

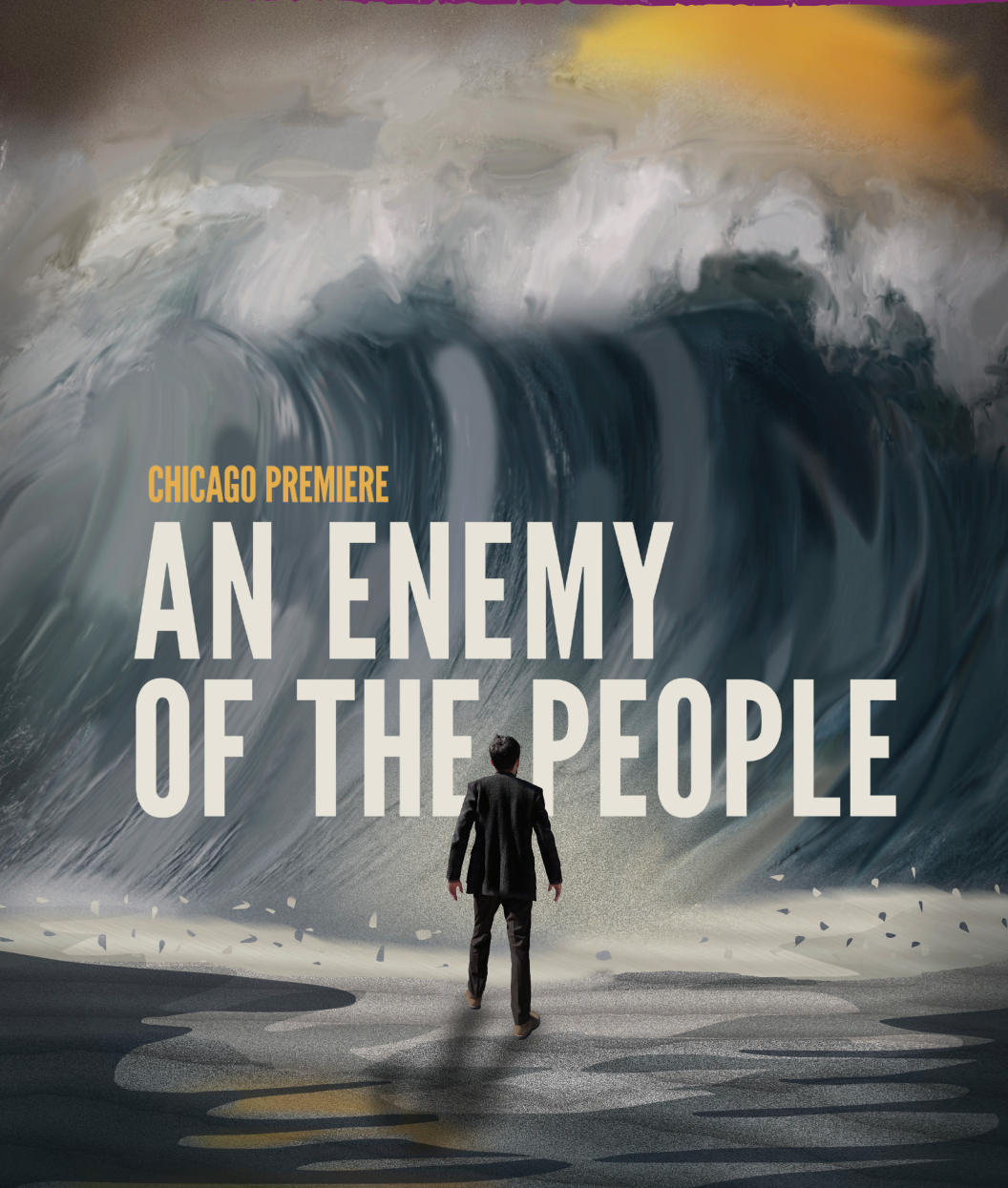
TIME **LINE**
THEATRE
COMPANY

BACKSTORY

Your Guide to TimeLine Productions

CHICAGO PREMIERE

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE



A MESSAGE

from Artistic Director PJ Powers

DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to *An Enemy of the People* and TimeLine's new home in Uptown!

Whether you've been a part of our journey since 1997, experiencing many of our nearly 100 productions, or if this is your introduction to TimeLine's work, we're delighted you're joining us as we conclude our 29th season and embark on a new era.

This is a space designed to bring our community together, and we hope that you will feel welcomed, engaged, and at home.

The path to opening these doors has been well-documented as both lengthy and circuitous. TimeLine spent many years in rented spaces that couldn't fully support the ambition of our artistry, nor the comfort and accessibility of our audience, artists, and staff. But the heart of TimeLine always shone through in those cramped quarters, and passionate supporters like you showed up. And stepped up. Our ever-growing community saw what TimeLine could become and helped to make this new home a reality.

Our gratitude is beyond measure, nearly impossible to fully articulate.

As thrilled as we are to have this beautiful new facility, it's important to underscore that the quest for a home of our own was never merely about bricks and mortar.

