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## New immersive show, titled 'A House Divided,' takes Kennedy Theatre 'hostage' from Oct. 19-23

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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UH Mānoa's Department of Theatre + Dance is proud to open its 2016-17 Primetime series with the immersive-theater event, *A House Divided*, written and directed by MFA Directing candidate Kevin C.K. Berg. Performances will take place Wednesday to Saturday, October 19-22, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, October 23, at 2 p.m. in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre.

In this part-scripted, part-devised (created by the actors during the rehearsal process) immersive piece, the audience does not sit in the dark, silently watching the action unfold. Rather they are thrust into the middle of the story and observe the action going on around them. Dealing with the subjects of Hawaiian sovereignty, self-determination and domestic terrorism, this piece may not be suitable for all audiences, as it includes strong language and simulated violence.

The setting is a fundraising gala ten years in the future, which is hosted by the U.S.-backed Provisional Hawaiian Government (PHG). This group had grown out of the efforts of Na'i Aupuni in the spring of 2016 in an effort to secure funding from foreign countries as well as multinational corporations. The audience members are attendees of the gala, assigned roles as dignitaries and representatives. The United and Sovereign Nation of Hawai'i (USNH), a coalition of Hawaiian national groups and sovereignty activists that had formed in opposition to the PHG, crash the gala. Tempers flare and proponents of both sides start to argue. That is when a single person, armed with a gun, takes the whole gala hostage.

This production is truly groundbreaking in both style and subject matter and is unlike any show or production that has yet taken place on the island. Using a bilingual script (English and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i), touching on the themes of sovereignty and self-determination, while utilizing the concept of a theatricalized hostage simulation, it aims to ask the question: What are we doing for those who will follow?

"When thinking about my thesis and the ideas I'd like to express through it, the thought struck me that my son will never know what it's like to live in a pre-9/11 world," Berg states, "What happens when children like him grow up and become young adults, and they want to achieve something and fight for an ideal? The option of violence could be prevalent among those we raise, unless we take a conscious and purposeful stand against it."

According to Director Berg, the Thirty Meter Telescope protests were also an inspiration. "Something that inspired me was the protector's practice of Kapu Aloha. So many had signs saying, "For the Keiki!" or they shouted, "For the keiki of the future!" They get it. They understand."

It should be stressed that many hours will be spent to ensure the safety of the audience. Advisories will be given at the box office as well as at the start of the show. All audience members will be repeatedly informed that what they are about to take part in is a production, not a true hostage situation. Audience safety is a top priority for Berg and the staff at Kennedy Theatre.

Berg has high hopes for this revolutionary production in terms of collaboration, interaction and its potential impact on the people here. "I'm Native Hawaiian, but I'm also diaspora. I didn't spend the majority of my life here so I'm still trying to find where I fit into all of this. But coming back with fresh eyes, I see a lot of division and I wonder how much thought is given to bracing our children against an unknown and dangerous future. I hope, at the very least, to spark some more conversation about that future and the steps we should take for those who will follow."

Tickets to *A House Divided* can be bought online now at [www.tickethawaii.com](http://www.tickethawaii.com), by phone at (808) 944-2697, at official outlets, and at the Kennedy Theatre Box Office during the week of the show.

#### EVENT:

*A House Divided*

#### PRESENTED BY:

UHM Department of Theatre + Dance

#### WHEN:

Oct. 19-22 at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 23 at 2:00 p.m.

#### WHERE:

Earle Ernst Lab Theatre

1770 East-West Rd.

Honolulu, HI, 96822

#### TICKET PRICES:

\$18 Regular

\$16 Seniors, Military, UH Faculty/Staff

\$13 Students

\$8 UH Mānoa students with valid UHM ID

#### PURCHASE INFO:

Tickets are available online at [tickethawaii.com](http://tickethawaii.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. Mondays through Fridays during show weeks, with extended hours on performance dates.

