared to Hudetz and are urging him to jump from the viaduct.

Hudetz appears, terrified at the sight of the ghosts, but they call him back. They make him confront the reality of their deaths and urge him to commit to his life sentence: taking his own life. Hudetz says he is thinking beyond even that – he believes so strongly in his innocence that he only wants to be judged by a Higher Power, if a God exists: only God will understand him. Pokorny agrees, knowingly.

The wind begins to howl, and the ghost of Anna appears. She admits her fault in the matter, because she cannot lie anymore: the stationmaster missed a signal because she kissed him, because he had a wife he did not love. Anna and Hudetz talk about the nature of guilt, and where the blame lies between the pair of them: the giver or the taker.

The signal changes again to green, as the train is on its way. As the train approaches, Hudetz asks the ghosts what it is like to be dead. Pokorny tells him it is very peaceful and that they are pretty happy with not being alive any more. Hudetz moves slowly towards the train tracks as the train driver continues assuring him how good it is in the afterlife. Anna tries to stop Hudetz, telling him not to believe Pokorny.

The policeman, the Landlord, Ferdinand and Alfons appear. Hudetz goes slowly to the policeman, and calmly gives himself up. Ferdinand lunges and tries to attack Hudetz, but Alfons urges him to keep the peace. The wind howls. Hudetz hears the sound of trumpets. The play ends.



THOMAS HUDETZ

Joseph Millson

Stationmaster at the village railway station. He is very reliable and always obeys orders and does his duty. He is married to Frau Hudetz, but is 13 years younger than her. It is not a happy marriage. He is well-liked and respected by all in the village.



FRAU HUDETZ

Suzanne Burden

Wife of Thomas Hudetz. She does not care what people think of her or listen to gossip. She is 13 years older than her husband, and warned him when they married to think carefully before committing. She is misunderstood and disliked by the people of the village, who think she is 'shrewish' and a cruel wife to Hudetz.



ALFONS

David Annen

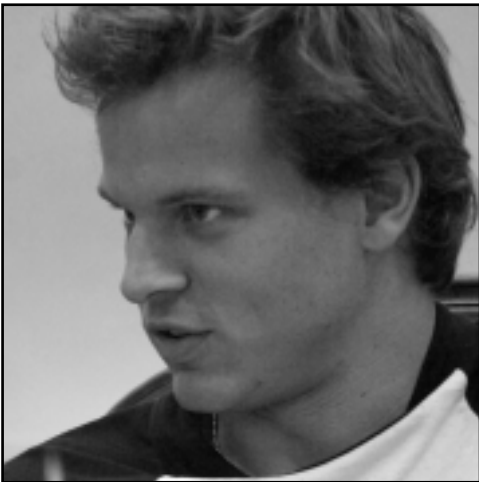
The village chemist, who runs his own shop. Sister of Frau Hudetz. He does not care much for the opinion of others, and is regarded by the villagers as bad-tempered and ill-mannered. He is unmarried.



ANNA

Laura Donnelly

Daughter of the Landlord of The Savage Inn. She is a pretty girl, and more outward-looking and worldly than the other girls in the village. She is engaged to Ferdinand. She distracts Hudetz because she wants to provoke reaction from Frau Hudetz.



FERDINAND

Daniel Hawksford

A butcher, from a nearby town. Engaged to Anna. He is a simple-minded man, loyal and loving but easily led and follows the general opinion.



LENI

Julie Riley

Barmaid at The Savage Inn. She has a fondness for Hudetz. She has a questioning nature and can see through gossip to the truth of human nature. She is unsatisfied with her life in the village and wants more.



LANDLORD

Tom Georgeson

Landlord of The Savage Inn and father to Anna. He is held by many to be guardian of public opinion. He is a pillar of society within the village and The Savage Inn is a decent hostelry, centre of village life.



FRAU LEIMGRUBER

Sarah Woodward

Lives in the village, a voice in the play of public opinion. She follows the crowd and considers herself morally upstanding.



POLICEMAN

Jake Nightingale

The village policeman, upholder of the law and yet not immune from the power of gossip.



The Almeida Theatre - empty space
Photo: Lara Platman

Design is one of the most thrilling aspects of theatre craft. The look of a show helps to set mood, atmosphere, time and place. Design elements for any production include set, lighting, sound and music.

At the Almeida Theatre the set design is the first and last thing the audience sees. As soon as the audience enters they can see the set and this, together with any sound effects, or music, will begin to determine how they will experience the production. This initial impression helps to set the tone for the story to come. When the play is over and the actors have left the stage, the empty space remains visible to the audience, often still lit.

The designer, therefore, has to consider what impression he wants to make on the audience before the play begins. The designer will look for clues in the play text and will liaise with the director and the playwright about these.

There are also practical considerations for the designer, such as how big the stage is; what kind of flexibility is required in terms of entrances and exits; and whether the play is set in a specific time period. The designer often has to be very creative designing a set which calls for several different locations.

Designing for the Almeida Theatre

The Almeida Theatre was not purpose-built as a theatre so does not have the specialised architectural features which typify most purpose-built performance venues: a flytower, orchestra pit, wings, offstage area (indeed our “back stage” is actually “sub-stage” in an excavated basement directly below the stage floor).

This means that our designers and production teams have to come up with ingenious solutions to create innovative sets in our “found space.”

The building is famous for its large curved brick wall at the back of the stage. This feature of the building is used as part of the set design for many of the Almeida’s productions. Even when the actual wall is not visible in the set, the brickwork is often echoed as a feature in the design.

**A BRIEF HISTORY:
The Almeida Theatre
seats 325 people, and re-
opened in 2003 after
extensive
refurbishment. The
building dates back to
1837, and was originally
the Islington Scientific
and Literary Institution.
During the war it was
used as a Salvation
Army Citadel, and was
later a toy factory, before
it was converted into a
theatre in the 1970s.**



From front - with revolve set straight as for Scene One



From above - with revolve turned as for Scene Six

The model box - set for *Judgment Day*
Designer: Miriam Buether

The design for *Judgment Day* is one of the most technically ambitious seen at the Almeida Theatre in recent years, making full use of the building's architecture and featuring a revolve platform as the main stage.

As the model box pictures indicate above, the set for *Judgment Day* features a long rectangular raised stage, set on the base floor of the playing space. Generally, designs at the Almeida require a full stage to be constructed on the floor, as no fixed platform exists; yet this set takes the idea of a station platform and creates a stage thereon. The platform stage revolves 360 degrees and allows for different angles to alter the perception of the space and create distinct environments, from the station platform to underneath the viaduct.

The play is set in Austria in 1937, and the set is in keeping with the style of the period. Yet the set is representational rather than realistic or abstracted. Simple shapes are used to delineate environments, and adulterated by lighting and sound effects to compliment the atmosphere. Props and furniture are kept to a minimum, for example the train station features just a bench. The focus is on the actors and the human drama within the play rather than a life-like construction of its world.

When consulting with designer Miriam Buether, director James Macdonald took inspiration from the Almeida's distinctive curved back wall. To him it was reminiscent of the Roundhouse in Camden, now a performance venue but originally built to house a turning circle for the steam trains arriving in London from the north, to reverse them for their return journey. So effectively, the revolving platform stage creates just that inside the Almeida - a turntable. The motif of the railway track and turntable persists throughout the design and there is a symbolic element to this, as it echoes the changeable social reasoning fuelling the drama of the play: where opinions of the village citizens can similarly turn 180 degrees, perceiving innocence as guilt and then again as innocence.

A flat wall is created with wooden planks, slatted like a fence or gate; items can be attached to it to indicate location, for example a pub sign, bar counter or chemist sign. The wall moves in and out as the platform revolves. The planks on the back wall also open up to create doorways for actors to enter on to back of stage.

Trains, featuring in the script but hard to realise in physical form in a theatre, are created by smoke, sound and lights; the audience do not see it but they are imagined to pass in front of the stage.

The seven scenes of the play, each with an altered location, require a lot of set changes: the stage revolves for each scene. With a technically demanding show, a lot of work goes into keeping the revolve equipment well-maintained, behind the scenes during the performance run.



Ödön von Horváth

In his short lifetime, Ödön von Horváth authored 21 plays, of which *Judgment Day* was one of the very last. He also wrote four prose works. He lived for most of his life in Austria and southern Germany. He opted to stay in Nazi Germany for most of the difficult years leading up to the Second World War, documenting life from inside the regime.

Ödön von Horváth was born in Fiume (now Rijeka) near Trieste in Hungary on 9 December 1901. His father was a diplomat, and the family moved from country to country. Eventually he settled in Austria, and German became his main language. He was most interested in the southern German and Viennese dialects, which are the ones in which he wrote his plays. He moved to Berlin in 1924 where he felt inspired by the stimulating artistic and political atmosphere at the time.

His first play, *Italienische Nacht (Italian Night)* premiered in March 1931, and caused considerable excitement, if mainly for the fury it aroused from the Nazi Party. His greatest success came later that year, with *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald (Tales from the Vienna Woods)*, which was performed with a star cast at the leading Deutsche Theater. In 1931 he also received the much coveted Kleist-Preis, the most important prize for German Literature awarded annually by the Weimar Republic. The award was discontinued in 1933, and only re-established again in 1985.

Horváth was a merciless critic of the petit bourgeoisie, yet nonetheless he viewed them with great warmth. His interests as a writer were social rather than overtly political. He belonged to the Austrian tradition of Nestroy, Raimund and Karl Kraus with whom he shared a fascination for the bizarre and macabre.

He was undoubtedly against the Nazi party regime, yet this political aspect of his life leaves some questions unanswered. On the day of the Anschluss, 13 March 1938 (where the Nazi party annexed Austria into part of the Greater Germany, the Third Reich), Horváth fled from Vienna to Budapest. He had retained his Hungarian nationality. Following this, he stayed for short periods in many major European cities. In Amsterdam he visited a clairvoyant - Horváth was very superstitious - who urged him to go to Paris where 'the most decisive event of his life' would happen. She was tragically right: shortly after his arrival there, sheltering under a tree from a thunderstorm on the Champs-Élysées, he was killed instantly by a falling branch, at the age of just 36.

