

George Woollands and Margaret Rendle founded Proscenium in 1924. The company's first production was the now little-known *The Tide* by Basil McDonald Hastings. Since then, the company has performed nearly 250 plays, using Harrow as a base since 1945. In this time Proscenium has built up a strong reputation for performing challenging plays (both classic and contemporary) to a high standard.

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MARK SUTHERLAND

Artistic Director
CRYSTAL ANTHONY

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PROSCENIUM

Put my boots

PROSCENIUM

All My Sons

By Arthur Miller

All My Sons

January 28th-31st 2004
Travellers Studio, Hatch End

All My Sons

Arthur Miller

Joe Keller.....	David Pearson
Kate Keller.....	Evelyn Moutrie
Chris Keller.....	Julian Wood
Ann Deever.....	Clare Wooster
George Deever.....	Robert Ewen
Dr Jim Bayliss.....	Keith Bayross
Sue Bayliss.....	Angie Sutherland
Frank Lubey.....	Rob Hurcum
Lydia Lubey.....	Rosie Moutrie
Directed by.....	Duncan Sykes
Set Design by.....	James Lewis
Lighting designed and operated by....	Janet Harrison
Sound.....	Kushag Patel
Stage Management.....	Rod Moor-Bardell
	Hannah Reeves
Set Build.....	Anton Jungreuthmayer
	Mark Sutherland
	Michael Williams
Rehearsal Prompt.....	Paul Davis
Music.....	Duncan Sykes
Programme by.....	Colin Hickman
	Mark Sutherland

The action takes place in the back yard of the Keller home in the outskirts of a mid-Western American town in the late 1940s

- Act 1 Morning
Act 2 Late afternoon, the same day
Act 3 Next morning, 2am

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes between Act 1 and Act 2.

Arthur Miller: A Chronology

- 1915 Born in Harlem, New York
1929 Family moves to Redwood, Brooklyn during the Depression.
1932 Graduates from Abraham Lincoln High School.
Works in automobile parts warehouse.
1934 Enrolls as journalism major at University of Michigan.
1936 First play, *No Villains*, wins university drama award.
1940 Marries Mary Slattery
1944 *The Man Who Had All the Luck*: Theatre Guild National Award
1947 *All My Sons*: New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play

1949 *Death of a Salesman*: Tony Award, Critics' Circle Award, Pulitzer Prize.
1950 *An Enemy of the People*, adapted from Henrik Ibsen.
1953 *The Crucible*: Tony Award, Donaldson Prize.
1955 *A View from the Bridge*.
1956 Divorces Mary Slattery. Summoned before House Committee on Un-American Activities – refuses to name names. Marries Marilyn Monroe.
1959 Gold Medal for drama from National Institute of Arts and Letters.
1960 Filming of *The Misfits*.
1961 Divorces Marilyn Monroe.
1962 Marries Inge Morath.
1964 *After the Fall* and *Incident at Vichy*.
1965 Elected President of PEN International.
1968 *The Price*.
1977 *The Archbishop's Ceiling*.
1980 *The American Clock*.
1983 Visits Beijing in China to direct *Death of a Salesman*.
1984 *Salesman in Beijing* published.
1985 *Two Way Mirror* staged at Young Vic.
1987 *Timebends – A Life* published.
1991 *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*.
1993 *The Last Yankee*.
1994 *Broken Glass*: Olivier Award for Best Play.
1998 *Mr Peter's Connections*.
2000 *Resurrection Blues*.

The Source

Both Miller's early plays, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* and *All My Sons*, originated in a true incident told to him by a friend. The inspiration for *All My Sons* was a story concerning a family from the Middle West which had been destroyed when the daughter had reported her father to the authorities for selling faulty machinery to the army. Miller says that he visualised the second act climax to the play almost before the narrator had finished the story – though the actual writing of the play took another two years.

Dramatic Influence

When *All My Sons* opened on Broadway all the critics described the play as 'Ibsenesque'. Ibsen perfected what has been called 'the play of ripe circumstance' in which, in the course of a relatively short period of stage time, the events of a whole lifetime are put into perspective which gives tragic significance to the catastrophe. Miller clearly learned from Ibsen how to withhold information about the past until it is most useful dramatically, and how to create a sense of an inexorable web of cause and effect. But *All My Sons* is not an imitation and the principal difference is in the attitudes of the dramatists. *Whereas Ibsen is primarily concerned with the consequences of past actions (the birds coming home to roost), Miller is more interested in the reaction which follows understanding. In Miller, the moment of awareness is always preparation for a moment of choice.* Neil Carson 1982.

In his introduction to the 1958 edition of his collected plays Miller acknowledges his debt to Ibsen, a debt which he describes as being both structural and moral. Structurally he admits that the first act is deliberately slow, *so that even boredom might threaten, so that when the first intimation of the crime is dropped a genuine horror might begin to move into the heart of the audience, a horror born of the contrast between the placidity of the civilisation on view and the threat to it that a rage of conscience could create.* He admires Ibsen's ability *to forge a play upon a factual bedrock*, where situations are revealed through actions and the emphasis is on what people did rather than what they felt.