Expanding our impact was—and is—our goal. Deepening and expanding the breadth of our mission is our goal. Uplifting the work of remarkable artists and making a difference in the lives of a younger generation is our goal. Welcoming a broader community to engage with our work and being a meaningful community partner in Uptown is our goal. And ensuring that TimeLine will sustain for years to come is our goal.



With this opening, we celebrate an unbelievable milestone toward achieving those goals.

But it is not a finish line. It is a new beginning. Chapter Two commences.

And we are elated to launch this chapter with a play that is a fitting embodiment of our mission, connecting past with present.

Originally written by Henrik Ibsen nearly 150 years ago, *An Enemy of the People* has retained its rightful place as a timeless classic, and it's a story that TimeLine has explored previously. In 2004, we produced *Paragon Springs* by Steven Dietz, which shifted the play's setting to 1926 Wisconsin. This new version, inaugurating our new theatre, is crafted by one of the most exciting American playwrights working today, Amy Herzog. Set in late 19th century Norway, as was Ibsen's original, this adaptation premiered on Broadway in 2024 to great acclaim. We're delighted to introduce it to Chicago under the direction of Ron OJ Parson, a TimeLine Company Member and one of our city's peerless artists.

It's a timely tale about speaking truth to power and risking everything to bring the facts to light.

At our first rehearsal, Ron (a sports enthusiast) spoke eloquently about the importance of building a team, and he's assembled an extraordinary one to bring this resonant play to life. It includes renowned designers and a cast that features five TimeLine Company Members (the most that have appeared together in more than a decade), joined

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by three rising stars making their TimeLine debuts. It's a team that combines long histories with TimeLine, alongside new voices working with us for the first time.

Coach Ron and his team have leveraged the flexibility of our new theatre to design a thrust stage that places the audience on three sides of the action. Reimagining the theatre configuration to best serve each play is a core artistic value of TimeLine, helping to create an intimate connection between artist and audience. And we now also have the benefit of enhanced technology and theatrical infrastructure that was sorely lacking in our old space on Wellington Avenue.

This theatre is the beating heart of this dynamic facility, but it's far from the sole

Artistic Director PJ Powers steps into TimeLine's new rehearsal room—where he declared at the top of the *An Enemy of the People* first rehearsal: "Today is when we start to do what we do." (Ashley Hamm Photography)



focus. Every floor is designed for connection and engagement.

We hope you'll explore our exhibit galleries to dig deeper into the stories we tell and discover our Education and Community Room, where we can expand the impact of our Living History Education Program. Behind the scenes, a rehearsal room, offices, and production support spaces will allow our artists and staff to do their best work, no longer feeling restricted or having to make-do in inadequate spaces.

And, center stage on the first floor, our Bar and Café—a space to build community with you. It's designed to be a gathering place, and to foster what's always been most important to TimeLine's mission—conversation. Between friends and strangers. Among neighbors and newcomers.

Here, for decades to come, we look forward to coming together to experience everyone's history. To make sense of our present. To recognize the beauty of our different experiences, reveal the richness of our commonalities, and contemplate how to move forward together.

We hope that this new home can be a place to listen. And to feel that we are not alone.

As we open these doors, we stand proudly on the broad shoulders of Chicago's storied theatre community, second to none. And we humbly join this remarkable Uptown neighborhood, revering the legacy of Argyle Street and awed by the history of our neighbors who have distinguished North Broadway and beyond with art, music, cuisine, and soul for generations.

We look forward to contributing to that legacy with you, while cementing a new beginning for TimeLine. I can't wait for the history that can be made at 5035 North Broadway.

Best,

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Henrik Ibsen

HENRIK IBSEN WAS BORN March 20, 1828 in Skein, Norway, a town on the Norway fjord about 70 miles from Oslo, then known as Christiania. His father Knud Ibsen was a prosperous merchant, but when Henrik was about 7, his father's risky speculations brought about financial ruin. They sold properties brought into the marriage by Knud's wife, Marichen Altenburg Ibsen, and moved to a smaller farmhouse called Venstøp. Henrik's mother was a fan of the theater and an artist and would pass those interests to Henrik. At home, he would entertain his siblings and cousins with little plays and sketches.

At age 15, Ibsen left school and moved to the town of Grimstad to apprentice to a pharmacist and begin to earn a living. These were years of hard work and loneliness, through three years of apprenticeship and another three as an assistant pharmacist. At 18, he fathered a child out of wedlock with a servant woman 10 years his senior. He paid support for this child for 14 years, though he kept the child secret. In spite of the isolation, Ibsen continued to write, including poetry and satiric sketches.

Ibsen moved to Christiania (now Oslo) and studied to enter the University of Christiania and become a doctor, but was not admitted. He did find a group of like-minded friends—fellow writers and students with whom he could share his writings and political beliefs. Ibsen was a radical, believing there should be no kings and that no nation should invade or curtail the freedoms of other countries. He co-edited a radical paper and wrote satires, articles, reviews, and more poetry. He participated in protests and narrowly avoided arrest. Ibsen wrote to his friend, scholar Georg Brandes, that “the State is the curse of the individual ... the State must be abolished.”