The basic dramatic motive of all my plays is the constant struggle between consciousness and subconsciousness.

Ödön von Horváth



Joseph Millson
Photo: Keith Pattison

List of selected works

(those translated/published in English are indicated in bold)

PLAYS

Das Buch der Tänze, 1920

Mord in der Mohrengasse, 1923

Zur schönen Aussicht, 1926

Die Bergbahn, 1926, originally *Revolte auf Côte 3018*

Sladek der schwarze Reichswehrmann (Sladek), 1929, originally ***Sladek oder Die schwarze Armee***

Rund um den Kongress (A Sexual Congress), 1929

Italienische Nacht (Italian Night), 1930

Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald (Tales from the Vienna Woods), 1931. Winner of the Kleist-Preis the same year.

Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung (Faith, Hope, and Charity). 1932

Kasimir und Karoline (Kasimir and Karoline), 1932

Die Unbekannte aus der Seine, 1933

Hin und her, 1934

Don Juan kommt aus dem Krieg (Don Juan Comes Back From the War), 1936

Figaro lässt sich scheiden (Figaro Gets a Divorce), 1936

Pompeji. Komödie eines Erdbebens, 1937

Ein Dorf ohne Männer, 1937

Himmelwärts, 1937

Der jüngste Tag (Judgment Day), 1937

PROSE NOVELS

Der ewige Spiesser, 1930

Jugend ohne Gott, 1938

Ein Kind unserer Zeit, 1938 (***A Child of Our Time***, English translation)

Zeitalter der Fische, (***The Age of the Fish***, English translation) 1939

And people will say
In far away blue days
It will become clear
What is false and what is true
What is false will perish
Although it rules today
What is true shall come -
Although it dies today.

Horváth died in Paris on the evening of 1 June 1938, when a tree limb broke off in a thunderstorm, hitting him on the head and killing him instantly. One of the items found in his pocket was a cigarette pack with this poem written on it.

- 1901** **9 December:** Edmund (Ödön) Josef von Horváth is born in in Susak, a suburb of Fiume. He is the first son of the diplomat Dr. Edmund Josef von Horvath (1874 – 1950) and Maria Hermine Prehal (1882 – 1959).
- 1902** **Summer:** move to Belgrade.
- 1903** **6 July:** Ödön's brother Lajos is born in Belgrade.
- 1908** Move to Budapest. Ödön receives his first lessons in Hungarian by a private tutor.
- 1909** Dr. Horváth is transferred to München. Ödön stays in Budapest and is sent to the Rákócziánium (the archiepiscopal boarding school). Rigorous religious education.
- 1913- 1914** Ödön joins his parents in Munich. He goes to the Kaiser Wilhelm Gymnasium and later switches to the Realgymnasium Klenzestraße. Disputes with his religion teacher Dr. Heinzinger frequently get him into trouble at school. Beginning of the war. Horvath's father is enlisted.
- 1915** Dr. Horváth is sent back to Munich.
- 1916** Move to Bratislava. First literary attempts in the form of poems, one of which survived: *Luci in Macbeth. Eine Zwergengeschichte* von Ed. v. Horváth (*Luci in Macbeth. A dwarves story* by Ed. v. Horváth). Childhood friends talk about other poems from this time.
- 1918** Before the end of the war Dr. von Horváth is summoned to Budapest and takes the family with him. Ödön joins a young politically motivated group (Galilei Kreis) which enthusiastically embraces the national-revolutionary works of Endre Ady. He has a strong interest in the power struggles taking place in Budapest at the time.
- 1919** **Spring:** Dr. von Horvath is transferred to Munich. Ödön is taken into the custody of an uncle in Vienna and goes to a private school there (Privatgymnasium der Salvatorianer). **Summer:** Abitur in Vienna; subsequently move to Munich. **Autumn:** Matriculation at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich.
- 1920** Ödön meets the composer Siegfried Kallenberg. He commissions Horváth to write lyrical texts for a music/dance performance. The result is Horváth's first professional work: *Das Buch der Tänze (The Book of Dances)*.
- 1921** **7 February:** *Das Buch der Tänze* is put on at the Steinicke Saal in Munich. Horváth also works on Amazonas, a 'romantic novella'. *Das Buch der Tänze* is published by El Schahin Verlag in Munich. Later Horváth is so ashamed of it that he buys up all existing copies (through the financial aid of his father), asks his friends to return copies in their possession, and destroys them.
- 1923** Horváth moves to his family's country house in Murnau. He writes intensively, but destroys almost everything. All that remains from this period are the fragment *Dosa* and the play *Mord in der Mohrengasse (Murder in Moorstreet)*. Motifs from this play were later re-used in his Volkstücke (folk plays). He also writes the *Sportmärchen (Sport Fairy Tales)* which are published in magazines in 1924.
- 1924** On **26 March** Siegfried von Kallenberg organises another musical/theatrical event for which Horváth writes texts. *Ständchen (Serenade)* and *Schlaf meine kleine Braut (Sleep my little bride)* were both set to Kallenberg's music. The latter piece is now lost. In **autumn** Ödön spends several weeks in Paris with his brother Lajos. This sparks his desire to live in a capital and he resolves to move to Berlin.
- 1926** **20 February:** *Das Buch der Tänze* is performed at the Stadttheater Osnabrück. Horvath writes *Revolte aus Côte 3081* and *Zur schönen Aussicht (The Belle Vue)*.
- 1927** **4 November:** *Revolte aus Côte 3081* is performed in Hamburg. Horváth is unsatisfied with it. He reworks it and gives the new version the title: *Die Bergbahn (The Mountain Train)*.
- 1928** Horváth works on *Sladek der schwarze Reichswehrmann*.
- 1929** **4 January:** *Die Bergbahn* is performed in Berlin. **1 January:** Horváth signs a one year contract with the publishing house Ullstein Verlag. Horváth reworks the earlier fragment *Ein Fräulein wird verkauft (A Girl for Sale)* into the farce

Rund um den Kongreß. Horváth writes the novel *Herr Reithofer wird selbstlos* (*The Selfless Herr Reithofer*). The first chapter of this novel forms the basis for the later work: *Der Ewige Spießler* (*The Eternal Bourgeois*). Horváth also completes the novel *Der Mittelstand* (*The Middle Class*).

13 October: *Sladek der schwarze Reichswehrmann* has its premiere as a matinee and provokes hefty attacks from the national socialists.

Horváth travels to Spain. His experiences there feed into the writing of *Der Ewige Spießler*.

1930 Horváth completes *Der Ewige Spießler* and gives it to the publishing house Propyläen Verlag which has already published some of his plays.

Horváth gives several readings of his works, mostly in Munich.

Horváth writes the Volkstück *Italienische Nacht* (*Italian Night*).

1931 *Italienische Nacht* has its premiere in Berlin.

1 July: Oskar Sima directs a depoliticised version of *Italienische Nacht* in Vienna. On the opening night Horváth announces that he has just finished a new play: *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald* (*Tales from the Vienna Woods*).

Autumn: Horváth receives the Kleist Preis (together with Erik Reger). He was suggested for the award by Carl Zuckmayer.

2 November: The premiere of *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald* at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin is a huge success. Max Reinhardt encourages Horváth to collaborate with him on a revue. Sketches for the revue *Magazin des Glücks* are drafted, but the project is never completed.

Horváth writes *Kasmir und Karoline*.

1932 In **February** Horváth meets Lukas Kristl who gives him the idea for the play *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (*Belief Love Hope*). Horváth writes several drafts.

Horváth's popularity is steadily rising. He conducts several readings of his works in Munich and is interviewed on the Bayrischer Rundfunk.

1 November: *Kasmir und Karoline* is premiered in Leipzig and in the same week the production travels to Berlin. Horváth feels compelled to write a Gebrauchsanweisung (instructive manual) for his plays.

1933 Heinz Hilpert, artistic director of the Volksbühne, is forced by the NSDAP to abandon his plans to stage *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung*. Other planned productions of Horváth's plays on German stages are equally aborted.

The country house belonging to Horváth's parents in Murnau is searched by an SA troupe. Horváth leaves Germany and goes to Salzburg and subsequently Vienna.

He writes the play *Die Unbekannte aus der Seine* (*The Unknown Woman from the Seine*).

In order to keep his Hungarian citizenship Horváth has to travel to Budapest. Horváth uses this incident to write the farce *Hin und Her* (*Back and Forth*).

1 December: Horváth marries the singer Maria Eisner in Vienna.

1934 **September:** Horváth and Eisner divorce. The planned premiere of *Die Unbekannte aus der Seine* in Vienna falls through. Horváth decides to go back to Berlin. He writes about his impressions of the city under the NSDAP in the draft for a new play *Der Lenz ist da!* This play later becomes the basis for the novel *Jugend ohne Gott*. In Berlin Horváth forges connections with the film industry. He writes and collaborates on several screenplays, many of which are no longer traceable. Later Horváth distances himself from screen writing. Horváth draws on motifs from previous works to write the 'fairytale' *Himmelwärts* (*Skywards*). A Berlin publisher buys the rights for it, despite not being allowed to stage it. The NSDAP start new investigations against Horváth.

December: premiere of *Hin und Her* in Zürich. Horváth uses this opportunity to leave Germany together with the actress Wera Liessem.

1935 Notes, fragments and sketches under the heading *Flucht aus der Gegenwart* (*Flight from the Present*). He forges a plan with his brother Lajos to create an illustrated epistolary novel with the title *Die Reise in Paradies* (*The Journey to Paradise*) and starts work on ***Der Jüngste Tag*** (***Judgement Day***). Horváth is commissioned to write a comedy for the Max Pfeffer Verlag. The result is *Mit dem Kopf durch die Wand* (*Headfirst Through the Wall*), which he rewrites several times after its premiere in Vienna, but finally abandons it.

