


The Ibsen Society of America
President's Letter

11 December 2023

Dear members of the ISA:

In my last President's Letter (January 2021), I sought your feedback on the Society's future. I subsequently hosted an online meeting, open to the membership. Thank you to those who attended. Since that time, community and scholarly support for the Ibsen Society of America has continued to dwindle, and the Council has been considering the best ways to sustain some of its most important remaining functions. After much deliberation, we have decided that the most reasonable course of action is to dissolve the non-profit organization, while preserving its legacy by merging certain features with the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies (SASS), a learned society with whom we are already affiliated.

Some of the work that ISA has done will be continued by SASS.

The Society's publication, *Ibsen News and Comment (INC)* will be discontinued. As noted in my last letter, *INC* has been an important record of both Ibsen performances and writings on Ibsen since its first appearance in 1980. Its early issues are treasure houses of information, containing interviews with directors and actors like Lee Strasberg, Eva Le Gallienne, and James Earl Jones, as well as scholar/critics like Eric Bentley and Francis Fergusson. From Rolf Fjelde, the first editor, to Joan Templeton, the journal has featured "Ibsen on Stage," which includes ISA members' reviews of productions all over America and Europe. The field of Ibsen studies owes much to the editors of *INC*, particularly Joan Templeton, who edited the publication for more than 20 years.

It is a great pity to have to discontinue *INC*, but we do not know of any scholar who is both willing and qualified to take over the editor's job. Fortunately, a full record of *INC* remains available on JSTOR and continues to bring new readers to Ibsen studies. Alongside the ISA's savings, the revenue that the publication brought to the ISA (approximately \$1690 through JSTOR and \$150 through Proquest annually) will be managed by SASS. All funds will be used to support the two legacy-preserving goals named below.

The ISA website will no longer be maintained. We will soon alert the public by announcing the dissolution of the Society on that site. We will redirect visitors to SASS's pages.

How will we preserve the legacy of the ISA?

One of the most important functions of the ISA in recent years has been to support both junior and senior scholars doing research on Ibsen, drama, theater, and performance. Over the course of the next year, we will work to create a Memorandum of Agreement with SASS. Our primary goals include,

1. guaranteeing that a panel on Ibsen continue to be organized at the annual SASS conference, and
2. organizing and awarding an Ibsen Society of America Legacy Prize at SASS.

The annual ISA panel at SASS has served the essential purpose of supporting Ibsen studies in North America. At the 2024 SASS conference, all proposed papers relevant to Ibsen will be considered for that panel, which aims to showcase cutting edge research on Ibsen from a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Proposals for sharing new research on Ibsen and “movement” (the 2024 Presidential theme) as well as proposals guided by other themes and approaches, are welcome. Within Ibsen studies, “movement” could refer to manifestations of Ibsen on global and local stages, the dynamics of theatrical practices, global adaptations, the sociopolitics and history of drama and performance, and more. Papers in Ibsen studies not selected for the ISA panel will be considered for other relevant streams and panels at SASS. SASS 2024 will be hosted by the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle, from 9-11 May 2024. Paper proposals can be submitted here: <https://scandinavianstudy.org/annual-meeting/sass-2024-seattle/>

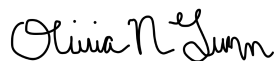
Both of the above-stated goals will require the formation of an Ibsen committee within SASS.

Please note that the ISA will soon close the capacity to pay dues via PayPal. This means that you might receive a notice that your automatic payment has been refused.

I understand that the contents of this letter will be distressing to many of you. I am sorry to be the messenger. Please know that we have not made these decisions lightly. I am committed to maintaining the ISA’s legacy through SASS, by supporting excellent scholarship on Ibsen, drama, theater, and performance. As always, I welcome your comments, concerns, and questions.

Perhaps some of you would like to make one final donation to the Ibsen Society of America. This donation would be used to support scholars (including graduate students) who will continue to produce great work on Ibsen, by means of the ISA Legacy Prize presented at SASS. If you are motivated to contribute to preserving the ISA’s legacy, you will be able to donate by sending a check payable to the Ibsen Society of America to Gergana May (3141 N Valleyview Dr., Bloomington, IN 47404) until 1 June 2024.

With gratitude,



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