



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I®
MĀNOA
Kennedy Theatre

Department of Theatre and Dance
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
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Media Release • 2012-2013 Season

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2013

“Thread Hell” Brings the Japanese Avant-Garde to the Kennedy Stage

Guest Artist Presents English-Language World Premiere

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to present Kishida Rio's "Thread Hell" as its final mainstage production of the 2012-2013 season. This classic work of the Japanese *angura* (underground theatre) movement will be directed by visiting artist Colleen Lanki, who is an alumna of UHM's Asian Theatre program. This production will mark the first *angura* production on the Kennedy mainstage — as well as the world premiere of a new English-language version, which Lanki co-translated. Performances will take place on the theatre's mainstage Apr. 12, 13, 18, 19, and 20 at 8 p.m., and Apr. 21 at 2 p.m. Audiences will also have the opportunity to attend free pre-show chats at 7:00 p.m. on Apr. 13 and 20. Subject to availability, UHM students with a validated Spring 2013 ID will be able to take advantage of the theatre's buy-one-get-one-free program on Thursday, Apr. 18.

Kishida Rio was a major figure in Japan's *angura* movement — and the only female playwright to have a significant role in the movement's first wave, which began in the 1960s. Although she declined to identify herself as a feminist, she often wrote about the interior lives and

societal struggles of women, in language that is poetic and highly symbolic. "Thread Hell" is her most successful piece: it has received multiple productions in Japan and toured Australia, and was awarded Japan's major playwriting honor, the Kishida Kunio Prize.

"Thread Hell" is Kishida's symbolic exploration of the role of women in Japanese society. Set in 1930s Japan, the play takes place in a silk-spinning factory that doubles by night as a brothel. (Due to some mature themes, the play may not be appropriate for audience members younger than 14 years of age.) The women employed at the factory, named after suits in the Japanese card game *hanafuda*, have lost the memory of their lives before the factory. (The large ensemble cast includes Karissa Murrell Myers and Kyle Scholl, both seen earlier this year in UHM's production of "Uncle Vanya and Zombies," and Amanda Stone, who was also an ensemble member in the Fall production of "Sonnets for an Old Century.") But the appearance of a young woman named Cocoon who "came from the sea" (Leah Koepfel, seen last Spring in "The Vagina Monologues") brings back memories, and begins to free the women from the control of Rope, the factory owner (Isaac Ligsay, seen in last semester's Prime Time production of "Handler").

Director Lanki is the Artistic Director of TomoeArts in Vancouver, Canada, and is uniquely qualified to bring "Thread Hell" to the Kennedy Stage. Before receiving her MFA in Asian Directing from UH - Mānoa, Lanki spent several years in Japan studying both *nihon buyō*, or classical Japanese dance, and traditional *nō* theatre. She has performed at Japan's National Nō Theatre, and became a *natori*, taking a professional performance name in *nihon buyō*, in 2001. At the same time, Lanki was investigating contemporary Japanese drama, and she worked in a variety of contemporary styles ranging from *shingeki* to *angura* and movement-based theatre. Lanki shares all of this knowledge and experience with her actors, incorporating both classical and contemporary approaches in rehearsal.

These techniques, combined with Kishida's densely layered script, create a piece that is neither typical Western realism nor traditional Asian performance. "Audience members should expect a

performance that’s both highly poetic and extremely physical,” says Lanki. “This play is full of characters who do extraordinary things in a terrifying and extraordinary world.”

“Thread Hell” is supported in part by grants from the Office of the Chancellor, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; the UH Foundation Japanese Theatre Fund; the National Resource Center East Asia, UHM; the Norma Bird Nichols, PhD Asian Theatre Endowment Fund; and the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu.

Tickets for “Thread Hell” are available online at 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, with extended hours on performance dates. Prices are \$24 general admission; \$22 seniors / military / UH faculty and staff; \$15 UHAA members; \$13 students; and \$5 UHM students with validated Spring 2013 UHM photo ID. Ticket prices include all service fees. Discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more. For more information, please visit hawaii.edu/kennedy or call the theatre at (808) 956-7655. For disability access, please call the theatre.

EVENT:	“Thread Hell”
PRESENTED BY:	UHM Department of Theatre and Dance
WHEN:	Apr. 12, 13*, 18, 19, 20* at 8 p.m. Apr. 21 at 2 p.m. * Free pre-show chat at 7:00 p.m.
WHERE:	UHM’s Kennedy Theatre Mainstage 1770 East-West Road, Honolulu
TICKET PRICES:	\$24 general admission \$22 seniors / military / UH Faculty and staff \$15 UHAA members \$13 students \$5 UHM students with validated Spring 2013 UHM photo ID (subject to availability) Ticket prices include all service fees.
PURCHASE INFO:	Tickets are available online at 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, with extended hours on performance dates.
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