- 1936** Horváth finishes *Der Jüngste Tag*. He writes *Figaro lässt sich scheiden* (Figaro gets a Divorce), *Don Juan kommt aus dem Krieg* (Don Juan Returns from the War), *Ein Dorf ohne Männer* (A Village Without Men) and *Pompeji* in swift succession. During this period Horváth stays mainly in Vienna and Henndorf near Salzburg. In August he visits his parents in Possenhofen and is told that his permission to reside in Germany has been suspended and he must leave within twenty four hours.
13 November: *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* receives its premiere in Vienna under the title *Glaube Pflicht und Hoffnug* (Belief Duty and Hope).
- 1937** Horváth distances himself from almost all of his previous plays and resolves to write a 'Komödie des Menschen' (a comedy of the people). *Ein Dorf ohne Männer* and *Pompeji* are the only two plays which he wishes to integrate into his new project. In Henndorf Horváth finishes *Jugend ohne Gott*.
1 April: premiere of *Figaro lässt sich scheiden* in Prag.
24 September: premiere of *Ein Dorf ohne Männer*, also in Prag.
 In autumn the Amsterdam based publisher for German writers in exile Allert de Lange releases *Jugend ohne Gott* which becomes a huge success. The rights for translation into many different languages are swiftly sold. Horváth starts work on his next novel *Ein Kind unserer Zeit* (A Child of our Times).
5 December: Premiere of *Himmelwärts* (an adapted version) in Vienna.
11 December: **Premiere of *Der Jüngste Tag*** in Mährisch-Ostrau.
 Horváth completes *Ein Kind unserer Zeit* and it is published by Allert de Lange.
- 1938** Severe depression and artistic dissatisfaction combined with financial worries hinder the development of several projects. The planned novel *Adieu Europa!* never progresses beyond the first few pages which Horváth constantly rewrites.
March: Horváth's friends flee: Walter Mehring to Zürich, Hertha Pauli to Paris, Franz Theodor Csokor to Poland.
12 March: Horváth also leaves Vienna and accepts an invitation from Lajos Hatvany in Ofen.
30 March: Horváth visits the actress Lydia Busch in Teplitz-Schönau and stays until late April.
Beginning of May: travels to Zürich via Budapest, Yugoslavia, Trieste, Venice and Milan.
18 May: Horváth arrives in Brussels and continues to Amsterdam.
28 May: Horváth arrives in Paris to meet Armand Pierhal the translator of *Jugend ohne Gott* and *Ein Kind unserer Zeit*, and Robert Siodmak who wants to make a film of *Jugend ohne Gott*.
1 June: Meeting with Robert Siodmak. Horváth plans to travel to Zürich on the following day.
19.30 a branch falls on his head and kills him.
7 June Horváth is buried on the graveyard of St. Ouen in the north of Paris.
8 December: A commemoration for Horváth is held at the Salle d' Lena in Paris and *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* is performed.

Source: Traugott Krischke's *Horváth Chronik*, compiled and translated by Philip Thorne.

The following is an interview with Ödön von Horváth, broadcast on the Southern German radio station *Bayerische Rundfunk* on 6 April 1932, shortly after Horváth was awarded the Kleist Preis, the Weimar Republic's highest accolade for achievement in literature. Translated by Philip Thorne.

Since you received the Kleist Award the newspapers and cultural journals are filled with opinions about you. I'd go as far as saying that no other modern playwright has enflamed the hearts and minds of the critics as you have Herr Horvath. It will be interesting to hear your opinions directly from you.

I can give you my opinions. And to pre-empt your first question I'll tell you exactly when and where I was born and whether I'm a pure blooded German writer or simply a mongrel. I've been asked this before, so I might as well go through it one more time. When I'm asked whether I'm a German writer I can only reply: I consider my cultural identity to be German – and the reason I consider my cultural identity to be German is that German is my mother tongue. It seems to me that this is reason enough. Then there's the fact that I lived in Germany for defining stages of my development, namely in Southern Bavaria and Austria. My name is Hungarian – I have Hungarian ancestry, also Czech and Croatian – so I'd say I'm a typical Austrian/Hungarian affair. But in my defence and my own interest, I believe the products of such racial mixing don't have to be the worst. - There are those of mixed race whom future generations have claimed to be the greatest and truest representatives of German culture – and rightly so.

Nietzsche for example.

Yes, he was half Polish. And the painter and poet Albrecht Dürer was half Hungarian. But let me descend from these dizzying historical heights and get back to talking about myself. Newspapers frequently describe me as a Hungarian writer. That's completely false. I've never written anything in Hungarian (apart from at school), only German. So I'm a German writer.

Anybody who is familiar with your work will be aware of your German, very Southern German style – Even though you're not a German national. Perhaps you could tell us where you were born?

Since you seem so interested in my private life I'll happily oblige. I was born thirty years ago in Fiume on the Adriatic coast. When I was thirteen I came to Munich and went to school there.

Where you a successful student?

Well more or less. Actually, less.

That was during the first years of the war.

Yes, it was while I was in Munich that the war started. When I think back on it today it seems I don't remember the time before the war. I really have to concentrate to remember things from before. I believe you and others of our generation will know what I mean.

Yes, absolutely.

The World War cast a shadow over our youth and robbed us of our childhood memories. But let's move on.

Yes, let's talk about the arts. Tell us Herr Horvath, how did you become a writer?

In 1920 I was a student at the university of Munich and was as they say 'interested in the arts', but had never actually been artistically active in any way. Outwardly that is. Inwardly there had always been a voice within me saying: why don't you try to be a writer. You like going to the theatre, you've experienced a lot, you like to contradict, and above all you have this strange urge to write down the things you see and experience and the things you imagine others to see and experience. You also believe that you should never make concessions and you've never been worried about what others say about you. And there we have all trappings of what more flamboyant souls might call 'the dawning of a poetic mission.'

I met the composer Siegfried Kallenberg in Munich by coincidence. Completely out of the blue he asked me to write the book for a ballet. I was obviously rather taken aback. I had no idea why he was coming to me with this request. I was no poet and had never written anything in my life. He must have confused me with someone else and at first I wanted to inform him of his mistake, but then I changed my mind: why not try my hand at this? I thought. I sat down and wrote *The Book of Dances*. It was subsequently published and performed. I received my first ever review, I think you wanted to ask me about this?

Indeed.

It was damning. It began with the words 'It's an outrage' and continued in that vein. But I didn't really take it to heart.

So you decided to pursue writing as a career?

Ah! I tried all sorts of more conventional jobs first, but I wasn't suited to any of them. Apparently I'm destined to be a writer after all, I thought.

You started writing plays which you called 'folk plays'. Today we are no longer familiar with the customs and traditions of folk theatre, so it would be interesting to hear what drew you to this term.

I don't use this term arbitrarily, that's to say, not just because my plays are written in Bavarian or Austrian dialect, but because I envisaged a continuation and innovation of the old concept of folk plays. The old folk plays seem pretty alien to our generation. It's said that at heart they deal with eternal human problems that remain timeless and continue to move people. Indeed they do, but in a different way. There are many eternal human problems about which our grandparents would have cried and about which we laugh – and vice versa. For a modern folk play to succeed it's important to put modern people onto the stage. We have to put those sections of society onto the stage that are defining for our contemporary climate. In our times this is the petit bourgeois and in order to realistically capture their speech I have to appropriate the disintegration of dialect through educated jargon. As a dramatic chronicler of the times I have invented a new form of folk play.

Is this new form you speak of to be found in the epic nature of your plays?

Yes. This new form is descriptive rather than dramatic. Formally it's closer to the traditions of folk singers and folk comedians than it is to the writers of the former folk plays.

Would you say your plays are satires?

I'm a big friend of satire. I can't help myself but write satirically.

We've reached a sensitive issue. You're aware that our generation's love of satire and irony is frequently criticised as a lack of empathy and respect. I'd say that in reality it is the exact opposite. We're not, God forbid, being arrogant, for us irony is a world view and a form of self-criticism. But the older generation misunderstands this stance and denies us the respect which is so necessary for our work. They are making it doubly hard for us. They isolate us and look almost exclusively to the artists of the past. With so many birthdays, anniversaries and commemorative festivities, it's easy to forget that there is a young generation searching for new forms and ideals. But I'm straying from the point.

But you are right Herr Cronauer, and it is to do with a misunderstanding of this satirical stance that my plays are often met with outrage from the press. This is always rather confusing to me. I'm accused of being too vulgar, too cynical, and all these adjectives, and people fail to see that I'm simply trying to describe the world as it is. The disgust my plays provoke in certain areas of the public might result from the fact that they recognise themselves on the stage. There are of course people who can't laugh about themselves.

I'd be interested in your thoughts on parody Herr Horváth.

I expressly distance myself from parody as a dramatic form. Parody has nothing to do with art and is nothing but very cheap entertainment.

Herr Horváth, let's talk about our mutual passion: Theatre. I assume you will agree with me that the theatre will endure the present dire economic circumstances.

Certainly. Of course the theatres are having a rough time economically, but who isn't? It is possible, perhaps even likely, that some theatres will shut down. But new theatres will be created, amateur theatres... Theatre as an art form cannot die, because of the simple reason that people need it. For me this is an obvious fact. The theatre dreams for the spectator and simultaneously allows him to experience the products of his fantasy. You may have noticed, that almost all plays feature a criminal incident – Indeed: the vast majority of all dramatic heroes right down to the extras are guilty of some crime, they are not honourable gentlemen! Isn't it strange that people buy a ticket and go to the theatre, dress nicely and put on perfume in order to eavesdrop on more or less slanderous things or watch how someone or several people are killed, – and hereafter leave the theatre in a festive mood, ethically excited. What is going on in the individual spectator? The following: his apparent abhorrence of criminal proceedings on the stage is no true indignation, but in actual fact a participation, an experiencing and through this experiencing a gratification of antisocial cravings. So the spectator is appalled by himself. This condition is called edification.

I just wish that this edification would reach the broad masses which hardly go to the theatre anymore.

