

= Harriet Bosse =

Harriet Sofie Bosse (19 February 1878 ? 2 November 1961) was a Swedish ? Norwegian actress . A celebrity in her own day , Bosse is today most commonly remembered as the third wife of the playwright August Strindberg . Bosse began her career in a minor company run by her forceful older sister Alma Fahlstrøm in Kristiania (now Oslo , the capital of Norway) . Having secured an engagement at the Royal Dramatic Theatre (" Dramaten ") , the main drama venue of Sweden 's capital Stockholm , Bosse caught the attention of Strindberg with her intelligent acting and exotic " oriental " appearance .

After a whirlwind courtship , which unfolds in detail in Strindberg 's letters and diary , Strindberg and Bosse were married in 1901 , when he was 52 and she 23 . Strindberg wrote a number of major roles for Bosse during their short and stormy relationship , especially in 1900 ? 01 , a period of great creativity and productivity for him . Like his previous two marriages , the relationship failed as a result of Strindberg 's jealousy , which some biographers have characterized as paranoid . The spectrum of Strindberg 's feelings about Bosse , ranging from worship to rage , is reflected in the roles he wrote for her to play , or as portraits of her . Despite her real @-@ life role as muse to Strindberg , she remained an independent artist .

Bosse married Swedish actor Anders Gunnar Wingård in 1908 , and Swedish screen actor , director , and matinee idol Edvin Adolphson in 1927 . All three of her marriages ended in divorce after a few years , leaving her with a daughter by Strindberg and a son by Wingård . On retiring after a high @-@ profile acting career based in Stockholm , she returned to her roots in Oslo .

= = Early career = =

Bosse was born in Norway 's capital Kristiania , today called Oslo , as the thirteenth of fourteen children of Anne @-@ Marie and Johann Heinrich Bosse . Her German father was a publisher and bookseller , and his business led to the family 's alternating residence in Kristiania and Stockholm , the capital of Sweden . Bosse was to experience some confusion of national identity throughout her life , and to take the 512 kilometres (318 mi) rail trip between the cities many times . A bold , independent child , she first made the journey alone when she was only six years old .

Two of Bosse 's older sisters , Alma (1863 ? 1947) and Dagmar (1866 ? 1954) , were already successful performers when Harriet was a small child . Inspired by these role models , Harriet began her acting career in a Norwegian touring company run by her sister Alma and Alma 's husband Johan Fahlstrøm (1867 ? 1938) . Invited to play Juliet in Romeo and Juliet , the eighteen @-@ year @-@ old Harriet reported in a letter to her sister Inez that she had been paralysed by stage @-@ fright before the premiere , but had then taken delight in the performance , the curtain @-@ calls , and the way people stared at her in the street the next day . Alma was Harriet 's first and only ? rather authoritarian ? acting teacher . Their harmonious and sisterly teacher ? pupil relationship became strained when Alma discovered that her husband Johan and Harriet were having an affair . Both Bosse parents were now dead , and Harriet , ordered by Alma to leave , used a modest legacy from her father to finance studies in Stockholm , Copenhagen , and Paris .

The Paris stage ? at that time in dynamic conflict between traditional and experimental production styles ? was inspirational for Bosse and convinced her that the low @-@ key realistic acting style in which she was training herself was the right choice . Returning to Scandinavia , she was hesitant as to whether she should carve out a career in Stockholm , with its greater opportunities , or in Kristiania , to which she had closer emotional ties . In spite of the disadvantage of speaking Swedish with a Norwegian accent , Bosse let herself be persuaded by her opera @-@ singer sister Dagmar to try her luck in Stockholm . She applied for a place at the Royal Dramatic Theatre (" Dramaten ") , the main drama venue of Stockholm , governed by the conservative tastes of King Oscar II and his personal advisors . After working hard at elocution lessons to improve her Swedish , which was Dramaten 's condition for employing her , Bosse was eventually to become famous on the Swedish stage for her beautiful speaking voice and precise articulation . Having trained her Swedish to a high level , she was engaged by Dramaten in 1899 , where the sensation of the day was the innovative

play *Gustaf Vasa* by August Strindberg .

= = Marriage to August Strindberg = =

= = = August Strindberg = = =

Although Bosse was a successful professional , she is chiefly remembered as the third wife of Swedish dramatist August Strindberg (1849 ? 1912) . Strindberg , an important influence on the development of modern drama , had become nationally known in the 1870s as an angry young socialist muckraker and had risen to fame with his satire on the Swedish establishment , *The Red Room* (1879) . In the 1890s , he had suffered a long and miserable psychotic interlude , known as the " Inferno Crisis " , and , emerging from this ordeal , he remained marked by it . He turned from naturalism to symbolism in his prolific literary output , and his convictions and interests at the turn of the 20th century focused less on politics and more on theosophy , mysticism , and the occult . When Bosse met him in 1899 ? 1900 , he was , at age 51 , at the height of his creative powers , his name " red @-@ hot " on the stage .