Portrait of Henrik Ibsen, circa 1864. (Daniel Georg Nyblin / Wikimedia Commons)

Ibsen wrote two unsuccessful plays in Christiania. In 1851, he relocated to Bergen to work at Det Norske Theatre. He earned a salary and increased his financial stability serving in a variety of roles, including writer, director, producer, and most often, general laborer. Det Norske primarily produced the popular theater of the time: melodramas and lighter pieces translated from plays written in other countries. It wasn't until he traveled for the theater and saw productions in Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Dresden that Ibsen saw work that would influence his own.

Ibsen began to have some success with his newly penned historical dramas: *St. John's Night*, a revised version of *The Burial Mound*, *Lady Inger of Østråt*, *The Feast at Solhaug*, and *Olaf Liljekrans*.

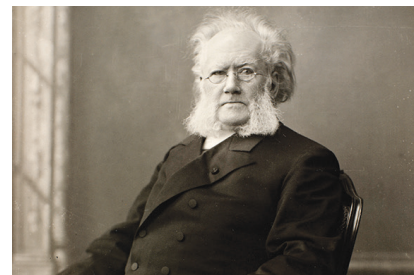
Ibsen wrote plays unlike anyone else in Europe at that moment. In an era of often badly sanitized Shakespeare and melodramas, it cannot be understated how shocking his plays were, in style and often subject matter.

He married Suzannah Daae Thoresen on June 18, 1858; she would be a lifelong supporter of his work. The couple left Bergen for Christiania when Ibsen became Artistic Director of the new Norwegian Theater. They had one son, Sigurd, born December 23, 1859.

Though he had some success with his plays, Ibsen grew annoyed with the light commercial fare that theaters offered. He felt attacked by both his theater's board and the press—and the theater went bankrupt in 1862. This period was a struggle for Ibsen. He was depressed, his family lived off donations from friends, and he struggled to write. He finally finished the play *The Pretenders*, which was performed in 1864 at the Christiania Theater and was a success. However, Ibsen had soured on Norway and soon entered a period of self-imposed exile in Italy and Germany. He would return only once over the next 27 years. In spite of this exile, his mind and writing remained firmly in Norway.

In 1864, Ibsen received a government travel grant to study theater in other countries and left for Rome, where his wife and son soon joined him. They were just as poor in Rome, frequently relying on money from friends, but Ibsen was happier and more productive. He completed *Brand*, about a clergyman with extreme viewpoints. His friend Brandes likened the central character to Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher and theologian, who both men had read. The play was published in Copenhagen and became a success. At the same time, Ibsen was granted an artist pension by the Norwegian government; finally, he had achieved financial security. It was now that he began work on what he termed “a drama of ideas.”

Photo of Henrik Ibsen, 1901. (Gustav Borge / National Library of Norway)



Ibsen began to shift both his writing style and subject matter from romantic nationalism and verse to realistic language and everyday people as central characters. It is this period of social plays, or social realism, on which much of his reputation as “the father of modern drama” or “the father of realism” relies.

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From the late 1870s into the 1890s, Ibsen entered a period of some of his most successful plays, including *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck* and *Hedda Gabler*. Both *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* were considered controversial in their subject matter. *Ghosts* was banned for 20 years in Norway; the first production would end up being by an amateur group of Danish-Swedish immigrants in Chicago.

At the height of his success, Ibsen liked to dress well and relished his accolades as well as the attention of female friends much younger than himself—though many biographers suggest that these flirtations never became infidelities.

He returned to Norway in 1891, and in 1898, there were celebrations in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden for his 70th birthday. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1902, 1903, and 1904, but was passed over by the committee. During his lifetime, he was already regarded as one of the most important playwrights since Shakespeare.

Ibsen died in Christiania on May 23, 1906 after a series of strokes. It was reported in many accounts of his death that he had a visitor on May 22 and his nurse said he was getting better. Ibsen said, “On the contrary” (“Tvertimod!”). He died the next day, a contrarian to the end. He remains the most produced playwright after Shakespeare.

THE PLAY

An Enemy of the People

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE, *En Folkefiende* in Norwegian, was finished in 1882 and debuted in 1883. Henrik Ibsen wrote it in a single year rather than his typical two. In many ways, *An Enemy of the People* is Ibsen's angry response to the negative response to *Ghosts*; critics were horrified that he had written a play that openly discussed venereal disease and said he had ruined his career. It's not a stretch to say that Ibsen wrote a version of himself in creating Dr. Thomas Stockmann. At the same time, Ibsen promised his publisher that the subject matter would be palatable to the general public and any housewife could safely read it.

“Never in any circumstances shall I be able to belong to a party that has the majority on its side ... the minority is always right—that is to say, the minority that is leading the way towards some point at which the majority has not arrived.”

—Henrik Ibsen, in a letter to Georg Brandes after the public response to *Ghosts*

Ibsen drew on many sources for *An Enemy of the People*. Like much of his work, there are familial similarities. The town is similar to his hometown of Skien, and Peter Stockmann may have been modeled on Ibsen's uncle Christian Cornelius Paus, who was a judge and served in multiple positions of power in the region's government. The title is a conscious nod to a line in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and indeed, Dr. Stockmann shares some of the same characteristics of the title character.