The declining interest in theatre may well be due to the fact that we no longer have a proper folk theatre.

Due to psychological reasons I never really talk about the social and economic plight of our times. But, don't you think that many people don't go to the theatre simply out of financial reasons?

Of course the theatres are suffering because of the current economic crisis, although it must be said that the cinemas are doing especially out of it. I have a small practical suggestion: get rid of the cloak rooms and do away with the social dress code. Many people don't go to the theatre because they don't have a nice suit. If people could keep on their coats or stay in their work clothes, I'm sure the theatres would be better filled.

That's a remarkable suggestion, and out of personal experience I'm convinced that its application would win back a large part of the lost public. Unfortunately we must come to an end. I've enjoyed our conversation and I very much hope that the listeners of Bavarian Radio found your comments and ideas just as stimulating as I did. Thank you.



Flag of the Weimar Republic

Germany underwent many startling political and social changes between 1919 and 1938, during the formative years of Ödön von Horváth's artistic career.

In spring 1919, Odon von Horvath's diplomat father was transferred to Munich. Initially Odon remained in the care of relatives in Vienna, but in the summer moved to join his father, enrolling at university in Munich that autumn.

It was at this time, in August 1919 that the Weimar Republic came into being less than two months after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, at the close of the First World War. With Friedrich Ebert as its first president, the Weimar Republic promised a new democratic regime for Germany, established under close surveillance from international peacekeepers; but from the outset it faced great pressure from widespread public dissatisfaction and bitter indignation at what were felt to be humiliating peace terms.

The Treaty of Versailles indicated that Germany and its allies were to accept full responsibility for the war, and were to pay heavy financial reparations for all loss and damages suffered by the Allies. All German colonies were to be handed over to the British and the French; Poland was restored; and Saarland, Germany's industrial heartland, was to be governed by the League of Nations for an agreed 15 years. The once mighty German army was limited in size to 100,000, its general staff were dissolved and war material and munitions handed over to the Allies.

The Weimar regime was beset by uprisings from opposing political parties, namely the German Communist Party (KDP) and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), both of whom used the Weimar Republic's constitutional freedoms to fight against it. They led rebellions against the regime in the early 1920s, which further destabilised the government, and led in turn to economic downturns.

Horvath was writing intensively by this point, having had his first two plays premiered in 1920 and 1921, and had moved from Munich to his parents' house in Murnau, Bavaria. In 1923 Germany defaulted on its reparation payments and French and Belgian troops occupied the industrialised Ruhr area. The Weimar government encouraged Ruhr citizens to engage in passive resistance: refusing to sell goods to the foreign troops. However, this also led to a state of hyperinflation in the region and many citizens who lost their fortunes in the dire economic circumstances became diehard opponents of the Weimar regime. In autumn 1923, Chancellor Gustav Stresemann called an end to the passive resistance in the Ruhr and introduced a new currency, the Rentenmark (Reichsmark), along with other measures to halt the hyperinflation.

In November 1923, Adolf Hitler, a then unknown member of the NSDAP and former German Army volunteer from WW1, led a group of 600 men to storm a beer hall in Munich, where the heads of the Bavarian state were gathered for a rally. Hitler tried to force all present to join him to march on Berlin and seize power, but he was later arrested and sent to prison.

The national elections in 1924 saw a swing to the right, and Field Marshal Hindenburg was elected president in 1925. Later that year, Hindenburg signed the Treaty of Locarno, delineating Germany's borders with France and Belgium and ultimately paving the way for Germany's admission to the League of Nations in 1926.

My dear lady, I'm a travelling salesman and fate has carried me to every corner of the globe, but I must say, I don't think I've ever experienced such a dazzling display of apathy as I've found here! Quite exceptional!

Travelling Salesman Scene One



Flag of the Third Reich

Landlord: *Well, at the time, our stationmaster was wrongly suspected, he suffered a bitter injustice - he's been on remand for four months, but yesterday afternoon he was totally rehabilitated - he walked free.*

Customer: *Really? Fancy that, not many people walk free these days.*

Scene Three

Yet once again Germany's economy was in rapid downfall, this time led largely by global trends and in particular the Great Depression initiated by the 1929 Wall Street Crash. By 1932, one of Germany's biggest national banks had collapsed and over 6 million people were unemployed. Horvath's popularity is steadily rising with his plays premiering in high-profile theatres in Berlin, Munich and Vienna.

Political turmoil added to the national state of crisis, with the political parties in the Reichstag unable to establish a governing majority. Henrich Brüning was appointed Chancellor in 1930 and used emergency decrees – and even dissolved parliament on one occasion – to push through his financial austerity measures against a majority of Social Democrats, Communists and the NSDAP. Hindenburg was re-elected as President in 1932; but the NSDAP emerged as the largest splinter party in those national elections, and in fact with the largest share of the votes became the biggest party in the Reichstag. While the Communist KPD came third, together the anti-democratic parties of right and left held the majority of seats in parliament. In 1933, President Hindenburg finally appointed Hitler Chancellor.

In that year, the Volksbühne in Germany was forced by the NSDAP to abandon plans to stage Horvath's *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (Belief Love Hope). Other planned productions of Horvath's plays on German stages were aborted. Horvath was forced to join the Nazi Writers Union in order to keep writing. His residence in Murnau was searched by SA troops and Horvath leaves Germany for Austria, settling in Vienna. The remainder of his plays, when they were performed at all, premiered in Austria, Poland or Switzerland.

Once Hitler had secured the role of Chancellor, he had the power to be able to call for new elections – hoping to secure a majority for his NSDAP in the Reichstag. After a fire took hold of the Reichstag building in February 1933, Hitler swiftly blamed a Communist uprising and convinced President Hindenburg to sign the Reichstag Fire Decree, a decree that banned communist agitation and thereby overturned many of the Weimar constitution's important political and human rights.

The Gestapo, a secret police force, was formed, and under the auspices of the Reichstag Fire Decree 11,000 communists and socialists were rounded up and confined in concentration camps with many Communist Reichstag deputies taken into protective custody. But despite the public fear this created, the NSDAP still failed to win the overall majority at the next election that Hitler had anticipated. Hitler formed a slim majority government and managed to convince the parliament to pass the Enabling Act of 1933 which gave his party full legislative power and formed the basis of the Nazi Dictatorship, whereby all other parties than the National Socialist Party were forced to dissolve. Germany left the League of Nations. A centralised totalitarian state was established, leaving behind the liberal Weimar constitution; this can be seen as the political end of the Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Third Reich.

From thereon, the totalitarianism and intolerance of the Nazi regime accelerated, with the SS given independence and coming under the command of Heinrich Himmler, who also took on control of the regular police alongside the Gestapo and the concentration camps. The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 decreed that all Jews lost their German citizenship and were forbidden to



Daniel Hawksworth and Laura Donnelly
Photo: Keith Pattison

***Because I really am innocent
- and if I am going to be
judged, I want it to be by a
Higher Power. If there is
one, if God exists, he'll
understand me...***

**Hudetz
Scene Seven**

marry non-Jewish Germans. Hitler reintroduced universal military service and re-established the German Air Force – flying in the face of the Treaty of Versailles. Notes of protest were issued from Britain, France and Italy; but even after Germany marched into the demilitarised Rheinland in 1936, flouting the Treaty of Locarno, no intervention from the foreign Allies was made.

The 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin was a great propaganda success boosting national morale and Hitler's standing in Germany. In 1937, Hitler signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan, against the international Communist organisation, and forged links with Mussolini in Italy, re-establishing the Rome-Berlin axis. Judgment Day was written in 1936, and premiered in December 1937 in Mährisch-Ostau in Poland, over the border from Austria, just as tension in southern Germany and Austria was rising at the threat of German invasion. Meanwhile, Hitler was now prepared to take offensive action foreign policy, and in 1938 the Anschluss occurred, whereby the Nazi Party annexed Austria into the German Third Reich.

It was at this exact point on 12 March 1938 that Horvath left Vienna for good, bound for the safety of America via Amsterdam and Paris. He had fallen into a great depression and artistic dissatisfaction, having had most of his plays refused for performance. He never got to witness the horror of the Second World War unfolding that ensued the Anschluss, as he died in Paris on 1 June that year.

The Last Judgment

The title of Ödön von Horváth's play is highly appropriate for what director James Macdonald calls 'an existential thriller about conscience'. Judgment Day is a theological concept that is found in all Abrahamic religions and refers to God's final judgment on a human's life lived according to virtue and religion.

In Christian theology, Judgment Day (also known as the Last Judgment, Final Judgment or Day of the Lord) is the final and eternal judgment by the God of all nations, which takes place after the resurrection of the dead and the second coming. It can be taken to be a judgment on a good or bad life, based on true 'divine' justice.

Eschatology is the branch of theology concerned with the end of the world or humankind. It is also used to denote the belief or doctrine regarding the ultimate states, i.e. death, destiny of humanity, the Second Coming and the Last Judgment.

The following passage from the Book of Revelation is one of the most commonly cited sources by Christian eschatologists, which decrees that on Judgment Day, all will be judged according to the way they led their life and the deeds committed therein:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation (20:11-15)

In Christianity, belief in the Last Judgment is held firmly inside Roman Catholicism. Each soul undergoes judgment immediately upon death and, depending upon the state of the person's soul, goes straight to heaven, purgatory or hell. The last judgment will occur after the resurrection of the dead and the reunion of a person's soul with their physical body.



The Last Judgment, Michelangelo Buonarroti
Sistine Chapel, Rome

This is when the second coming of Christ will occur, and will reveal the divine truth of each man's relationship with God, and each person who has ever lived will be judged with perfect justice. Those in heaven will go back to heaven, those in hell back to hell, and those in purgatory will be released into heaven. After Judgment Day, the universe will renew itself creating a new earth and new heaven.

In Christian Orthodoxy, the idea of the last judgment is extremely important and Orthodox churches tend to feature a fresco or mosaic of the Last Judgment on the Western Wall (back wall), so that the faithful are reminded that they will be judged on their earthly life when leaving the services.