Strindberg had the reputation of a misogynist , something which all of his wives stoutly denied . Bosse wrote in an unpublished statement which she left to her daughter with Strindberg , Anne @-@ Marie : " During the years I knew and was married to Strindberg I saw only a completely natural , kind , honorable , faithful man ? a ' gentleman ' " . However , all of Strindberg 's marriages were blighted by his jealousy and a sensitivity which has sometimes been considered paranoid and delusional .

= = = Courtship = = =

Bosse later published Strindberg 's letters from their courtship and marriage . Incidents narrated in those letters and in Bosse 's own interspersed comments have been analysed at length by biographers and psychiatrists , and have become part of the " Strindberg legend " . Even before their first meeting , Bosse had been inspired by the newness and freshness of Strindberg 's pioneering plays ; an iconoclast and radical with two turbulent marriages already behind him presented an intriguing and irresistible mix to her .

Strindberg was susceptible to strong , independent career women , as well as to dainty , delicate @-@ looking young girls ; like his first and second wives ? Siri von Essen and Frida Uhl ? Bosse combined these qualities . He was entranced when he saw the dark , exotic @-@ looking , petite 22 @-@ year @-@ old Bosse (who was often cast in sprite roles or what were conceptualized as " Oriental " roles) play her first major part , an impish Puck in *A Midsummer Night 's Dream* . He immediately picked her out as a suitable actress for the part of The Lady in his coming play *To Damascus* , and invited her to his bachelor establishment to discuss the role . At this famous first meeting , Strindberg , according to Bosse 's narrative of the event , met her at the door all smiles and charm . Offering her wine , flowers , and beautifully arranged fruit , he shared with her his fascination with alchemy , showing her a golden brown mixture he told her was gold he had made . When she got up to leave , Bosse claims Strindberg asked for the feather in her hat to use for writing his plays . Bosse gave it to him , and he used this feather , with a steel nib insert , to write all his dramas during their marriage . It is now in the Strindberg Museum in Stockholm .

Strindberg wooed Bosse by sending her books about theosophy and the occult , by attempting to mould her mind , and by furthering her career . Throwing himself into writing plays with central parts he considered suitable for her , he tried to persuade her to act them , and the Dramaten management to cast her in them . Bosse asserts in her edition of the Letters that she tended to hang back , as did the management , being in agreement that she lacked the experience for major and complex roles . Strindberg , a power in the theatre , nevertheless often prevailed . The role of Eleonora in *Easter* (1901) , which intimidated Bosse by its sensitivity and delicacy , but which she finally undertook to play , turned out to be Bosse 's most successful and beloved role , and a turning

@-@ point in Bosse 's and Strindberg 's relationship . They became engaged in March 1901 , during the rehearsals of Easter , in what in Bosse 's narrative may be the best @-@ known incident of the Strindberg legend . Bosse relates how she went to see Strindberg to ask him to give the part to a more experienced actress , but he assured her she would be perfect for it . " Then he placed his hands on my shoulders , looked at me long and ardently , and asked : ' Would you like to have a little child with me , Miss Bosse ? ' I made a curtsy and answered , as though hypnotized : ' Yes , thank you ! ' ? and we were engaged . "

= = = Marriage and divorce = = =

Bosse and Strindberg were married on 6 May 1901 . Strindberg insisted that Bosse bring none of her possessions to the home he had furnished for her , creating a " setting in which to nurture and dominate her " . In this setting , his taste in interior decoration was revealed to be Oscarian and old @-@ fashioned , with pedestals , aspidistras , and dining @-@ room furniture in hideous imitation of German renaissance , to Bosse 's modern judgment .

Striving towards the life beyond , Strindberg explained , he could permit nothing in the apartment that would lead the thoughts towards the earthly and material . In her comments in the Letters , Bosse described with loyalty and affection Strindberg 's protectiveness and his efforts to bring his young wife with him along his own spiritual paths ; nevertheless , she chafed under these efforts , pointing out that she herself , at 22 , was not even remotely finished with this world . Increasingly agoraphobic , Strindberg attempted to overcome his anxieties and allow his young wife the summer excursions she longed for . He planned sunny drives in hired victorias , but often the mystical " Powers " which governed him intervened . A crisis came as early as June 1901 , when Strindberg arranged , and then at the last moment called off , a honeymoon trip to Germany and Switzerland . Bosse wrote in the Letters that she had nothing to do but stay at home and choke down the tears while Strindberg attempted consolation by giving her a Baedeker " to read a trip in " .

