

ANTAEUS

Theatre Company

Contact: Sophie Bell Meincke, Marketing | sophie@antaeus.org |

...**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**...

September 1, 2026

***"If we women were particular about men's characters,
we should never get married at all." – Ellie Dunn***

HEARTBREAK HOUSE

(A Fantasia in the Russian Manner)

Written by George Bernard Shaw

Directed by Nike Doukas

October 11 to November 16 (press opening October 17)

Tickets at www.antaeus.org Ph 818-506-1983

Glendale, CA. (September 1, 2026) - For thirty-four years Antaeus Theatre Company has provided a home for classical theatre in Los Angeles, and that tradition continues with the launch of their 35th Anniversary Season and a revival of George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, October 11 to November 16. Written in the shadow of World War I as the British Empire crumbled, Shaw's comedic tribute to the works of Chekhov is a provocative study of what happens when a society becomes so distracted by its private passions that it fails to recognize the dangers that surround it. Desmond MacCarthy, a notable theater critic at the time, championed the play, calling it Shaw's "best-written play." And Shaw himself eventually regarded *Heartbreak House* as his greatest work. Tickets and season subscriptions are available at www.antaeus.org or by phone at 818-506-1983.

Heartbreak House will be directed by Artistic Director Nike Doukas, who previously directed *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, and *The Hothouse* at Antaeus. The Company's last Shaw offering was the successful 2013 production of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. The cast is composed entirely

of Antaeus Company Members, actors who are known for their virtuosity with language, style and accessibility to the deep emotional requirements of Shaw. Harry Groener, whose extensive Broadway credits include Tony-nominated performances in *Crazy for You*, *Cats*, and *Oklahoma!*, plays Captain Shotover. Arye Gross, who has appeared on Broadway in *Brooklyn Boy*, plays Mazzini Dunn; and Jocelyn Towne, who played the title role in the Antaeus production of *Nora*, and Henri Lubatti, who most recently appeared at Antaeus in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, play Hesione and Hector Hushabye; Carolyn Ratteray, who directed Antaeus' 2025 production of *The Glass Menagerie*, plays Lady Utterword. Elinor Gunn, who most recently played Imogen in *Cymbeline* at Antaeus, returns as Ellie Dunn. Bernard K. Addison, whose Broadway credits include *Electra*, and played the title role in *Cymbeline*, plays Boss Mangan. Alex Barlas, most recently appeared in *A Glass Menagerie*, and plays Randall Utterword; Amelia White, a Theatre World Award winner, plays Nurse Guinness, and Alberto Isaac, most recently appearing as Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Antaeus' *Twelfth Night*, plays an Unexpected Guest.

Youthful and pragmatic Ellie Dunn impatiently waits in the drawing room of an unconventional, ship-shaped house which she soon learns belongs to eccentric, 88-year-old inventor, Captain Shotover. Ellie has been invited to a gathering by Shotover's daughter Hesione, and finds herself surrounded by an extraordinary collection of romantics, schemers, dreamers and social misfits. What begins as a lighthearted country-house comedy gradually reveals a deeper portrait of love, money, marriage and politics. Shaw's characters may initially seem eccentric, and delightfully flawed, but their world also feels surprisingly familiar.

Acclaimed as one of the greatest plays of the twentieth century, *Heartbreak House* is George Bernard Shaw at his most witty, incendiary, and entertaining. "I chose *Heartbreak House* because it's always been one of my favorite plays," said Doukas. "It's extremely well-crafted, and an example of a playwright at the top of his game. It speaks deeply about the human experience, the yearning at every age to find meaning and purpose in life, and how difficult that journey can be. The fact that Shaw does this with such sparkling humor makes it even more entertaining."

Heartbreak House remains a deeply relevant and sharply satirical examination of social gender constructs, societal complacency, political failure, and the dangers of ignoring impending global disaster. "I love the way Shaw finds humor in the most deadly serious situations, the way he almost startles you with comedy," Doukas said. "Just as you begin to feel outraged by a character's argument, or moved by some powerful exchange of ideas, he turns the tables and makes you laugh with surprise and recognition at the equally true, opposite argument. He's a master of table-turning."

Heartbreak House also marks the start of Antaeus Theatre Company's 35th season, "Talk about the perfect launch to Antaeus' 35th Anniversary season. Here is one of the most humorous and important plays of the twentieth century, and unless you see this Antaeus production, you may never have another chance to experience it," said Executive Director Joe Witt. "That's what's so special about what Antaeus brings to our community of theater lovers."

Post-performance discussions will take place on Monday, October 26, featuring director Nike Doukas, who will explore the play's enduring resonance, and on Monday, November 2, featuring the accomplished cast, who will share insights, behind-the-scenes stories, and take audience questions.