The Last Judgment is a common theme in medieval and renaissance religious iconography. One of the most famous depictions is Michelangelo Buonarroti's *The Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City.



James Macdonald was associate director at the Royal Court for 14 years, premiering works by among others Sarah Kane, Caryl Churchill and Martin Crimp; since then he has directed plays for the National Theatre, the Lincoln Center and Public Theater in New York, in the West End, on Broadway and at the Schaubühne Berlin. Almeida Projects spoke to him about *Judgment Day*, and asked why he thinks it is an interesting and relevant piece of theatre for audiences today.

Almeida Projects: Can you tell us a bit about Horvath's life?

James Macdonald: Horváth was a contemporary of Brecht's, and although he was Hungarian, he wrote in German – his father was the Hungarian ambassador in Munich, so he grew up in Munich, in South Germany, and he wrote in South German dialect. This was the second to last play that he wrote, he died very young, tragically a tree fell on his head, in the Champs Elysses in Paris in 1938, just as he was getting away from Germany and going to America.

Horváth had a sense of imminent doom, appropriately enough, for someone who had a tree fall on his head.

The last thing he wrote was set in Pompeii, so he very much had a sense of the world heading towards catastrophe, which indeed if you lived in the middle of Europe in the 1930s it absolutely was.

AP: And is this a direct translation?

JM: Christopher Hampton's translated a lot of his plays, he's really the writer here who's championed his work. But this isn't really a dialect translation.

AP: Almeida Projects: Talk us through the play and what happens.

JM: So the set-up of the story is that from a little human error, comes this huge catastrophe. This play is set in a small town and its hero is a stationmaster. In the first scene you're on the railway platform and absolutely nothing is happening, it's a boring spring evening and the locals are gossiping and there's a stranger who they're explaining people in the town to. At the end of the scene when everyone's got on the train, when it finally arrives very late, there's one girl left on the platform and he flirts with the stationmaster, even though he's a married man, and in fact she flirts because he's a married man and she thinks his wife's watching from the flat above the station where they live. And because she flirts with him, he takes his eye off the ball, he doesn't pull the signal he should've pulled, and suddenly the express train roars through the station and he realises it's too late to pull the signal, and a minute later the train has hit a goods train coming in the opposite direction and there are 18 people dead.

What happens in the second scene is that you're on the site of the accident and they're clearing up wreckage and bodies and so on. And there's a sort of mini trial scene, because the public prosecutor has come down to work out whose fault it was, and the stationmaster lies and says it wasn't his fault. It was a small lie, in his own head he thinks he hasn't done anything wrong, he thinks it was the girl's fault because she distracted him, and the girl lies to protect him. And then the wife gets brought down, to the location, and she's going to lie to protect him, but she gets so angry with the other townspeople being horrible to her, they don't like her because she's married this man they all do like, she's older than him and the marriage is a failure. So she was going to lie to protect him but she changes her mind in the middle of this scene and she tells the truth, but it's a truth that no one's going to believe. So it's a story really about how one little lie, someone lying in a way to themselves, about their own marriage, compounds more and more lies, and more and more people are not telling the truth.

And as the story goes on, Hudetz wins the court case – there's a court case because his wife's accused him, he gets sent to trial, he has 4 months in prison, but he gets off scot free; nobody believes his wife, even though she's telling the truth. He returns to the town, he's now a hero, they have a big party, there's lots of music; a big public scene. And the knowledge that Anna has, the girl who has lied to defend him in court, absolutely cripples her and she becomes very depressed and wants to die. She meets him, he does actually kill her, but it's a very strange and rather beautiful scene in the middle of the night, it's a sort of love scene – he loves her but he kills her, and she wants to



die. Then Hudetz finally does crack up, and he's being chased by the police from the moment the girl is dead.

The last part of the story is that once he does realise he's done wrong he thinks he will kill himself and the last scene has ghosts in it – people who are dead from the train crash come back and debate with him whether he should kill himself or not. The people who he causes to be killed want him to die because then he will be in hell. The play's called *Judgment Day* so the last day, there he is in the middle of the night in the place where the train crashed, waiting for the same express train to come along and see if he can throw himself under it. And finally what

he realises is that no, that's the cowardly thing to do. It would be more honest, and braver, to just put your hand up and say, 'I did wrong, you judge me'. And that's the 'Judgment Day'.

AP: What do you find so interesting about this play, being performed now?

JM: It's a sort of existential thriller and the interest of it is particularly from the time it's written: will this man realise he's done something wrong? Will this man realise that he's caused this thing, this huge thing to happen, even if it's out of proportion with the size of his original mistake?

So it's a play about conscience, written at a time when, in the 30s and in Germany, that was a commodity in very short supply. And the thriller element is: 'will the hero realise he did something wrong' – a surprising thing about conscience. I think it does speak to our times rather strongly, because although we're not living in a time of fascism (yet), though fascism is on the rise in Europe, we do live in a time in which people are very slow to take responsibility for their actions, I think, and it's quite common, I think, in our culture, that people prefer to wait to be told they're wrong rather than putting their hand up to admit they're wrong. *Judgment Day* is a thriller about one man and his journey towards realising what he's done wrong.

AP: So he didn't base it on any personal experience – for example, why does he choose a train crash rather than any other catastrophe?

JM: I don't think so, no. The only personal experience he based it on in a way is that having been an incredibly strong, left-wing, politicised writer, in 1933 when the Nazis came to power, in order to be able to work, he joined the Nazi Writers Union. And yet he was writing at the same time as Brecht and his plays were always slagging off the Nazis. So he compromised in order to stay in Germany. And all his later plays were therefore about quite personal things like conscience, and so on one level, he is writing about himself and the compromise you have to make if you're living in those kind of times with that kind of regime. The kind of compromise it was all too easy to make.

But eventually Horváth got booted out – they wouldn't put his plays on, they all got banned. He tried writing films and they weren't very successful either. Then he went back to Vienna and of course the Anschluss happened in 1938 and then he left Austria and that's how he wound up in Paris.

AP: Almeida Projects: How does he compare to Brecht?

JM: Horváth is more modern in lots of ways than Brecht. And Brecht we now struggle with and don't do so much: my generation did Brecht a lot 20 or 30 years ago.

What's different from Brecht, is that Brecht is an out and out politicised writer. Brecht knows the answers, Horváth asks the questions. And writes beautiful, very subtle, very complicated characters. He's very funny – although this play's very dark, clearly, it's very funny and he writes very touching, human, flawed people.

In German theatre, Horváth's now as important as Brecht and gets done as much, it's just that he hasn't been done quite so much over here. His most famous play, *Tales from Vienna Woods*, was done in the very first season at the National Theatre when it opened on the Southbank, and in fact Stephen Daldry directed *Judgment Day* at the Old Red Lion just down the road from the Almeida in the late 80s - his first play in London, and he's actually a big Horváth champion. The Gate Theatre in Stephen Daldry's day also did a couple of Horváth's plays. But he's never quite taken root here in the same way as he has in Germany as a writer, so we're banging the drum for him!



Laura Donnelly and Joseph Millson
Photo: Keith Pattison

Christopher Hampton, writer of this new version of *Judgment Day* spoke to us about Horváth, and how he came to be a playwright.

Horváth was Hungarian – he was born in what is now Croatia, but at that point I think was part of Italy, in 1901. His father was a diplomat, who eventually wound up in Germany. He said he wrote his first German sentence when he was 14, so he wasn't brought up as a German speaking writer. Yet he had a wonderful ear, particularly for people's periphrasis or pomposity, or euphemism. He was very much, you would say, a realistic writer, except that his plays always have a slightly strange and otherworldly air about them.

I first came across Horváth when I was asked to translate a play called *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, which was in the very first season of the Olivier Theatre, when the National Theatre opened on the Southbank. And it was something of a triumph, the kind of show you don't see very often now, about 40 in the cast and a live orchestra, so it was a great evening, directed by Maximilian Schell. And it was one of the successes of the first season at the National.

Through all this I got very interested in Horváth. It had in any case been a name that I'd heard a lot when I'd been working in Germany in the early 70s, because his plays had just been really rediscovered at that point and were extremely influential on all the writers of my age, the young writers in Germany at the time – they were reacting against what they took to be, I guess, the rather black and white propositions of Brecht, and they were more interested in somebody a bit off the wall, like Horváth.

I wrote a play, called *Tales from Hollywood*, in which he was the central character, in the 80s, but since then I haven't really had anything to do with Horváth and these two pieces (by which I mean *Judgment Day* and a novel of his called *Youth Without God* which I've adapted also this year for a theatre in Vienna called the Theaterinderuzerstadt), written in that period of time between when the Nazis came to power in 1933 and Horváth's death in 1938. He was one of the only writers who stayed in Germany during that period. Most of the writers, those who didn't support the regime, who by definition were no good, most of the writers left Germany as soon as the Nazis came to power, but Horváth was somehow fascinated by what it would be like being in the country, what daily life would be like under the Nazis. So he went back into Germany and spent the best part of the next 5 years there, and wrote about Nazi Germany from the inside. Now this didn't come without a cost – he had to join the Nazi Writers' Union for example – he was acutely aware of having to compromise all the time with the regime that he absolutely detested.

So I think he felt a great deal of uncertainty and guilt about the decision that he'd taken to stay in Germany. And so both these pieces, *Judgment Day* and *Youth Without God* are about or feature a protagonist who is suffering the consequences of having told a lie and trying to make the decision to tell the truth.

I think narrowly 'relevant' plays are not usually interesting 70 years later. What it deals with is people's paranoia, people's suspicion, people's rush to judgment, people's self-righteousness, all those things that are still unfortunately – I think were acutely present in that era in that country at that time – but are still very much with us, and also that sense that we know about of a country quite calmly moving towards some appalling catastrophe, i.e. the Second World War in

I'm telling the truth and I'll swear to it in court. She kissed him just to provoke me, but there's a God of vengeance and that's why he forgot the signal...

