Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Playwright Gives Voice to Pacific Islanders

Fa'alavelave: The Interruption opens in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to present the world premiere of local MFA Playwriting candidate Kiki’s (aka Kiana Rivera) Fa'alavelave: The Interruption directed by MFA Directing candidate, Laura Clark Greaver. This play tells the story of one Pacific Islander’s journey through coping with the loss of a family member, handling the revelation of long-hidden family secrets, and questioning one’s place in between worlds and cultures. Performances run November 29 and 30 and December 1 and 2 at 7:30 p.m., and December 3 at 2:00 p.m. in the recently renovated Earle Ernst Lab Theatre. A free post-show rap will take place after the Friday, December 1 performance.

Set on O‘ahu, the Island of Hawai‘i, and American Sāmoa, Fa'alavelave: The Interruption centers on the character Mele (played by Katherine Wong), a mixed-race Sāmoan woman, as she searches to discover her identity within her culture, society, and family. Upon the death of her absent and elusive father, she and her fiancée, Sefina (Vaganafetalai Mamea), visit Mele’s aunties, Pina (Dorothy Mane) and Samaria (Alex Savusa), to go through her father’s things. While sorting through matters, Mele begins to bond with her aunties and learns more about her Sāmoan culture and heritage including the secrets that it holds. The discovery of these secrets causes Mele to labor to find her place in her relationship with Sefina, society, and her family.

Kiki, whose one-act play Puzzy ran at Kumu Kahua Theatre earlier in 2017, draws inspiration from her own life experience to give voice and stage-time to Pacific Islanders in Fa'alavelave: The Interruption. Kiki says “It is important for me to write for Pacific Islanders so we have a place to tell our stories.” Mele, the daughter of a Sāmoan, was raised in Hawai‘i and is part of the Pacific Islander diaspora. She struggles to find her place between two worlds and feels that she
is not enough for either. Kiki and Greaver believe that this strain parallels the experience of many Pacific Islanders, and they want to showcase that story because they feel it is not yet common for this narrative to be presented in dramatic form this side of the Pacific. Greaver, who has been involved since the initial imagining of the play, thinks, “There are few female Pacific Islander playwrights. Their stories need to be heard.”

Dr. Luafata (Fata) Simanu-Klutz, UHM Assistant Professor of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures, along with UHM Associate Professor of Theatre and the Hawaiian Theatre Program Director, Tammy Haili‘ōpua Baker, have served as mentors for Kiki throughout the writing of the script. These mentorships coupled with Kiki’s personal knowledge and research into Sāmoan culture have engendered the play with some traditional Sāmoan elements like a fa‘afafine character (Tom Perelini), a siva samoa, as well as the integration of Sāmoan phrases. The title itself describes a revered Sāmoan celebration; however, fa‘alavelave can also mean “interruption” and refers to anything that gets in the way of normal life and calls for special activity.

While this play contains many elements that originate in the Sāmoan culture, like a fa‘afafine character and a fa‘alavelave, it is important to note that it is not a traditional Sāmoan play. Instead, it is a modern story that explores many current themes like abandonment, the LGBT experience, and gender along with the search for personal, family, and cultural identity—a universal message that anyone can relate to. After all, as Kiki says, “Every family has secrets.”

Tickets for Fa‘alavelave: The Interruption are available 24/7 online at etickethawaii.com, by phone at (808) 944-2697, and at official outlets. Cash sales at the Kennedy Theatre Box Office begin on November 27th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday with extended sales hours on show days.
EVENT:
Fa'alavelave: The Interruption

PRESENTED BY:
UHM Department of Theatre + Dance

WHEN:
November 29, 30 and December 1*, 2 at 7:30 p.m.
Matinée December 3 at 2:00 p.m.
*Free post-show rap following performance

WHERE:
Earle Ernst Lab Theatre
1770 East-West Road, 96822

REGULAR TICKET PRICES:
$18 Adult
$16 Senior, Military, UH Faculty/Staff
$15 UHAA
$13 Students
$8 UHM Student with Valid ID
Ticket prices include all service fees.

PURCHASE INFO:
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