Scholar Peter Watts has written that Ibsen also took inspiration from two historic



TimeLine Company Members Will Allan (as Dr. Thomas Stockmann, right) and Behzad Dabu (as Peter Stockmann) reunite for the first time since the company's 2009 smash hit *The History Boys* in TimeLine's *An Enemy of the People*. (Joe Mazza / brave lux, inc.)

incidents. His friend, the poet Alfred Meissner, told him the story of his father, who had been medical officer at a spa in Teplitz in Bohemia when there was a cholera outbreak. Dr. Meissner warned the public. When all the spa guests left, angry townspeople stoned his house and he had to flee the district. The second incident was a chemist in Christiania, Harald Thaulow, whose fight with a local steam kitchen led to a public meeting that divided the city. Ibsen also claimed that he put the characteristics of certain friends in Dr. Stockmann. From expressionist painter Jonas Lie he took “his abruptness and joyous virtue” and from literary rival Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson the “strength of will.”

The play was a success both in published form and on stage, and new adaptations seem to be perennially relevant as a vessel for current political issues. In 1950, Arthur Miller wrote an adaptation in the midst of responding to McCarthyism. In 2004, TimeLine produced *Paragon Springs*, a play by Steven Dietz inspired by *An Enemy of the People* and set in America in the 1920s. In 2024, Theater of War Productions staged a reading at the National Academy of Sciences, giving scientists in the audience lines to speak as part of the crowd, which offered clear resonances with the 2020 COVID-19 shutdown. In a 2024 article in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, they tracked 620 stagings of the play worldwide since the start of 2020. Amy Herzog's version premiered on Broadway in 2024.

“In ten years' time, the majority will probably come round to the point of view that Dr. Stockmann held at the meeting ... But the Doctor himself won't have been standing still all those ten years—once again he'll be at least ten years ahead of the majority ... Nowadays there's a reasonably compact crowd standing at the point where I stood when I wrote each of my plays, but I'm not there any longer. I'm further ahead again, I hope.”

—Ibsen, in a letter to his friend Georg Brandes

THE ADAPTER

Amy Herzog

AMY HERZOG'S PLAYS have been produced at Lincoln Center Theater, Donmar Warehouse, New York Theatre Workshop, and Yale Repertory Theatre, among others. They include *Mary Jane* (New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play), *The Great God Pan*, *Belleville* (Susan Smith Blackburn Prize finalist), *4000 Miles* (Pulitzer Prize finalist, Obie Award for Best New American Play), and *After the Revolution*. She is a recipient of the Joan and Joseph F. Cullman Award for Extraordinary Creativity, the Benjamin H. Danks Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Whiting Writers' Award, among several other honors.

Herzog's version of *An Enemy of the People* premiered on Broadway at Circle in the Square Theatre on March 18, 2024. Directed by Sam Gold, the production featured Jeremy Strong (*Succession*) and Michael Imperioli (*The Sopranos*) and was nominated for five Tony Awards, including Best Revival of a Play.



THE TIMELINE

Revolutionary Changes Shaping the 19th Century

1803 A large portion of what is now the United States is purchased from France through the Louisiana Purchase.

1803 – 1815 The series of conflicts known as the Napoleonic Wars occur.

1804 The first steam-powered locomotive begins operation.

1807 Great Britain bans the trading of enslaved people across the British Empire; this does not end the institution of slavery in British colonies.

1810 The steam-powered printing press is invented by Friedrich Koenig.

1810 – 1825 The Latin American Wars of Independence occur, as various areas fight for freedom from Spanish rule.

1812 – 1815 The War of 1812, America's “second war of independence,” occurs between the U.S. and Great Britain.

1820 The Revolutions of 1820, a wave of uprisings in Spain, Italy, and Portugal, try to establish constitutional monarchies.

1821 – 1832 The Greek War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire occurs.

1825 In the failed Decembrist Revolt, military officers challenge Russia's autocratic rule and try to force political reform.

1830 During the Revolutions of 1830, King Charles X is deposed in France and Belgium gains independence from the Netherlands, alongside additional uprisings in Italy and Poland.

1831 Cyrus McCormick invents a mechanical reaper. It revolutionizes agriculture by automating grain harvesting.

1831 – 1836 Charles Darwin voyages around the world on a scientific expedition via the HMS Beagle.

1833 Great Britain abolishes slavery across most of the British Empire.

THE SCIENCE

Germ Theory of Disease Transmission

ALTHOUGH MICROSCOPES WERE INVENTED in the 1590s, it would take nearly 300 years for the general public to accept that germs existed and were responsible for disease transmission. A germ is the umbrella term for a disease-causing organism such as a bacteria, virus, or parasite—generally single-celled and only visible under a microscope in a sample of blood or culture.

Prior to understanding bacteria, people believed miasmas, or “bad air,” could cause illness. Hygiene and hand washing were not considered as means of stopping the spread of disease. This led to high mortality rates in both childbirth and battle, when doctors failed to adequately sanitize their equipment and even their hands between patients.