**Frau Hudetz
Scene Two**



Laura Donnelly and Tom Georgeson
Photo: Keith Pattison

Frau Hudetz: *The way you're talking, it was me that missed the signal, it was me that killed those eighteen people.*

Alfons: *It's all connected.*

Scene Two

that case, in our case the economic crisis. These are things that don't change – people aren't as aware of the world around them as they always ought to be and that's one of key subjects of this play.

I always wanted to be a writer from a very early age – I started writing plays from the age of about 8 or 9, and wasn't quite sure about whether I wanted to write novels or go into the theatre or whatever it was. When I was 18, in that gap between school and university, I wrote a play, and managed to get it done a couple of years later at uni, and it was reviewed, and everything happened very quickly after that and about 3 or 4 months later it was in the west end. So I started in a very...I didn't quite realise at the time how unusual it was to be thrown straight into the maelstrom while I was still a student. After that, when I graduated, because of my play already having been done, I was able to go straight into work at the Royal Court Theatre, where I was in the literary department, and I was associated with the Court for a number of years after that. My first 5 or 6 plays were done there.

First of all I like doing all kinds of different things, and one of the things that I actually studied languages (French and German) at university so it's very nice to be able to use those skills and translate which has been a big stretch of my career. I love working in the theatre because it's so temporary really, a movie is like a book, it's there for ever, there's nothing you can do about it, you look at it and you think 'I wish I could've fixed that, or done something different'. Even if you direct the films yourself, as I've begun to do a bit, there's nothing you can do with them once they finish, whereas the theatre is just different every time and what's really interesting is that if your career lasts long enough people start to do your plays again, and what's very interesting is to see how different they are when they're done now to the way they were done 20 or 30 years ago. The cinema is very very tempting for a all kinds of reasons, financial and because it's enjoyable, but I've always felt that theatre was my real home.

The first play I ever saw, weirdly enough, was an Enemy of the People by Ibsen, which was a school play at a school in Egypt where I was a pupil. And I was very struck by it, but I think the real revelation for me was when I came up in a school party to see Peter Brook's production of King Lear with Paul Schofield, which I didn't really want to see – I was quite reluctant to go and sit and watch Shakespeare for however many hours it was likely to last! But I came out, I literally came out of the theatre at the end of the evening, got on the bus to go to the station thinking 'that's what I want to do – I want to work in the theatre'. And what's great is that in ten years I've worked twice with Paul Schofield! Once on a translation of Uncle Vanya and once on one of my own plays, so that was like a dream come true.

I think it's sort of even harder now for people to get into the theatre than it was. You know, in the late 60s things were somehow very open, doors would open quite easily, which I think they don't now. I feel that theatres are not able to be as experimental or welcoming as they used to be or to do plays with a large enough cast to be able to engage the local community as it were. I just think things are tough, and therefore you have to be even more bloody-minded and determined and you know, obsessed, than you had to be when I started. So when people say what advice would you give me if I wanted to become a writer, and my advice is don't, unless there's nothing else you can do.



Philip Thorne in rehearsal
Photo: Bridget Jones

Assistant Director on *Judgment Day*, Philip Thorne, gives us an insight into the rehearsal process, from read-through to opening night.

Week One

Day One at last! We've been planning towards it for some time now... Over the past months James and I have met several times, re-reading the play, fine tuning bits of translation here and there and conducting research into 1930s Germany. I've been spending time in Germany where my research trails through libraries, archives and second hand book stores have yielded some interesting material...

It's thrilling to have everyone assembled together for the first time. We start with a read-through. It's always a strange and exciting moment to hear the play read out loud for the first time. After the read-through James proposes a tea break, but somehow we drift straight into a spontaneous conversation about the play and its themes and the tea gets forgotten! The spark of the play is a brief kiss that Anna gives stationmaster Hudetz to arouse the jealousy of his wife. Only seconds later an express train hurtles through and Hudetz has forgotten to give the signal. A fatal collision is the consequence.

The play has been wonderfully and faithfully translated by Christopher Hampton. We're lucky to have Christopher with us for a good chunk of the first week.

We spend the whole of the first week around a table attempting to unravel this complex play. We start with a very simple exercise: We go through the play, underlining everything that can be considered a fact. This ranges from simple information such as 'it's a small town', 'it's nine o'clock' etc. to less obvious and hidden observations about places and characters that only reveal themselves through close reading. We draw up a map of the play's given circumstances.

One of the things we realise through this exercise, is how difficult it is to pluck out the true facts from between the play's layers of lies and half truths. A lot of the exposition in the first scene is untrustworthy, since it's rendered through Frau Leimgruber's prejudices and animosity. The characters in this play thrive on gossip and are quick to pigeonhole people (the 'upstanding stationmaster', the 'evil chemist'). We identify the details of the marriage between Thomas and Josefine as a particular incidents of blurred fact. We never actually see Thomas and Josefine alone together as a couple, all we have to go on are second hand opinions and suspicions about their relationship. We have long conversations about what the reality of the Hudetz marriage might be.

As part of the first week's table work we also begin to immerse ourselves in the play's historical context. The play takes place in a small village in Southern Germany in 1937. The characters are victims of inflation and throughout the play we catch the echoes of wider social and political events happening in Germany at the time. Whilst nazism is never in the foreground, the play does depict the conditions and mindsets which allowed fascism to flourish.

The German TV series *Heimat*, a wonderfully detailed chronicle of Germany between 1919 and 1950 becomes a constant reference point in rehearsals. The films show German history through the eyes of a family from the Hunsrück area of the Rhineland. Little

Look at me as much as you like, sir, I'm not afraid of the light.

Frau Hudetz
Scene Two



Joseph Millson, Daniel Hawksford and David Annen in rehearsal
Photo: Bridget Jones

Frau Leimgruber: How can you say such a thing? Anna, she's innocence personified in person.

Woodsman: She may be innocent, but she still knows what's what.

Scene One

domestic and everyday details which history books don't mention can be gathered from these films. We refer to them for information on stationmaster's etiquette, salutes, the practices of a plate-layer etc. Heimat also becomes an invaluable costume reference. Other films we watch that gives us an insight into the historical world of the play are Jean Renoir's breathtaking train film *La Bete Humaine* (from which we glean insights into the daily routine of a stoker) and Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*.

We read the last scene of *Spring Awakening*. The final scene in our play owes much to the ghost scene at the end of that play. We also read Horváth's novel *Youth without God* in which he approaches similar themes as in *Judgment Day* (conscience, guilt, opportunism) from a slightly different angle.

Towards the end of the week we are visited by Ian Huish, a leading academic on Horváth's works. Ian tells us about the writer's turbulent life. We are particularly struck by Horváth's decision to join the Nazi Writer's Union. His justification was that he wanted 'to study the Nazis at close quarters.' Whilst writers like Brecht had left the country long ago and were writing about what they imagined life in Germany to be like, Horvath's plays are experiential accounts of actual life inside Nazi Germany. Eventually Horváth was also forced to flee the country and felt extreme guilt at having joined the writer's union. It was during this time that he wrote *Judgment Day*. We discuss the parallels between Horvath and his guilt ridden protagonist Thomas Hudetz and how the play can be read as a comment on a whole nation fooling itself of its innocence whilst atrocities were happening all around.

Ian also alerts us to the frequent stage directions 'smiling' and 'silence'. The grins and smiles in this play come at very unusual places, often when you'd least expect them. He explains them as disguised moments of uncertainty. Moments in which the characters are putting up facades. We make a note to explore this in rehearsals. Ian explains the silences as 'moments when the conscious battles against the unconscious.' We don't quite understand what this means yet, but hope it will reveal itself to us when we start rehearsing!



Laura Donnelly and Suzanne Burden in rehearsal
Photo: Bridget Jones

She's such a swine - very unpopular woman - never stops tormenting that poor station-master, he's a saint, he's so kind - it's an absolute disgrace.

Frau Leimgruber
Scene Seven

Week Two

When we arrive back on Monday the table has gone and stage management have put up a mark up of the set. This week is about getting the play 'up on its feet'!

Miriam's design features a raised platform. It starts off front-stage as the station platform the characters are waiting on. After the collision the platform is pushed back, spatially expressing the emotional sense that the world seems to have come out of joint. It slowly revolves during the trial scene, giving us the opportunity to view the proceedings from every angle. It's a very simple and clever set, evoking not only a platform and later the track but also giving us a sense of passing time through the gradual revolve. For the purpose of rehearsal the platform has been marked by a static and level strip of black carpet. We won't figure out the revolve until we get into the theatre in the final week.

The actors are fantastic and it's really satisfying to start seeing the play come alive. We start filling the contextual work of the previous week into the back-stories we create with the actors. We imagine Alfons and Josefine once belonged to a very wealthy family which lost its fortune in the inflation. This explains why they feel set apart from the rest of the town. We also create a back-story for Josefine and Hudetz's relationship. We read in the previous week that it was very common for women to take much younger husbands during the final years of the First World War, since older men were out fighting. This is what we imagine happened in the Hudetz relationship. We establish that Thomas Hudetz's mantra is 'I always follow orders and do my duty' and that even the marriage with Josefine occurred out of a sense of duty. It's important to us to get this back-story right, because in a way this is where the whole dilemma of the play starts. As Anna says: 'I'd never have kissed the stationmaster if he hadn't had a wife he never loved!' Jo discovers that his mantra about duty and following orders, whilst at first sounding honourable and upstanding, is in actual fact a way of ducking personal responsibility.

We learn a lot about the play's structure in this week. Scene one seems to work best if there's a real sense of boredom to it. It should feel like a bog standard day in a provincial, backwater station. As an experiment James lets Jack, Andy and Sarah endure five silent minutes waiting for the late train before Andy utters his first line to kick off the scene. This results in the scene having a low, lumbering energy about it which feels right. When the collision occurs, it's all the more shocking. Scene two then cuts straight into the most exciting and dramatic day the town has ever known.

