

# Kennedy Theatre



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I at MĀNOA

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## Media Release

December 16, 2015

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Gods, Ogres, and Monkeys Battle at Kennedy

*Subali-Sugriwa: Battle of the Monkey Kings* opens at Kennedy Theatre

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to present the world premiere of *Subali-Sugriwa: Battle of the Monkey Kings*, Balinese *wayang listrik* (shadow theatre). The show is directed by Professor of Theatre Kirstin Pauka, in collaboration with three master artists from Bali, Indonesia. It will be presented on the mainstage at Kennedy Theatre. Performances will take place Jan. 22, 23, 29, and 30 at 7:30 p.m., and Jan. 31 at 2:00 p.m.; free pre-show chats will be held Jan. 23 and 30 at 6:45 p.m.

The story of *Subali-Sugriwa: Battle of the Monkey Kings* is based on a section of the famous Hindu *Ramayana* epic and has been adapted specifically for the UHM Asian Theatre production by renowned Balinese master artist Ketut Wirtawan. It was translated to English by UHM Asian Theatre Ph.D. Candidate Annie Reynolds. In this play, a powerful demon wants a beautiful goddess for his wife. Legendary monkey brothers Subali and Sugriwa are enlisted to help the gods repel the demonic suitor's armies in a story told through *wayang listrik*, a modern Balinese theatre genre that blends shadow puppetry (*wayang kulit*), dance, acting, and live gamelan music. Utilizing a giant 30ft x 15ft screen, the ensemble will use traditional carved leather puppets, shadow masks, hand-painted transparencies, and special effects to tell this magical story through acting, music, dance, light and shadow; a show suitable for the whole family.

The production will feature the UHM gamelan ensemble *Segara Madu*, under the musical direction of Madé Widana and Annie Reynolds, showcasing Widana's new compositions for this special production.

Joining the artistic team, puppet master (*dalang*) Ketut Wirtwan came on board as artist-in-residence for Balinese puppetry and dance training in October, and designer Madé Moja is in residence to design the shadow masks, scenery projections, and set.

Such a complex production is no easy undertaking. While show-specific rehearsals for the January 2016 show started in October, the planning and training for such an intricate and large-scale piece go back years, involving collaboration with many artists, craftspeople, and teachers in Bali and beyond. The craftsmanship that is required for this production is amazing. “Everything is hand-made,” Pauka says, “The scenery slide projections are all hand-painted by our guest designer. There are no computer-generated images or effects, and that has its own unique magic.” Everything that the audience will see will be done by hand and in the moment, a rarity in our technology-dependent age.

When asked why people should see this production, Pauka and Reynolds had the same answer. “This is a momentous production, utilizing the collaboration of artists from here and from around the world,” Reynolds said. “It will be a unique and memorable treat for Hawai‘i audiences,” Pauka adds.

This production is presented by the Department of Theatre and Dance and is hosted by the Asian Theatre Program. This is the first Balinese theatre production by UHM’s renowned Asian Theatre Program since Hawai‘i and Bali, two island cultures with histories as independent kingdoms, were officially declared sister states in 2014. The sister state relationship was formed in order to foster cultural as well as economic exchange.

Production support has been provided by Bali Aga, the Cooke Foundation, the Doris Duke Foundation, the East-West-Center Arts Program, the Norma Nichols Asian Theatre Outreach Fund, and the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council. It is co-sponsored by the UHM Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the UHM Chancellor’s Fund for Asian Theatre with additional support from the UHM Music Department and the UHM Office for Diversity, Equity, Access, and Success. Additional support was generously provided by the US Department of Education (DOE) through the National Resource Center (NRC) Grant program.

Tickets to *Subali-Sugriwa: Battle of the Monkey Kings* can be purchased online at [www.etickethawaii.com](http://www.etickethawaii.com), by phone at (808) 944-2697, at official outlets, and at the Kennedy Theatre Box Office during sale periods only.

**EVENT:**

*Subali-Sugriwa: Battle of the Monkey Kings*

**PRESENTED BY:**

UHM Department of Theatre + Dance

**WHEN:**

Jan. 22, 23\*, 29, and 30\* at 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 31 at 2:00 p.m.

\*6:45pm: free pre-show chat.

**WHERE:**

UHM Kennedy Theatre Mainstage

1770 East-West Rd.

Honolulu, HI 96822

**TICKET PRICES:**

\$25 general admission

\$22 seniors / military / UH faculty and staff

\$20 UHAA

\$15 students

\$8 UHM students with validated Spring 2016 UHM photo ID

Ticket prices include all service fees.

**PURCHASE INFO:**

Tickets are available online at [etickethawaii.com](http://etickethawaii.com), by phone at (808) 944-2697, at participating outlets, and at the Kennedy Theatre box office. The box office is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Monday through Friday during show weeks, with extended hours on performance dates.

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