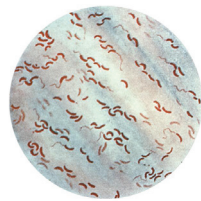
Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister, and Robert Koch are the major scientists who pushed understanding of germ theory. Lister recognized that when he used carbolic acid as an antiseptic on open wounds, he could reduce infection. He then pioneered antiseptic surgical techniques that cut disease transmission. In the 1870s, Pasteur proved that microbes caused decomposition. Robert Koch would prove that specific germs caused anthrax, cholera, and tuberculosis by taking samples from an animal infected with anthrax and then causing the disease in another animal by giving them the same germ.

Like many new scientific techniques, there was resistance among many doctors and scientists to accepting germ theory and adopting those techniques—it required adopting a new set of practices for which they hadn’t trained. Similarly, the general public, who did not have access to microscopes and had varying levels of literacy and education, were being asked to believe in microorganisms they could not see.

Prior to understanding bacteria, people believed miasmas, or “bad air,” could cause illness.

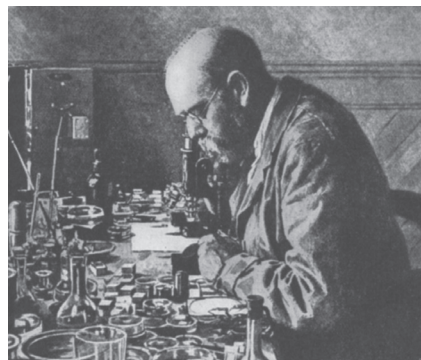
Germs can be transferred through a variety of vectors (water, air, surfaces) that vary with the microorganism. In 1850, the physician John Snow was able to treat a cholera outbreak in London’s Soho neighborhood by removing the Broad Street water pump, a major source of water in the neighborhood. He removed the handle from the pump to prevent people getting water there, and the cholera epidemic subsided. He also showed a difference in infection rates in people who lived upstream from the Thames River, which frequently contained sewage. This also tied the spread of disease to economic resources and race, as certain neighborhoods were at risk of contaminated water and others were not.

During the 19th century, six cholera pandemics killed millions worldwide; the disease remains a risk, particularly in regions with poor sanitation or unsafe water supplies.



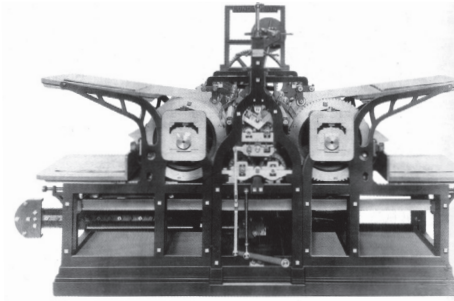
(Left) Photomicrograph of *Vibrio cholerae*, the bacteria that causes cholera. (CDC / Wikimedia Commons)

(Below) Robert Koch in his lab, circa 1885. (published in *Mikrobenjäger*, or *Microbe Hunters*, by Paul de Kruif, 1927 / Wikimedia Commons)



THE PRESS

The Rise of Newspapers



Freidrich Koenig's steam-powered printing press, 1814. (published in *A History of Graphic Design* by Philip B. Meggs, 1998 / Wikimedia Commons)

THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY saw an unprecedented rise in the number of newspapers.

In 1810, the steam-powered press was invented by Freidrich Koenig. These new machines could print papers more quickly—initially up to 1,100 single-sided impressions per hour—and those papers could be sold more cheaply. Literacy was on the rise, and inexpensive newspapers were accessible to the many, not just the wealthy. In Norway, the number of newspapers grew from a handful to around 100 over the course of the century.

However, even as it became easier to print and read newspapers, there was no real standard of journalistic practice. Newspapers were often partisan, and people picked up papers that espoused the same beliefs they had. The concept of journalistic distance or impartiality didn’t really grow until the end of the century. It wasn’t until 1936 that the “Vær Varsom” Code of Ethics (literally translated as the “be careful” code) was written in Norway for the national press. This helped establish professional standards of journalism.

Post World War II, the standard of journalistic objectivity became the norm—though many may feel those standards shifting again with the current proliferation of digital media.

THE TIMELINE CONTINUED

1837 The first telegraph is patented, marking the beginning of near-instant long-distance communication.

1843 The Indian Slavery Act abolishes slavery in territories controlled by the East India Company.

1846 – 1848 The Mexican-American War takes place, driven by U.S. expansionism and territorial disputes.

1848 *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, is published.

1848 – 1849 A wave of uprisings known as the Revolutions of 1848, or “the Springtime of the Peoples,” spreads across much of Europe.

1849 King Frederick VII of Denmark accepts a constitution, ending a nearly 200-year-old absolute monarchy, in the peaceful “March Revolution.”

1850 – 1864 The Taiping Rebellion, a civil war against China’s Qing Dynasty that will become known as one of the deadliest conflicts in history, takes place.

1853 – 1856 The Crimean War against Russia, one of the first conflicts to be documented extensively, takes place.

1857 The India Revolt, a large scale uprising by Indians against the rule of the British East India Company, occurs.

1859 Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species*.

1859 – 1869 The Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, is constructed.

1860 The first audio recording of the human voice is created by Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville.

1861 – 1865 The American Civil War between the Union (North) and Confederacy (South) is fought.

