Hawaii

Photo Flash: NORA Opens at Kennedy Theatre, 4/13

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UHM's Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to present legendary filmmaker Ingmar Bergman's Nora, a stage version of Henrik Ibsen's masterpiece A Doll House, adapted and translated by Frederick J. Marker. This fast-paced adaptation directed by Assistant Professor of Theatre, Stacy Ray, shows the choices one woman makes for love and offers the audience a modern spin on a classic work allowing them to call to mind what they themselves would do for love. The play, filled with juicy secrets, looming debts, and difficult choices, runs on the Kennedy Theatre Mainstage April 13, 14, 20, and 21 at 7:30 p.m. and on April 22 at 2:00 p.m.; there will be free pre-show chats on April 14 and 21 at 6:45 p.m. for ticket holders. Due to some sexual situations and adult themes, this production is not recommended for children under 13.

Nora is "more relevant to our world than ever before," says Ray. The power of the #MeToo movement coupled with other matters such as gender income inequity, divorce rates, inability of non-workers to receive credit ratings, and the continuance of terminal diseases attracted director Ray to Ibsen's classic A Doll House because it seemed to her that these concerns still take place today. Bergman's 90-minute adaptation cuts to the core of the social issues in Ibsen's masterpiece, and with Ray's inventive staging and use of pop music from artists like Gwen Stefani and Cardi B, the production draws a line of connection straight from 1879 to 2018. As Ray states, "Things haven't really changed."

In his cutting of the script, Bergman has removed those he believed to be the non-essential characters-the children and the maid. This allows the play to draw audiences into the world of its title character. According to director Stacy Ray, "Nora is specifically about Nora and her psyche through this journey. Ibsen's A Doll House shows everyone's psyche, but in this adaptation, Bergman focuses on explicitly what Nora goes through." Nora intensifies the psychological drama inherent in Ibsen's play. Ray's direction will highlight the human condition; she says, "We are all trying to do the best we can. This is not about who is good and who is evil. It is about people being people who make mistakes. We hurt people, people hurt us. That's life and that's the journey. It may not be easy, but it is worth living because it is full of laughter and joy and tears."
In Nora, Nora’s husband, Torvald Helmer, has just been promoted to bank manager when an old, widowed friend of Nora’s, Christine Linde, comes back into town seeking a job. Helmer hires her to do office work giving away the job of a former lawyer with a shady reputation. However, what Helmer does not know is that Nora had previously borrowed money on the sly from this lawyer, Nils Krogstad, in order to save Helmer’s life—something a woman was not allowed to do without her husband or father’s consent. Krogstad blackmails Nora to persuade Helmer into giving Krogstad his job back. Krogstad drops a letter exposing Nora’s secret in Helmer’s mailbox, which he later discovers and reads, leading to Nora’s epiphany about her actual status in this marriage.

This show has a cast of five characters made up of both new and familiar faces to Kennedy Theatre and the Hawai’i community. One familiar face is a 2017 Po’okela Award winner for Leading Male in a Play, Donovan Oakleaf. Oakleaf, a UHM MFA candidate in Acting, who was most recently seen as Pi Jin in Kennedy Theatre’s production of Fights & Delights, plays Nils Krogstad. Other MFA candidates in the show include: Christine Lamborn as Nora Helmer (previously seen in KT’s production of The Spitfire Grill as the grill owner, Hannah); Emily Steward as Christine Linde (also seen in The Spitfire Grill as the nosy town mailperson, Effy); and making his Kennedy Theatre Mainstage debut, Tyler Haugen as Torvald Helmer. Haugen, a first-year MFA candidate in Directing at UHM recently made his Hawai’i debut in Kennedy Theatre’s Late Night Theatre production of Almost, Maine and was the Assistant Director of MVT’s Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery. Rounding out the ensemble of Nora is undergraduate Theatre major, Malia Wessel who plays Dr. Rank. Wessel was most recently seen as Dr. Watson in MVT’s Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery.

Tickets for Nora are available 24/7 online at etickethawaii.com, by phone at (808) 944-2697, and at official outlets. Sales at the Kennedy Theatre Box Office begin on Monday, April 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday with extended sales hours on show days.