

KENNEDY THEATRE

Media Release • 2014-2015 Season

Department of Theatre and Dance
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 4, 2014

Devotion and Marriage Equality Take Center Stage at Kennedy Theatre

World Premiere of “Joker” Comes to 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 MFA candidate Yilong Liu's play “Joker” in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre. Performances will take place Dec. 3, 4, 5, and 6 at 8 p.m., and Dec. 7 at 2 p.m.; a free post-show chat will be held with the cast, playwright, and director on Fri., Dec. 5. The production will serve as Liu's MFA thesis presentation.

Before attending UHM, Liu was an established writer in the Chinese film and television industries, working with Sichuan Radio and Television and writing the award-winning screenplay “The Illusion Wanderer.” Liu chose to pursue his MFA in Honolulu because he was fascinated by the diversity that America and Hawai'i in particular offer. While at UHM, he has focused on stories featuring Asian-American and LGBT communities. “Joker” is Liu's first full-length play produced in English.

Director Matthew Kelty, an MA candidate in Asian Theatre, first became attached to the project when Liu asked him to do a workshop reading of the play. “I fell in love with the subtle way Yilong deals with some very complex issues,” he says. Kelty brings a playwright's eye to this original work — he studied playwriting with Romulus Linney in New York, where he also directed and acted Off-Broadway. He has appeared several times on the Earle Ernst stage, in

productions such as “Handler” and “very still & hard to see”; he also appeared in Diamond Head Theatre’s production of “Leading Ladies.” “Joker” will be the first production that he has directed in Honolulu.

“Joker” takes place in Honolulu just before the passing of the Marriage Equality Act last year. The story focuses on Joe (Jason Kanda), who manages a small Chinese restaurant with his wife Lin (Denise Aiko Chinen) and step-son Ray (Michael She). They live a quiet life, trying to raise Ray while keeping the restaurant afloat. This tenuous calm is rocked by the arrival of Frank (Michael “Donut” Donato), a former friend of Joe’s and reporter from the Philippines who’s been assigned to cover marriage equality in Hawai`i. Frank knows that Joe has been keeping a secret from his family that could ruin the life that he’s created — and Frank is willing to expose that secret on the eve of the gay community’s victory. But Frank does not know the full extent of Joe’s deceit — or the reason why he’s living a lie.

“Hawai`i is the closest that marriage equality has come to Asia.” says Liu. “In many parts of that region, there’s very little discussion regarding LGBT rights or marriage equality. My hope is that this play might raise awareness and start some conversations.”

Tickets for “Joker” 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 \$8 for UHM students with a valid 2014 UHM 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:

“Joker” by Yilong Liu

PRESENTED BY:

UHM Department of Theatre and Dance

WHEN:

Dec. 3, 4, 5*, and 6 at 8 p.m.

Dec. 7 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

\$8 UHM students with validated Fall 2014 UHM photo ID

Ticket prices include all service fees.



PURCHASE INFO:

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