1863 First portion of the London Underground opens, becoming the world’s first underground passenger railway.

THE COUNTRY

19th Century Sweden-Norway

THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF NORWAY, SWEDEN, AND DENMARK are deeply intertwined. Indeed, all three languages are mutually intelligible, with effort.

During the 14th century, all three countries, including parts of what is now Finland, were united under the Kalmar Union. Denmark and Norway then remained in a union from 1380 to 1814, while Sweden was independent.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark and Norway sided with France. After France's defeat, Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden, ending their more than 400-year union. Norwegians resisted and fought the Swedish–Norwegian War, but were defeated. Norway then entered a union with Sweden—known as the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway—while Denmark remained independent. This union lasted nearly 100 years, until it was peacefully dissolved in 1905.

During this period, the two countries kept separate constitutions, laws, legislatures, administrations, state churches, armed forces, and currencies. The Swedish King remained in Stockholm. Norway had always been weaker than Denmark and Sweden, as those countries both had more arable lands better suited for agriculture and trade. Norway is geographically dominated by steep mountains and forests with little farmland.

The industries of Norway at this time were primarily lumber, fishing, and shipping. Shipping would grow to comprise one-third of the Norwegian economy by the late 19th century, bringing people of many backgrounds in and out of the country. *[Visit our lobby for more about Swedish and Norwegian people of color in the 19th century.]*

The country's population rose from 883,000 in 1801 to 2.24 million in 1900. In 1800 its



Hand-colored map of Scandinavia, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, plus inset of Iceland, by Daniel Lizars, 1840. (Geographicus Rare Antique Maps / Wikimedia Commons)

urban population was only 8.8 percent; by 1900 it had reached 28 percent. This rapid population growth, combined with related economic pressures and promises of a better life elsewhere, likely contributed to the emigration of 800,000 Norwegians between 1830 and 1920—most of whom went to Canada or the United States.

In Norway during this period there also was a growth of Romantic Nationalism, drawing on folktales and stories about heroic Viking and Norwegian figures. Henrik Ibsen contributed to this cultural awakening with his early plays. This rising national consciousness helped fuel calls for independence from Sweden. In 1905, conservative and liberal Norwegian leaders collaborated to challenge the union under Sweden's King Oscar II, creating a constitutional crisis. After a nearly unanimous vote in the Norwegian parliament (the Storting) and a public referendum, Norway peacefully separated from Sweden on June 7, 1905. King Haakon VII of Norway was formally crowned on August 13, 1905.

LIVING HISTORY STUDENTS RESPOND

PART OF THE LIVING HISTORY EDUCATION PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

during *An Enemy of the People* is our continued engagement with North-Grand High School (located in West Humboldt Park) and teacher Michelle Livas' World Studies and AP Human Geography classes.

Livas has taught at North-Grand since 2008, and in Chicago Public Schools for 21 years. And she's been helping North-Grand's partnership with TimeLine and Living History thrive for more than a decade.

"Each collaboration between our students and the Living History team provides opportunities for our students to learn in a different way, to step away from the typical high school day, and to present a new side of themselves to their peers. I'm incredibly grateful for this partnership and feel that it has changed the way I approach teaching and learning.

—North-Grand High School teacher Michelle Livas

Now, as part of Living History's residency with North-Grand for *An Enemy of the People*, Livas asked her students to share their perspective on the choice to speak out that is central to the themes of the play:

In An Enemy of the People, Dr. Stockmann speaks out about a public health problem, even though it threatens the town's economy. Do you think speaking up in these situations can actually lead to change? Why or why not? What makes it hard for people to stand up for what they believe in?

THE TIMELINE CONTINUED

- 1865** Slavery is abolished in the U.S.
- 1869** The first transcontinental railway is established across the United States.
- 1870–1871** The Franco-Prussian War, fought for dominance in continental Europe, takes place.
- 1871** The Paris Commune briefly rules the French capital city.
- 1872** Women's suffrage activist Susan B. Anthony is fined \$100 for illegally voting in the U.S. presidential election.
- 1873** Denim blue jeans are invented.
- 1876** The telephone is patented by Alexander Graham Bell.
- 1877** Thomas Edison invents the phonograph, the first machine capable of recording and reproducing sound.
- 1879** Edison patents the first practical incandescent light bulb.
- 1882–1884** Robert Koch isolates the specific bacteria that cause tuberculosis, cholera, and anthrax, fundamentally proving the germ theory of disease and debunking prior theories of transmission.
- 1884** First electric car is produced.
- 1885** Louis Pasteur creates a vaccine against rabies. Karl Benz produces the first internal combustion engine.
- 1888** George Eastman patents the Kodak camera, which uses a film roll rather than heavy glass plates and makes photography accessible to more people.
- 1892** Fingerprinting is adopted for the first time.
- 1893** New Zealand becomes the first country with universal suffrage for women.
- 1895–1898** The Cuban War of Independence is fought against Spanish colonial rule.
- 1898–1900** The first Zeppelin is constructed and has its maiden voyage.



North-Grand teacher and longtime Living History Education Program partner Michelle Livas.

