

Kennedy Theatre

UNIVERSITY of HAWAI‘I at MĀNOA

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OCTOBER 2, 2013

“Wild Party” Brings the Roaring ’20s to Kennedy Theatre

MFA Candidate Directs Hawai‘i Premiere of Gritty Musical

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to present Andrew Lippa’s musical “The Wild Party” as the 50th Anniversary season’s first Prime Time presentation in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre. The production will serve as director Brittini Michele Shambaugh’s MFA thesis presentation, and marks the show’s Hawaiian premiere. Performances will take place Oct. 23, 24, 25, and 26 at 8 p.m., and Oct. 27 at 2 p.m.; a free post-show chat will be held with the cast and director on Oct. 25.

While musicals are not often performed at Kennedy Theatre, Shambaugh perceived that as a challenge to take on, rather than a limitation to accept; she picked a piece that requires solid, nuanced acting and subtle, complex harmonies. She feels her actors are up to the task: “I’m so lucky to have this cast,” she says. “They’re incredibly talented.” Lippa’s musical is based on the book-length narrative poem by Joseph Moncure March. First published in 1928, the poem was banned in many locations throughout the U.S. due to its content, which was considered extremely risqué when it was published in the 1920s. Lippa, who wrote the book and composed

the music for the show, echoes the poem's racy themes, with characters who drink bathtub gin, smoke constantly, and sleep around. Due to sexual and violent themes, the play is recommended for mature audiences over the age of 16.

Shambaugh was drawn to the uncompromising material. Although she was sure she wanted to direct a musical as her master's thesis, she also knew, “I didn't want a piece that would ever tempt me to use ‘jazz hands.’ I wanted something real, that would affect the audience emotionally.” She felt that the story of “The Wild Party” would do just that. As her relationship falls apart, vaudeville dancer Queenie (Leiney Rigg, last seen in Diamond Head Theatre's “Legally Blonde”) convinces her lover Burrs (Garett Taketa, who played Judd in Kennedy's production of “Oklahoma!”) to throw a party; her plan is to flirt with other men in order to make Burrs see how beautiful and desirable she is. But her friend and rival Kate (Kyle Scholl, last seen in Kennedy's “Thread Hell”) brings handsome loner Black (Lavour Addison, who previously worked with Shambaugh in last season's “Sonnets for an Old Century”) to the party; he falls for Queenie, making things more exciting and more dangerous.

Shambaugh wants the evening to be all about the party. The design, the staging, and her directorial approach are all about making the audience feel as if they're really at a gathering of vaudeville entertainers in the 1920s. The theatre is even encouraging audience members to come dressed in '20s regalia, to add to the party atmosphere. “I want for the audience to be enticed by the actors and the party,” says Shambaugh. “The more you feel you're part of the show, the more you'll be affected by the heartache these characters reveal.”

Tickets for “The Wild Party” 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 \$18 for general admission; \$16 for seniors / military / UH faculty and staff; \$13 for students and UHAA members; and \$5 for UHM students with a validated Fall 2013 UHM photo ID. Ticket prices include all service fees. For further information, please visit hawaii.edu/kennedy, or call the theatre at 808.956.7655. For disability access, please call the theatre.

EVENT: “The Wild Party”

PRESENTED BY: UHM Department of Theatre and Dance

WHEN: Oct. 23, 24, 25*, 26 at 8 p.m.
Oct. 27 at 2 p.m.
* Free post-show chat with the director and cast

WHERE: UHM’s Earle Ernst Lab Theatre
1770 East-West Road, Honolulu

TICKET PRICES: \$18 general admission
\$16 seniors / military / UH Faculty and staff
\$13 students / UHAA members
\$5 UHM students with validated Fall 2013 UHM photo ID
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