The cancelled journey was the beginning of the end . A crying , defiant Bosse went off by herself to the seaside resort Hornbæk in Denmark , a much shorter trip , but to her senses , a delightfully refreshing one . There , she was soon followed by Strindberg 's letters , full of agonized remorse at having given her pain , and then by Strindberg himself , steeling himself to bear the social life Bosse relished . However , the relationship quickly foundered on jealousy and suspicion , as when Strindberg struck a photographer over the head with his stick , unable to endure any attention to Bosse . In August , when Bosse discovered that she was pregnant , even Strindberg 's delight (he was a fond parent of the four children of his previous marriages) could not save a marriage full of distrust and accusation . This was illustrated in Strindberg 's increasingly frantic letters to Bosse . When their daughter Anne @-@ Marie was born on 25 March 1902 , they were already living apart . " For the sake of us both it is best that I do not return " , wrote Bosse in a letter to Strindberg . " A continuation of life together with suspicion of every word , every act of mine , would be the end of me . " At her insistence , Strindberg began divorce proceedings .

= = = Strindberg 's roles for Bosse = = =

The relationship of Strindberg and Bosse was highly dramatic . Strindberg would lurch back and forth from adoration of Bosse as the regenerator of his creativity (" lovely , amiable , and kind ") to a wild jealousy (calling her " a small , nasty woman " , " evil " , " stupid " , " black " , " arrogant " , " venomous " , and " whore ") . His letters show that Bosse inspired several important characters in his plays , especially during the course of 1901 , and that he manipulated her by promising to pull strings so that she could play them . During the brief , intense , creative 1901 period , the roles Strindberg wrote as artistic vehicles for Bosse , or that were based on their relationship , reflect this combination of adoration and " suspicion of every word , every act " . Carla Waal counts eight minor and six major roles written for Bosse to act , or as portraits of her , several of them classics of Western theatre history . The major roles enumerated by Waal are The Lady in To Damascus (1900 ; mainly already written when Bosse and Strindberg met , but used between them to enhance their

intimacy) ; Eleonora in Easter (1901 ; modelled on Strindberg 's sister Elisabeth , but intended for Bosse to star in) ; Henriette in Crimes and Crimes (1901) ; Swan White in Swan White (1901) ; Christina in Queen Christina (1901) ; and Indra 's daughter in A Dream Play (1902) . The years refer to dates of publication ; Bosse never played in Swan White , even though Strindberg kept proposing it , and though she was many years later to describe this play as Strindberg 's wedding present to her .

Strindberg claimed that Queen Christina was an " explanation " of Bosse 's character as being that of an actress in real life , flirtatious and deceitful . In his influential Strindberg biography , Lagercrantz describes this play as a synopsis of the entire course of the Bosse ? Strindberg marriage . He sees the courtiers as representing various stages of Strindberg 's own emotions : Tott , in the first glow of love ; de la Gardie , betrayed but loyal ; Oxenstierna , who has rejected her . Each of the three men has words to speak which Strindberg himself had spoken to Bosse .

A Dream Play is positioned at the median of Strindberg 's series of portrayals of his own marriage , the Bosse role imbued with both light and darkness . With its associative dream structure , this play is a milestone of modernist drama , described by Strindberg as a lawless reflection of The Dreamer 's (Strindberg 's) consciousness , limited only by his imagination which " spins and weaves new patterns ? on an insignificant basis of reality " . Agnes , played by and representing Bosse , is the daughter of the Vedic god Indra , descending to earth to observe human life and bring its disappointments to the attention of her divine father . The " Oriental " aspect of the play is based on Bosse 's dark , exotic looks . Yet she is also drawn into mere humanity and into a claustrophobic marriage to The Lawyer , one of the versions of The Dreamer and , thereby , of Strindberg . Shut up indoors by a possessive husband , Agnes can not breathe ; she despondently watches the servant working to exclude light and air from the house by pasting insulating strips of paper along the windows ' edges . Recognizably , the " insignificant basis of reality " of Agnes ' marriage to The Lawyer is the frustration of the newly married Bosse , yearning for fresh air , sunshine , and travel but fobbed off with a Baedeker .