Here are a handful of the Living History student responses:

I feel like the reason people are afraid to stand up for what they believe in is because they are afraid that people won't support them and turn against them. They may also be scared to stand up because their opinion is or might be something that people are against so they may be afraid that people will turn against them if they share their opinion.

What is worth it is the chance to save the life of another and of many more. He isn't just fighting for himself, or politics. He is fighting for him and for the people. People don't always know the hero in the end. An example can be Spider-Man. He fights for not just the city but for the people, and still many people still don't believe in his actions.

I think you should speak up for something you believe in even if people will turn against you because you can make a huge change for just being you and speaking out for those who maybe can't. This also sometimes leads to more people speaking out who were scared before. I feel like people are scared to speak out because of fear of being judged, being seen different, and the outcome.

I believe it's worth it to speak up even if you know people will turn against you because if you don't speak the truth and hold back, the situation will grow bigger ... The problem may be dangerous and/or life threatening to others and not speaking up could cause more harm than speaking the truth. Yet if you speak up there is a chance someone will believe you and/or you will end up getting evidence

to prove your claim. What makes it hard for people to stand up for what they believe is embarrassment. People often feel like they'll be judged and isolated, preventing them from taking a stand.

I think if you do speak up for a situation like this I don't know if it's possible to make a change considering it'll be very hard to change people's minds with the reputation you have and having to deal with corrupt town officials who only care about the money and reputation the town has.

I think that speaking up in these situations wouldn't really lead to change unless there's proof to be shown to the others. This is because the press is already against him and whatever information the press gives to the people they heavily rely as a research source.

I think speaking up in these situations can lead to a change. I say this because in Martin Luther King's situation he spoke up about racism and he hoped one day it will change, eventually it did because more people started to speak up.

I think speaking up in situations can change something because as it shows it says that he was determined to (stand to) his principles so I think when someone it determined about something it can actually help and change decisions. This is because he never gave up and he stood up.

Yes, because one voice leads to many voices. This happens because people may share a similar opinion on something and collectively speak up about it.

To read all the Living History student responses, visit our online lobby at timelinetheatre.com/enemy-lobby

THE INTERVIEW

Will Allan and Behzad Dabu



As rehearsals for *An Enemy of the People* started, dramaturg Maren Robinson (MR) met with actors Will Allan (WA) and Behzad Dabu (BD) to talk about history, *The History Boys*, and their return to open *TimeLine's* new home.

(MR) Can you tell me your first memory of each other?

(WA) I can tell you it was March 8, 2009, that Behzad and I met. We were doing a photo shoot for *The History Boys*, and they were lining us all up on this stairwell and I remember we were getting ready for our first pose and Behzad lays his whole body across the stairwell and is leaning against the banister. I just remember thinking, this was a funny move to do on the first day, before we even knew each other's names. So I had an inkling we would get along.

(BD) I don't know if Will knows this. In 2008, I had heard about this production of *The History Boys* because all the local Chicago theatre departments were talking about it. I knew, I'm Indian, I'm gonna get Akhtar, but I really wanted to play Scripps. So, when I walked in, I was like, who's Scripps? And I was like, "that guy?" But Will was so non-actor-y. He was so chill. I was allergic to theatre-type people at the time. And I loved the idea of a regular guy, a serious actor, and was excited about that.

BACKSTORY: The Credits

Maren Robinson
Dramaturgy, Research, Writing

PJ Powers, Rosie Schultz, Juliet Hart, and Michelle Livas
Additional Contributions

Lara Goetsch
Editing and Graphic Design

Michal Janicki
An Enemy of the People
promotional image design

Backstory is published to accompany each production.

THERE'S MORE ONLINE!

Don't miss any of the materials and events created to spark your curiosity and enhance your time with *An Enemy of the People!*

Visit timelinetheatre.com/explore-enemy to explore the show's Online Lobby experience, discussion events, digital versions of this *Backstory* and the Program Book, multi-media resources, our blog Behind the 'Line, ways to take action, and much more.



Scan to view all the online resources

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(MR) What does it mean, having met each other and worked at TimeLine for the first time in your 20s, to be back opening a play in our new home together?

(BD) *The History Boys* led TimeLine into a new era. It put TimeLine on the map for a lot of new audiences. Now we're once again going to new audiences, and we're going to a new place, and we're going into a new era.

(WA) It's a singular event, you know? It's just unbelievably special, a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and it's an honor to be a part of it.

(BD) The space really is incredible. It's so well designed, it is so... what's the word?

(WA) It's thoughtful. It's so thoughtful.

(BD) And every little detail was considered. How to make everything really great for audiences, and then how to make everything really great for actors. It's happening on either side of this building, and we meet in the middle, which is the theatre, which is still intimate.

The original cast of TimeLine's 2009 Chicago premiere of *The History Boys*, which ran for six sold-out months, at their first photo shoot (clockwise from top): Joel Gross, Will Allan, Behzad Dabu, Brad Bukauskas, Rob Fenton, Govind Kumar, Michael Peters, and Alex Weisman. (Lara Goetsch)



(MR) What's it like to do a show with your best friend, and to play brothers on top of that?

