

Hedda Gabler Review - The Destructive Power of Unfulfilled Dreams

By Elaine L. Mura

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As a special treat for their last play in North Hollywood before moving to Glendale, the **Antaeus Theatre Company** has chosen to present **Ibsen's** masterpiece, HEDDA GABLER, written in 1890. Women of the "Gay 90s" were probably anything but gay. They were expected to abide by strict standards of behavior and comportment with little attention to their personal strengths and desires. Marriage, motherhood, and taking care of the household were considered their biological destiny; and they were assumed to be intellectually inferior to men. Ibsen realized that the resulting frustrations and unhappiness might lead to tragedy under the right circumstances. What if a brilliant, talented woman were given no outlets for her creativity and genius?



Jaimi Paige - Photo by Karianne Flaathen

Hedda Gabler is just such a woman. She is bright, talented, and clever, a prestigious general's daughter. At the same time, she has no place to display her abilities. She is clearly a very frustrated and angry woman. Given her lack of opportunities, Hedda (Jaimi Paige) has chosen to marry Jorgen Tesman (Adrian

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LaTourelle), an academic who adores her. In fact, he strains his financial means to the breaking point just so that he can buy a mansion for her after she casually mentions that it is attractive. Hedda feels that Tesman may have some potential, which could then offer her an opportunity to live out her dreams through him.



Jaimi Paige, Ann Noble, and Adrian LaTourelle - Photo by Karianne Flaathen

But it may just be that her heart really belongs to Ejler Lovborg (**Daniel Blinkoff**), an alcoholic man-about-town who doesn't seem to have anything to offer her. However, when Lovborg writes a philosophic best-seller – unfortunately after Hedda's marriage to Tesman – that all changes. Now Lovborg is a teetotaler with money and status. On top of that, he has developed a warm relationship with Thea Elvsted (**Ann Noble**), who has been helping him with his writing and has become his muse. Even though she is married, she is willing to leave her family behind for Lovborg. Now Hedda's genius and frustration are converted into devious manipulation. If she can't have a happy ending, then no one can. Meanwhile, Judge Brack (Tony Amendola) has his own plans for Hedda.



Jaimi Paige and Daniel Blinkoff - Photo by Karianne Flaathen

In this version of HEDDA GABLER by playwright Andrew Upton, director Steven Robman has shifted the production

from the late 19th century to 30 years forward. HEDDA GABLER takes place in the early 1920s as Robman explores the question of how to shape or control one's life regardless of the era. The excellent cast seems to really enjoy dissecting the Ibsen play. Perhaps Hedda could have been presented as less petulant, spoiled, and selfish; the extent of her personal pain was not fully conveyed. Partner casting, as is customary for the Antaeus theatre company, has been employed. On the evening of this review, the "Generals" cast was performing. Intermittently the "Pistols" cast performs.

calendar

Wednesday July 6th

12:07 AM | SUMMER CAMP LOS ANGELES-CHILDREN & TEENS

5:00 PM | NORTHRIDGE FASHION CENTER'S FARMERS' MARKET & FAMILY FESTIVAL ON MARCH 16

Thursday July 7th

12:07 AM | SUMMER CAMP LOS ANGELES-CHILDREN & TEENS

8:00 PM | A New Stand Up Show with Josh Fadem

Friday July 8th

12:07 AM | SUMMER CAMP LOS ANGELES-CHILDREN & TEENS

Saturday July 9th

12:07 AM | SUMMER CAMP LOS ANGELES-CHILDREN & TEENS

6:00 PM | THE SHOPS AT DOS LAGOS BRINGS FREE "ROCKIN' SUMMER

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Jaimi Paige and Tony Amendola - Photo by Karianne Flaathen

Se Hyun Oh's scenic design is well-suited for the play and allows for action in many corners and cubbyholes. Leah Piehl's costumes are spot-on. Leigh Allen's lighting and Cricket Myers' sound are unobtrusive and yet advance the story in a subtle manner. Overall, this is an excellent production and well worth a visit.

HEDDA GABLER runs through July 17, 2016, with performances at 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, at 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. The Antaeus Theatre Company is located at 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. Tickets are \$30 and \$34. For information and reservations, call 818-506-1983 or go online to the Antaeus website.

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