= = Independence = =

Both before and after the divorce from Strindberg , Bosse was a Stockholm celebrity in her own right . Her independence and self @-@ supporting status gained her a reputation for being strong @-@ willed and opinionated , insisting on , and receiving , high pay and significant roles . She left Dramaten with its conventional repertoire and began working at Albert Ranft 's Swedish Theatre , where she and the skillful but more modest actor (Anders) Gunnar Wingård (1878 ? 1912) formed a popular co @-@ star team . She travelled frequently , particularly for guest performances in Helsinki , leaving little Anne @-@ Marie with Strindberg , a competent and affectionate father . In 1907 , Bosse made theatrical history as Indra 's daughter in Strindberg 's epoch @-@ making Dream Play . She and Strindberg met weekly for dinner at his house , and remained lovers until she severed connections in preparation for her marriage with Gunnar Wingård in 1908 . In 1909 the Wingårds had a son , Bo . This marriage was also brief , ending in divorce in 1912 . According to rumour , the cause of the divorce was Wingård 's infidelity . However , Strindberg also heard gossip that Wingård 's large debts threatened Bosse 's finances .

In 1911 , a divorced woman with two children to care for and support , Bosse returned to Dramaten . Strindberg was at that time fatally ill with cancer ; he died on 14 May 1912 . 1912 was altogether a year of death and disaster for the Bosse and Strindberg families : Alma Fahlstrøm 's son Arne went down with the Titanic on 15 April ; Strindberg 's first wife Siri von Essen died later the same month ; von Essen 's and Strindberg 's daughter Greta , a promising young actress , was killed in a train crash in June ; and Bosse 's divorced husband Gunnar Wingård shot himself on 7 October . Strindberg 's funeral was a national event . Gunnar Wingård , a popular and charming actor , was also the subject of public grief . Throughout these shattering events , which left both her children fatherless , Bosse kept up her busy schedule , apart from a few days off , distraught and grief @-@ stricken , after Wingård 's suicide . For months after it , she received anonymous letters and threatening phone @-@ calls , blaming her for Wingård 's depression and death .

Bosse 's third marriage , 1927 ? 32 , was to Edvin Adolphson (1893 ? 1979) , fifteen years her junior . Adolphson had abandoned his stage career in order to become instead a film director and one of the best @-@ known Swedish film actors , a ruggedly handsome matinée idol whose screen persona Nils Beyer referred to as a combination of " apache , gangster and gigolo " .

Bosse made two films , ambitiously shot and directed and based on novels by well @-@ known writers . The artistic achievement of Sons of Ingmar (1919) has been highly praised . Directed by and co @-@ starring Victor Sjöström , it was based on a novel by Swedish Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf ; many years later , Ingmar Bergman referred to Sons of Ingmar as a " magnificent , remarkable film " and acknowledged his own debt to Sjöström . Bosse , who played the female lead Brita , called Sons of Ingmar " the only worthwhile Swedish film I was involved in . " However , the film failed to give her career the kind of fresh start that the Swedish film industry had given Edvin Adolphson , and it was seventeen years before she made another film . This was Bombi Bitt and I (1936) , her only talkie , based on Fritiof Nilsson Piraten 's popular first novel with the same title and directed by Gösta Rodin . Bombi Bitt was a successful , though more lightweight , production with a smaller Bosse role (" Franskan ") .

= = Retirement = =

After many years of ambitious and successful free @-@ lance acting , Bosse found her options narrowing in the 1930s . The Great Depression brought her economic hardship , and , even though she looked younger than her age , most important women 's roles were out of her age range . Her technique was still often praised , but also sometimes perceived as old @-@ fashioned and mannered , in comparison with the more ensemble @-@ oriented style of the times . Finding herself unneeded by any Swedish repertory theatre , she only managed to return as a member of Dramaten by means of skillful persuasion and pointed reminders of her long history there . A humble employee at a humble salary , she played only fifteen roles , all minor , during her last ten years at Dramaten , 1933 ? 43 .

Retiring from the stage during World War II , Bosse considered moving back to Norway 's capital Oslo , the home of her childhood and youth . Both her children had settled there . The move was delayed for ten years , during which she travelled whenever possible , and when it took place in 1955 , she perceived it to be a mistake . Her brother Ewald 's death in 1956 left her the only survivor of the fourteen children of Anne @-@ Marie and Johann Heinrich Bosse . " How I long desperately for Stockholm " , she wrote to a friend in 1958 . " My whole life is there . " She became chronically melancholy , enduring failing health and bitter memories of the final phase of her career at Dramaten .

Bosse always guarded her privacy , so much so that the memoir she wrote of her life with Strindberg was deemed to be too uninterestingly discreet to be publishable .