(WA) When you're doing a play of this magnitude, with this many complicated themes and a lot of intensity, it's just so much easier. To know on day one that I have 100% faith in the person who's playing opposite me. All of that history we have is going to be underneath every single thing we do in this play.

(MR) What excites you most about doing *An Enemy of the People* today?

(BD) There's the obvious things about our president calling the press "an enemy of the people" several years ago. The most relevant line in the play is—every time I read it, I'm like, ugh—Will, what is the actual line?

(WA) "So, you're lying to the people in order to have the opportunity to keep lying to them."

(BD) I've been talking about how I feel every source has become polluted, pun intended. There is a disease, they are poisoned. There are propagandists and capitalists running the news media. And it means that nothing can be trusted. Even Google search has become corrupted. So it is so deeply relevant today. I think every single cast of every single play in America says that about every play that they're doing, but it really is. When our current leader used the exact words of the title to describe the press, I mean, it's literally ...

(WA) Crazy. There are times where I'm just sitting there stewing, thinking, we have learned nothing. This play should not be relevant. This was written in the 1800s. We should be talking about this crazy time in the past, when people didn't believe in science, and the press would betray its readers, and we should be saying, wow, what an awful time to be alive. Thank goodness it's not like that anymore. Instead, here we are, wondering—are we now at the apex of relevancy for this play that Ibsen wrote in the 1800s?

This is an excerpt of a much more extensive conversation; to read the full version, visit timelinetheatre.com/enemy-lobby.

BACKSTAGE

Your Role: Vital To Sustaining TimeLine's Work



Join our growing community of supporters!

WE'RE THRILLED TO WELCOME YOU to TimeLine's new home! Whether you've been following us for the last 29 years, came to Uptown for one of our preview events in March, or are joining for the first time, you are a key member of our vibrant community. And **you've made it at just the right time!**

As a nonprofit theatre company, TimeLine relies on donations from individuals, organizations, and foundations. With ticket sales covering only a portion of our costs, supporters of our Annual Fund are crucial to propelling TimeLine's mission and vision forward.

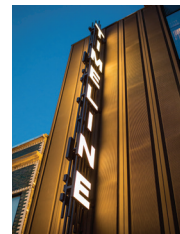
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YOUR CONTRIBUTION TODAY:

- **Inspires the next generation of Chicago artists** and thought leaders by sharing the power of theatre through our education programs.
- **Sustains a vibrant community** of artists, staff, and teaching artists who make our work possible.
- **Invests in our people and organizational resources** to ensure long-term impact of the company's mission.



◀ We hope you will join us with a gift to our Annual Fund today!



ABOVE (FROM LEFT): Longtime TimeLine Company Member Lara Goetsch; TimeLine Co-Founders Juliet Hart, Nick Bowling, and PJ Powers; TimeLine Executive Director Mica Cole; Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson; and 48th Ward Alderwoman Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth celebrate the ceremonial ribbon cutting in March. BELOW (FROM LEFT): TimeLine's vertical marquee blade sign is lit for the first time; guests mingle at a Chicago Theatre Industry Party; TimeLine Resident Dramaturg and Company Member Maren Robinson welcomes visitors to the exhibit galleries during the Uptown Community Preview.



2026-27 SEASON

The Inaugural Season at 5035 N. Broadway

WORLD PREMIERE

THE BIRTH OF THE PILL

BY JESSICA HUANG
BASED ON THE BOOK
BY JONATHAN EIG

DIRECTED BY SANDRA MARQUEZ



The origin story of the birth control pill and an eye-opening world premiere about science, power, and the women who paid the price for progress. Commissioned and developed by TimeLine (supported in part by the Joseph and Bessie Feinberg Foundation), *The Birth of the Pill* follows the pill's creators and the Puerto Rican women at the center of its clinical trials.

CHICAGO PREMIERE

HOME, I'M DARLING

BY LAURA WADE
DIRECTED BY MECHELLE MOE



A darkly funny exploration of marriage, nostalgia, and the allure—and delusion—of the “perfect” past. Judy and Johnny are living out an idealized 1950s suburban life where everything is choreographed. As Judy doubles down on her immersive retro domestic fantasy, the seams of their hyper-curated life begin to fray in a razor-sharp satire that feels both timely and timeless.

CHICAGO PREMIERE

THE FAR COUNTRY

BY LLOYD SUH
DIRECTED BY HELEN YOUNG



A sweeping, urgent, and deeply human epic about immigration, identity, and the struggle to claim a future in America. In the wake of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a man from rural China arrives at San Francisco's Angel Island immigration station and enters a labyrinth of interrogation where every answer could mean the difference between entry and deportation.

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

MUSIC & LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM
BOOK BY GEORGE FURTH
BASED ON THE ORIGINAL PLAY BY
GEORGE S. KAUFMAN & MOSS HART
DIRECTED BY NICK BOWLING
MUSIC DIRECTION BY OTTO VOGEL



A bittersweet, Tony Award-winning musical about friendship, ambition, and the choices that shape a life. Featuring some of Stephen Sondheim's most iconic songs, *Merrily We Roll Along* spans 20 years and moves backward through time to trace the unraveling of a once inseparable trio of friends and creative collaborators.