We are constantly reminded by what Ian Huish said to us about the complexity of Horváth's characters. James works very hard to make sure that we carry this complexity through to the stage. Horvath hated stereotypes and often goes against expectations. Ferdinand the butcher for instance who is initially introduced as a great hulking brute, turns out to be the most sentimental character in the play! We also realise that every character in this play is guilty of something. We initially thought that Alfons was the one entirely honest and upstanding character. But even in Alfons we begin to detect a certain self-righteousness and hypo-criticism in the way he doesn't reveal to his sister how he publicly distanced himself from her.

We also have another guest: Reg Davies. Reg worked for British Rail for thirty years and is currently doing a PhD in Railway Studies



Julie Riley, Patrick Drury and Ben Fox in rehearsal
Photo: Bridget Jones

in York. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of signalling systems, alarm bells, station whistles etc. His enthusiasm for trains is apparent in his every word! It's important to us to understand exactly how the play's central train collision happens. Jo has come up with a working theory that the station has a single line with a diversion route slightly further down the line that allows another train to pass. Hudetz is meant to set a signal to slow the express train down, in order to give the oncoming passenger train enough time to reach the diversion. Reg approves Jo's theory which makes him very proud! Reg gives notes to Jo, Patrick, Ben and Jack who are playing the stationmaster, train driver, stoker and platelayer. He describes the reality of these jobs to them. Some of this information will eventually feed into their characterisations. For instance Ben our stoker (or 'fireman' as Reg corrects us!) is told about the noise he'd be exposed to all day and that deafness is a common occupational hazard in this field. We decide that one of his character traits will be for him to talk very loudly.

Reg also talks to stage management and makes sure they've got the sound of signalling bells and positioning of the signal hands right.

Week Three

This week one of our main points of focus is cracking the elusive last scene of the play. The last scene breaks from the style of the the rest of the piece. Up to this point the play has been naturalistic, albeit with echoes of the bizarre and supernatural on the fringes. In the last scene the supernatural world is given a bold physicalisation through the sudden appearance of the ghosts of the engine driver and platelayer who died in the train crash. It's a difficult scene and we talk about different ways of staging it and 'solving' the ghosts. It seems Horvath himself had considerable difficulties with this scene and rewrote it several times. I've translated several of these earlier drafts and we read through them. His earlier ideas include a 'prosecutor from the beyond' to mirror the earthly prosecutor in the previous investigation scene and menacing visions of purgatory. We realise how in comparison to these earlier scenes, Horvath ended up going for something much more straightforward. The ghosts seem much more 'normal' in the final version, smoking cigars, cracking jokes and bickering about the late connecting train... Our conclusion is not to endow the ghosts with any 'otherworldliness' in costume or manner. At first it shouldn't even become apparent they are ghosts at all. We realise how when played straight the scene is in fact much more haunting than when we try to emphasise the supernatural. We also discuss how the ghosts can be interpreted as Hudetz's inner voices and the whole scene taking place in his head. James proposes an exercise in which Jo is alone on stage and Patrick, Jack and Laura read in their lines. We repeat this several times giving Jo the opportunity to experience

There's some desperate people in the world... People who just don't care. Not about anything - they don't care if someone walks free or gets out of jail, if they're innocent or guilty - all they think about is beer.

Landlord Scene Three



Ben Fox in rehearsal
Photo: Bridget Jones

I'm not making it too easy on myself, the only thing I did wrong was not to chase you off right away, that I was so polite to you, when I should have given you a good smack, all right?

Hudetz
Scene Four

playing the scene by himself and reacting to disconnected voices. The result is extraordinary. When we go back to playing the scene with the ghosts it retains much of the sense of schizophrenia found in the exercise.

After all that concentration on ghosts we're finally visited by one! We're rehearsing a scene in which Julie says the words: 'time slips away.' Right on cue the big cardboard cut-out of a station clock attached to the back of our rehearsal set comes loose and slides to the ground. We're all quite taken aback. Is this the ghost of Ödön urging us to put some more gags into his piece?

Week Four

This week we have a session on every scene. We pay special attention to the smiles and silences which pop up several times on each page and bear as much weight as the dialogue. We analyse what triggers each of these stage directions.

We find the silences are a key to unlocking Anna and Hudetz's scene beneath the viaduct. It's a haunting and enigmatic scene in which love, sex, guilt and death are intertwined. In this scene particularly, as much (if not more) happens in the silences as in the dialogue. We formulate the thoughts going through Anna and Hudetz's mind in these silences. James lets them rehearse the scene speaking out the silent thoughts. When we run the scene after this the silences have acquired an eloquence and precision that motors the whole scene. It really is a beautifully crafted scene that keeps me on the edge of my seat every time we run it...

Week Five

We start the week with our first run (or potter through as James calls it at this early stage!) It's good to see what we've achieved so far and the problem areas also become apparent. We work on these in isolation over the next few days. The biggest grey area is Anna's last appearance when the play takes on a mystical dimension and she and Hudetz become Adam and Eve. Unlike the previous ghosts, this section does have an elevated, otherworldly quality about it. We try to give Laura different actions, but none of them seem to ring true. However much we try, the section ends up sounding symbolic, whereas we want to ground it in some kind of reality. Still one to solve...

We start rehearsing with Thomas and Lewis our child actors for the scene at The Savage Inn. Their task is to present Hudetz with a bouquet of flowers and recite a crude poem about heroism. The scene is about the whole town welcoming back the (guilty) stationmaster and revelling in his and their perceived innocence. The kids do a great job and their little recitation really emphasises this phoney celebration of heroism and innocence.

Another big event is the arrival of all our extras! They will also be part of the celebrating crowd as well as playing rubbernecking villagers after the train crash. We give them little roles and actions to play and introduce them to the scenes. With our crowd in place the staging dynamics become incredibly important and it's a real inconvenience not having the revolve. Our DSM Harry has to move the rehearsal set every ten minutes to give us an idea of the its motion!

Next week will be about translating what we've worked on in the rehearsal room into the theatre - hopefully retaining its subtleties and nuances - whilst adding lights, sound and above all, the revolve! I think we're in a good place to begin this second part of the process.

The play deals with a number of issues that are particularly interesting to explore in the classroom. Below are just a few exercises, adapted and elaborated from our *Judgment Day* Introductory Workshop, for use in lesson time, to investigate the themes of the play in further depth.

Exercise 1. Whose Story?

Duration: 20 minutes.

Aim: To encourage students to consider the ease with which people are able to convince others of lies.

Practical work: Divide the class into groups of three. Each member of the group must tell the others a true, interesting story about something that has happened to them; e.g. they were once stuck in a toilet and rescued by Simon Cowell. As a group, they must then decide which of these true stories they will tell back to the rest of the class. All three members of the group will tell the story back to the class, as if it were their own story. Students are free to alter facts and embellish upon the story if it might make the tale more believably theirs.

Evaluate: Who did the class believe the story belonged to? Why? How did it feel to be deliberately lying to people?

Exercise 2. Group Consciousness

Duration: 20 minutes.

Aim: To create an understanding and empathy of how Hovarth, the characters in *Judgment Day* and people in the present day can find themselves supporting things they do not believe in.

Discussion: Odon von Hovarth was a left-wing artist, writing in Germany in the 1930s, during the rise of the Nazi Party. Unlike writers such as Brecht, Horváth stayed in Germany throughout this time, and was only able to do so by joining the Nazi Writers Union. Can anyone think of a time where they have had to compromise their beliefs, or, turn a blind eye to something, to continue doing what they want to do? Can you identify any characters in *Judgment Day* who are struggling with their conscience and beliefs?

Practical work: As a whole group, choose one person to leave the room. Explain to the volunteer that they have done something terrible, that had awful consequences for the community, and when they enter the improvisation to be prepared for how the rest of the community might react.

The remaining students will set up a group improvisation, set in a public house or other community setting, considering the different characters they may find there. Explain to the group that the volunteer outside the room is a local hero, returning after some time away. The group must decide what it is this person has done- perhaps they saved someone's life, or have overcome a great hardship. Once the improvisation has been set, invite the volunteer back into the room to join it. Allow the improvisation to run for a minute or so before freezing the action.

Ask the volunteer to leave the room again. Ask for two or three more volunteers. Explain to them that the hero has in fact not done something heroic, but something terrible. This time, when they replay the improvisation, they must consider how knowing this new piece of information changes the way they act towards the returning hero. Bring the improvisation to life again for a minute or two before freezing it.

Evaluate: Once you have replayed the improvisation twice, explain to the group that the first volunteer was not in fact a hero at all, but had done something terrible. How does it feel to know that they were congratulating him/her for something that wasn't true? Ask the volunteer to explain how it felt knowing they were being hailed a hero when they were in fact not. Were they suspicious that some people knew the truth? Did anyone actually know the truth? How did it feel for those people who did know? Did you want to tell the rest of the community? How might you have done this? Would you have been believed?

Exercise 3. Taking Responsibility

Duration: 20 minutes.

Aim: To consider how difficult it can sometimes be to own up to doing something wrong.

Practical work: In groups of three or four ask students to improvise a short scene, in which one of the characters has done something they shouldn't have and doesn't own up to it (for example, stolen a car/ broken a valuable vase/eaten the last chocolate éclair). Ensure that the consequence of not owning up to it is shown (for example, does someone else take the blame?). Share some of these scenes back, and invite the rest of the group to give constructive feedback on the scenes.

Ask the students to return to the same groupings and create the same scene again. However, this time the culprit will own up to their mistake. Share some of these scenes back.

Evaluate: How did the scenes differ? How did it feel for the actors to either be telling the truth or lying? Which were the worse consequences; from the first scenes or the last scenes?

Exercise 4. Exploring Text

Duration: 15 minutes.

Aim: To become familiar with the two principle characters in *Judgment Day*.

You will need: Multiple copies of the two *Judgment Day* script extracts from pages 41-43.

Discussion: Ask for two volunteers to read out each of the two scenes we will be exploring. Who are these characters? How do they know each other? What is their relationship? How old are they? What is happening in the scenes? Where is it set? Is there anyone else on stage? Is there anything that people don't understand?