Morally, he suggests, the play is concerned not so much with ideas of right and wrong, but with a moral world where *men cannot walk away from certain of their deeds.* He notes that in watching Ibsen's plays *one is constantly aware of process, change, development. What is precious in the Ibsen method is its insistence upon valid causation.*

In the careful clarity of its dramatic structure and its powerful moral seriousness *All My Sons* is certainly the most Ibsenesque of all Miller's plays. As he acknowledges in the 1958 introduction:

I think now that the straightforwardness of the 'All My Sons' form was in some part due to the relatively sharp definition of the social aspects of the problem it dealt with. It was conceived in wartime and begun in wartime; the spectacle of human sacrifice in contrast with aggrandizement is a sharp and heartbreaking one.

And in *Timebends* he declares

'All My Sons' had exhausted my lifetime interest in the Graeco-Ibsen form....The problem was not that it was too realistic but that it left too little space and time for the wordless darkness that underlies all verbal truth.

Relationships

In writing of the father-son relationship and of the son's search for his relatedness there was a fullness of feeling I had never known before; a crescendo was struck with a force I could almost touch. The crux of 'All My Sons' was formed; and the roots of 'Death of a Salesman' were sprouted.

1958 Introduction

In *Timebends* he tells of a meeting with his cousin Abby and discussing the markedly unsuccessful business efforts of Abby's father:

He wanted a business for us. So we could all work together. A business for the boys.

While the relationship between Joe and Chris is fundamental in *All My Sons*, Miller remembers a production in Israel in 1977 and one in London with Rosemary Harris in the role of Kate, which placed the moral ambiguity of Kate both as wife and mother at the centre of the play.

...If I had obeyed either the Party Line or the shibboleths of the national press during the war, I could not have written 'All My Sons' – which, now the war was over, was being praised for its courage, its insights, and its truth.

Arthur Miller: *Timebends*

Dramatic Purpose

I desired above all to write rationally, to write so that I could tell the story of the play to even an unlettered person and spark a look of recognition on his face. My intention in this play was to be as untheatrical as possible. To that end any metaphor, any image, any figure of speech, however creditable to me, was removed if it even slightly brought to consciousness the hand of a writer. So far as was possible nothing was to be permitted to interfere with its artlessness. I wanted to write so that people of common sense would mistake my play for life itself and not be required to lend it some poetic licence before it could be believed.

The First Production

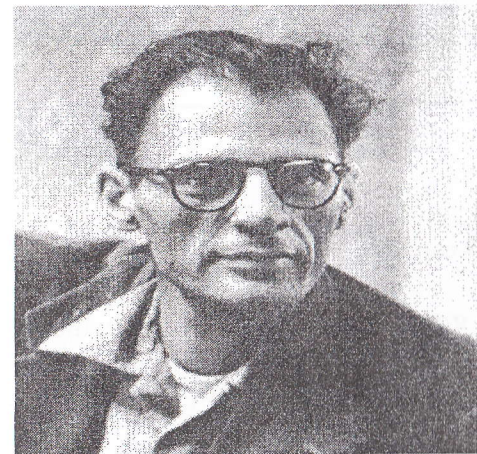
Miller acknowledges his debt to Elia Kazan, who directed the first production: *The play had already run in New Haven and had shown its impact, but Elia Kazan continued rehearsing sections of it every day even now, driving it to ever more intensified climaxes, working it like a piece of music that had to be sustained here and hushed there.*

The play apparently caused producers and critics some difficulty. Producer Herman Shumlin had said, *I don't understand your play*; Ward Morehouse, the New York Sun critic, invited Miller and Kazan for a drink to ask them, *What's it about?*; and Miller was invited by the Times to write a piece to explain the play. Miller says that *apart from the embarrassment of presuming to tell critics what to think, I was at a loss as to what needed elucidation.* He was more encouraged by the audience reaction, and tells of *one tall and dignified man I saw standing in the lobby crowd at the intermission after the second-act curtain that was quite visibly shaken by that climax, his eyes red with weeping. To his companion, who had asked what he thought of the play, he muttered through thin, barely moving lips, 'I like it'.*

Although *All My Sons* was Miller's first resounding success as a playwright he declares, in *Timebends*: *I counted myself lucky that 'All My Sons' had created a decent number of enemies as well as a great many friends, and thus kept reality in equilibrium.*

Death of a Salesman is not "about" late 1940s America any more than *The Crucible* is "about" the 1690s or the 1950s. *All My Sons*, with its reminder that the past is unfinished business, is, if anything, more relevant today than it was when the war seemed to have drawn a line across history..beyond all else what [Miller] works for is a respect for the human reality of a Willy Loman, a John Proctor, an Eddie Carbone or a Joe Keller: *"that you care about him that much is a miracle, I mean considering the number of ourselves we have destroyed in the last century. I think art imputes value to human beings and if I did that it would be the most pleasant thought I could depart with."*

Professor Christopher Bigsby, Young Vic programme, 1992



Arthur Miller 1950/2000



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Our Next Production

Troilus and Cressida by William Shakespeare

Love is timeless. So is war. Can one great passion survive the cynicism, ego-tripping, bloodiness of conflict? Or does it become another poor victim? Shakespeare gets beneath the skin of the mighty warriors of the Trojan War and into the hearts of Troilus and Cressida. No, all is not fair in love and war.

Travellers Studio, Hatch End, March 24th-27th 2004-01-12

NB Start Time 7.30pm

In accordance with the requirements of the Council:

"Persons shall not be permitted to sit or stand in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways."