

Kennedy Theatre

UNIVERSITY of HAWAI‘I at MĀNOA

Department of Theatre and Dance
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
1770 East-West Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
Website: hawaii.edu/kennedy
Online Press Resources: hawaii.edu/kennedy

Contact: Matthew Kelty
Director of Publicity
Email: ktpub@hawaii.edu
Phone: (808) 956-2598
Fax: (808) 956-4234
Box Office: (808) 956-7655



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AUGUST 29, 2013

“Big Love” Presents a Wedding Like No Other

Hawai‘i Premiere Is Also Director’s First Honolulu Production

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to present Charles L. Mee’s hit play “Big Love” as the first mainstage presentation of its 50th Anniversary season. The production will mark director Ian Belton’s first production on the Kennedy mainstage — as well as the world premiere of a musical adaptation of the play developed by Belton and composer Brendan Connelly. Performances will take place Sept. 27, 28, Oct. 3, 4, and 5 at 8 p.m., and Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. Audiences will also have the opportunity to attend free pre-show chats at 7:00 p.m. on Sept. 28 and Oct. 5. Subject to availability, UHM students with a validated Fall 2013 ID will be able to take advantage of the theatre’s buy-one-get-one-free program on Thursday, Oct. 3. Patrons who attend on opening night are also invited to join the cast and director, as well as faculty from the Department of Theatre and Dance, for a post-show reception on the theatre’s lanai in celebration of Kennedy’s 50th Anniversary.

Before joining UHM’s Theatre and Dance Department in Fall 2012, Belton directed and taught in New York and across the United States; his productions include stints with LAByrinth at the Public Theatre and the Off-Broadway premiere of “The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant,” which received two

Drama Desk nominations. He has also directed internationally, including Europe, Singapore, and the Philippines. Belton studied directing at the Juilliard School, as well as receiving an MPhil in Theatre and Performance from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. He is the recipient of the Richard E. Sherwood award from the Mark Taper Forum, and the Sir John Gielgud Fellowship awarded by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation.

Belton says that he chose “Big Love” because the themes of the play resonate with the challenges young people face regarding love and marriage. The play tells the story of three Greek sisters who have been promised in an arranged marriage to their American cousins. (Actually, the three sisters are representative of 50 sisters who have been promised to 50 husbands — Belton’s sly nod to Kennedy Theatre’s 50th Anniversary season.) The sisters represent three archetypal images of women: Olympia (Mareva Minerbi, seen last spring “La Strada”) is a “girly girl” who enjoys looking pretty and feeling desired. Thyona (Kaitlin Souza, who last spring played Roberta in “Danny and the Deep Blue Sea”) is an angry “man-hater” who has no time for love. Lydia (Karissa Murrell Myers, on the Kennedy mainstage last year in “Thread Hell” and “Uncle Vanya and Zombies”) is the most reasonable and grounded of the three: angry at the position she has been placed in, but still believing in the possibility of partnership and love. Together these women must decide how to respond when their bodies and futures are promised to men against their will. “The play asks big questions,” says Belton. “What does it mean, in this day and age, to be a woman? To be a man? To be a soldier, a protector? What does it mean to be married? People are asking these questions more than ever these days.”

Belton promises that the play will be smart, but not overly intellectual. “This play is fun, and funny, and sexy,” he says. He hopes to heighten the play’s antic energy with a new musical adaptation. To help with this, he will be working with Brendan Connelly, a sound designer and composer who has worked at La MaMa, PS 122, and Soho Rep, among other New York venues. Belton and Connelly have worked together on ten productions; for “Big Love,” Connelly will be designing the play’s

soundscape, composing a score, and setting some of the characters’ lines to music. The pair has been listening to “a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan” lately, Belton says, and exploring musical styles from operetta and Broadway to barbershop harmonies and hip-hop. Kennedy Theatre’s production will serve not only as the Hawai‘i premiere of Charles L. Mee’s play, but also the world premiere of this musical adaptation.

Tickets for “Big Love” are available at the Kennedy Theatre box office beginning Sept. 9; the box office is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, with extended hours on performance dates. Tickets may also be purchased online at etickethawaii.com, by phone at (808) 944-2697, and at participating outlets. Prices are \$25 general admission; \$22 seniors / military / UH faculty and staff; \$16 UHAA members; \$13 students; and \$5 UHM students with validated Fall 2013 UHM photo ID. Ticket prices include all service fees. Discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more. For further information, please visit the department’s website at hawaii.edu/kennedy, or call the theatre at (808) 956-7655. For disability access, please call the theatre.

EVENT: “Big Love”

PRESENTED BY: UHM Department of Theatre and Dance

WHEN: Sept. 27, 28*, Oct. 3, 4, 5* at 8 p.m.
Oct. 6 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: \$25 general admission
\$22 seniors / military / UH Faculty and staff
\$16 UHAA members
\$13 students
\$5 UHM students with validated Fall 2013 UHM photo ID
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NOTE: Due to some mature themes, the play may not be appropriate for audience members younger than 14 years of age.