Practical work: Ask the students to get into pairs. Give each pair one of the two extracts- they have approximately ten minutes to consider how they would stage the extract. They can choose to have one chair, two chairs or no chairs on stage with them.

Evaluate: Is it clear which character has control in the scene? How have you shown that through your staging, and characterisation?



Exercise 5. Subtext

Duration: 20 minutes.

Aim: To further deepen our understanding of the relationship between the two principle characters in *Judgment Day*.

Practical work: In the rehearsal room, the actors playing Anna and Hudetz struggled to understand the many stage directions for silences and smiles which appear in odd places in these two scenes. These are moments where the conscious and the unconscious are doing battle. In your pairs, using the same scene you have just been exploring, rehearse the piece speaking only what you imagine to be the characters silent thoughts, or subtext.

Evaluate: Ask pairs to share back their scenes, either using the text as written or their improvised 'silent thoughts' scene. Did exploring the silent thoughts reveal new things about these characters? Does it make the scene easier to understand?

Exercise 6. Otherworldly Actions

Duration: 10 minutes.

Aim: To consider how the paranormal can be effectively shown on stage.

Discussion: At the end of *Judgment Day*, the action moves from naturalism into the supernatural, with the appearance of ghosts. How might you be able to show ghosts onstage, without breaking the tension created in the previous scenes of the play? Possible ideas:

- Lighting
- Sound: using voices rather than physically having actors onstage
- The actors playing the ghosts naturalistically, rather than spookily.

Practical work: In small groups, consider a theatrically interesting way you might show ghosts onstage. Your aim is not to make the audience laugh at all, but encourage us to absolutely believe this is happening.

Evaluate: Were any of these ideas effective? Why?

Judgment Day and Forum Theatre

Judgment Day, with its themes of conscience, right and wrong, and guilt and responsibility, lends itself to exploration through the technique of forum theatre. Forum theatre is a theatrical model devised by Brazilian practitioner Augusto Boal, which enables the spectator to become involved in the action of a scene, guiding the protagonist to make alternative choices.

For further information on Augusto Boal and the practical application of his techniques, the following sources may be of use:



Boal, A: *Theatre of the Oppressed* (London: Pluto Press, 1979)

Boal, A: *Games For Actors and Non-Actors* (London: Routledge, 1992; Second Edition 2002)

Boal, A: *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (London: Routledge, 1995)

www.beyondthedoorko.uk/forumtheatre2

www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusto_Boal

Exercise 4. Exploring Text // SCRIPT EXTRACT #1

from Scene One

ANNA Herr Hudetz. Why don't you come and visit us anymore? My father thinks you must have started going somewhere else.

HUDETZ I don't go anywhere any more, Fräulein Anna. I'm always on duty.

ANNA Well, that's all right, then. I thought perhaps you'd stopped coming because of me.

HUDETZ (*genuinely surprised*) Why because of you?

ANNA I thought, because of your wife.

HUDETZ What's my wife to do with you?

ANNA She doesn't like me.

HUDETZ Go on, you're imagining things.

He stops abruptly and looks up at the first floor. Silence.

ANNA (*ironically*) What's up there?

HUDETZ Nothing.

ANNA Afraid your wife might see you with a young girl? Aren't you allowed to talk to me?

HUDETZ You must know the answer to that.

ANNA If you talk to me now, there'll be another huge row tomorrow, will there?

HUDETZ Who says?

ANNA Everybody.

Silence.

HUDETZ (*staring at her*) You really all ought to leave my wife in peace, understand? All of you, especially you, Fräulein Anna. You're much too young to get involved in all this...

ANNA (*mockingly*) Is that so?

HUDETZ There's a lot of things you'll never learn, until you start to understand...

ANNA (*as before*) Oh, yes, give us a little lesson, will you, teacher...

HUDETZ The first thing you have to learn is if you don't want to hurt yourself, don't hurt other people.

ANNA Now you're sounding like the priest...

She laughs.

HUDETZ Have a good laugh, we'll speak another time...

He starts to leave.

ANNA Everybody's laughing at you, Herr Hudetz. What's he really up to, they say, attractive man like that – stuck in his station morning, noon and night...

HUDETZ *(fiercely)* People seem unusually interested in me.

ANNA Yes, what they're saying is, the station-master isn't a man at all.

Silence.

HUDETZ Who says that?

ANNA Everybody. I'm the only one who defends you, sometimes.

She smiles maliciously, kisses him suddenly and points up at the first floor.

ANNA Now she's seen me kissing you, how about that? *(She laughs)* Now what's going to happen? *(She laughs)* Now you'll be for it, won't you?

She makes a spanking gesture.

HUDETZ *(staring at her)* If you don't clear off this minute, I don't know what's going to happen!

ANNA You want to kill me?

HUDETZ Stop this stupid nonsense and get out!

He grabs her arm.

ANNA Ow, let go of me, you thug!

She pulls herself free and rubs her arm.

ANNA Can't you take a joke?

HUDETZ *(roughly)* No!

An express train passes through.

HUDETZ Christ Almighty!

He throws one of the signal levers, the signal bell rings, he clutches at his heart.

ANNA *(frightened)* What is it?

HUDETZ *(staring in front of him, a whisper)* That was express train 405 and I forgot the signal... *(He snaps at her)* There's your joke for you. I've always followed orders and done my duty!

ANNA It's all right, nothing's going to happen.

HUDETZ Shut up!

He goes back in the door.

Exercise 4. Exploring Text // SCRIPT EXTRACT #2

from Scene Four

HUDETZ *looks around, then lights a cigarette; up on the viaduct a signal-bell rings, like the signal bell in the station. He listens, looking upwards. ANNA arrives, sees him and starts visibly.*

HUDETZ What's the matter?

ANNA *(smiling)* You appeared out of nowhere...

The church clock strikes in the distant town. HUDETZ quietly counts the number of strokes.

HUDETZ ...nine – I've been here since quarter to... *(He grins)* You don't keep a lady waiting.

Silence.

ANNA *(looking around carefully)* I crept out, I don't want anyone to know we're meeting.

HUDETZ Couldn't agree more.

ANNA People would only talk and there's no reason for that, is there?

HUDETZ Not that I know of.

High above them, a train travels across the viaduct.

ANNA *(looking up)* The stopping train...

HUDETZ *(also looking upwards)* No, that's the express.

ANNA It's going so slowly, made me think...

HUDETZ Yes, it's deceptive.

ANNA It is.

Silence.

HUDETZ What was it you wanted to tell me?

ANNA A lot of things. Really, a lot of things.

HUDETZ One at a time, then. First, second, third.

Silence.

ANNA Have you stopped hearing voices in your head, Herr Hudetz?

HUDETZ *stares at her.*

What would you say if I was to shout out that I was lying, that I perjured myself, that the signal was...

HUDETZ *(shouting her down)* Be quiet!

He looks around. Silence.

ANNA *(quietly, but urgently)* What would you do, Herr Hudetz?

HUDETZ I, erm, I really don't know.

ANNA I don't believe you.

HUDETZ What do you think?

ANNA I know.

Silence.

HUDETZ I wouldn't kill you.

ANNA *(smiling)* Pity.

HUDETZ *is surprised.* *Silence.*

(very simply) I don't want to go on living, Herr Hudetz.

HUDETZ It was your duty to swear that oath the way you did, you had no choice.

ANNA *(letting fly at him)* You're wrong if you think it was all my fault, I'm not having that, oh, no!

HUDETZ Then whose fault was it?

ANNA Not mine, not all mine!

HUDETZ *(sarcastically, like the PUBLIC PROSECUTOR)* Maybe it was the Bogeyman?

ANNA Maybe.

Up on the viaduct, the signal bell rings again. HUDETZ looks upwards.

(frightened) What was that?

HUDETZ The signal.

ANNA *suddenly puts her hands over her ears.*

ANNA *(quietly)* I keep hearing that wailing – I can't bear being alone, Herr Hudetz, the ghosts come, they're mean to me, they want to fetch me away...

Silence.

HUDETZ Listen, I've been on my own for four months, in solitary confinement, no one's company but my own, so I had plenty of opportunity to listen to my inner voices, every hour of the day. We had good long conversations, Fräulein Anna – and you know what my inner voice said to me? "You've always followed orders and done your duty," it said, "you've never missed a signal in your life, dear Thomas, you're innocent..."

ANNA *(interrupting him)* Innocent?

HUDETZ Completely.

ANNA *(letting fly at him)* Aren't you making it a bit too easy on yourself?

HUDETZ (shouting at her) I'm not making it too easy on myself, the only thing I did wrong was not to chase you off right away, that I was so polite to you, when I should have given you a good smack, all right?

Silence.

ANNA (*smiling*) You should have given me a good smack?

HUDETZ Yes.

Silence.

ANNA Pity you didn't...

HUDETZ Yes, I'm sorry, as well.

ANNA Why don't you give me a good smack right now? Perhaps it'd do the trick.

HUDETZ (*shouting at her again*) This is no time to make stupid jokes!

ANNA It's not a joke. Then it was, when I kissed you...

HUDETZ (*interrupting her*) Don't keep talking about that!

ANNA (*smiling*) I don't know what else to talk about...

HUDETZ Then you'd better shut up, or there'll be another accident!

Silence.

ANNA How do you mean, Herr Hudetz?

HUDETZ What?

ANNA What sort of accident?

Silence.

HUDETZ (*staring at her*) I walked free, Fräulein Anna, gloriously free.

ANNA Then maybe you'll have to do something even more serious, so that you can be properly punished...



Judgment Day **Almeida Projects Resource Pack**

Compiled by Charlie Payne, with assistance from Philip Thorne and Natalie Mitchell.

Judgment Day by Ödön von Horváth in a new version by Christopher Hampton was produced at the Almeida Theatre 3 September - 17 October 2009.

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Quotes from *Judgment Day* by Ödön von Horváth in a new version by Christopher Hampton.

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