Cast:

Bernard Addison	Boss Mangan
Alex Barlas	Randall Utterword
Harry Groener	Captain Shotover
Arye Gross	Mazzini Dunn
Elinor Gunn	Ellie Dunn
Alberto Isaac	An Unexpected Guest
Henri Lubatti	Hector Hushabye
Carolyn Ratteray	Lady Utterword
Jocelyn Towne	Hesione Hushabye
Amelia White	Nurse Guinness

Creative & Production:

Nike Doukas	Director
Angela Balogh Calin	Scenic Design
Karyn D. Lawrence	Lighting Design
Kate Bergh	Costume Design
Carter Dean	Sound Design
John McElveney	Props Design
Sean Spann	Dialect Coach
Melissa Graff	Production Stage Manager
Jessica Osorio	Assistant Stage Manager
Olivia Claire Freidenreich	Assistant Director

About Nike Doukas

Nike Doukas is a longtime member of the Antaeus Company, and has served as its Artistic Director since 2024. Her Los Angeles directorial debut, Harold Pinter's *The Hothouse*, garnered Antaeus 10 Ovation Award nominations and four LA Drama Critic Circle nominations. She earned her MFA at the American Conservatory Theatre, where she served as a company member before relocating to Los Angeles. She has appeared in 20 productions at South Coast Repertory Theatre, and has performed at The Mark Taper Forum, The Old Globe, The Pasadena Playhouse, and Shakespeare Festival LA. Other performing credits include Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, ACT (Seattle), Shakespeare Santa Cruz, The Jewel Theatre, and Pittsburgh's PICT Classical Theatre and Kinetic Theatre. Prominent directing credits include *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline* at Antaeus, and productions at A Noise

Within, Ensemble Theatre Company (Santa Barbara), North Coast Rep (San Diego), The Jewel (Santa Cruz), Playwright's Arena (Los Angeles), and PICT Classical Theatre. She is a 2012 Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship recipient.

Background about Heartbreak House by George Bernard Shaw

By the time George Bernard Shaw wrote *Heartbreak House*, he was already one of the most important dramatists of the modern era. He was a playwright whose work combined comedy, social criticism and political argument in ways that profoundly altered the possibilities of the English-language stage.

Shaw's thinking was transformed by the First World War. A committed socialist and outspoken critic of militarism, he was horrified by the political failures and national rivalries that produced this catastrophe. In his controversial 1914 pamphlet "Common Sense About the War," he argued that Britain and Germany had to be judged by the same moral standards and criticized the political and economic forces behind the conflict. His anti-war position made him deeply unpopular in Britain. *Heartbreak House*, written largely during the war, became his theatrical indictment of a privileged society that had become so absorbed in romance, money, status, sex and intellectual games that it failed to recognize the disaster approaching its doorstep.

The plays immediately preceding *Heartbreak House* reveal Shaw moving steadily toward this darker vision. *Fanny's First Play* satirized middle-class morality and the theater itself; *Androcles and the Lion* examined religion and conscience; *Pygmalion* attacked class assumptions through language and transformed its heroine, Eliza Doolittle, into one of Shaw's most memorable explorations of female independence; and *Great Catherine* used historical farce to contrast British and Russian society. During the war, Shaw turned increasingly toward political satire. *Heartbreak House* gathers those concerns together: marriage and gender expectations, class privilege, capitalism, political incompetence and the gulf between cultured appearance and moral reality. The women, in particular, refuse to remain merely passive Victorian figures, while the men repeatedly expose the weakness and self-deception beneath their conventional masculine authority.

The play was first performed not in London but in New York, where it opened on November 10, 1920. It ran 125 performances, substantially longer than its first London engagement, which opened October 18, 1921, and ran for only 63 performances. While the play's New York reception was favorable, and the production well received, London critics were considerably less enthusiastic. Yet London's initial disappointment proved anything but permanent. *Heartbreak House* returned again and again, with major London revivals in 1932, 1937, 1943, 1950, 1961, 1967, 1975, 1983, 1992, 1997 and 2018, demonstrating a remarkable durability in British theater.

Modern scholars have increasingly recognized what early critics missed: Emil Roy calls it "one of twentieth-century British drama's premier plays," while Frederick McDowell described it as

"one of Shaw's major accomplishments as an artist." Its mixture of comedy, political warning, gender politics, social satire and apocalyptic unease continues to speak powerfully to audiences because, as revered Canadian director Christopher Newton once observed, "its meaning will change with every generation." Over the years, the role of Captain Shotover, considered by theatre historians as a self-satirization by Shaw himself, has become one of the crown jewels of classical theatre, performed in major revivals by no less than Orson Welles, Maurice Evans, John Gielgud, Rex Harrison and Philip Bosco.

About Antaeus Theatre Company

Celebrating the 35th Anniversary since its founding, Antaeus is led by Artistic Director Nike Doukas and Executive Director Joe Witt. It is located at the Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center in Downtown Glendale, which includes an 80-seat theater, a reconfigurable 36-seat second stage and classroom, and is home to the largest classic theater library West of the Mississippi. It is an actor-driven theater company, grounded in a passion for the Classics, that believes in the transformative power of live theater. Its productions explore timely and timeless works that illuminate diverse human experiences.

The company began in 1991 as a project of Center Theatre Group. Founding Co-Artistic Directors Dakin Matthews and Lillian Groag believed that a world-class, classical ensemble could thrive in a city driven by the television and film industry. Bringing together a remarkable group of 30 members, they embarked on an ambitious project that would become Antaeus Theatre Company, and over the past thirty-five years, and through hundreds of readings, workshops, and productions, Antaeus has established an impressive reputation as a leader in the Los Angeles intimate theater community. Now with an annual operating budget of over \$1 million, Antaeus is governed by an 18-person Board of Directors, employs a full-time staff, and continues to grow and mature.

About Antaeus Academy

In 2002, Antaeus established the Antaeus Academy, with its mission to provide rigorous classical training to a broadly diverse community of artists. The Academy offers intensive scene study and technique classes for working and aspiring actors, as well as community workshops designed to deepen engagement with Antaeus productions. Classes are led by nationally recognized theatre educators from within the Antaeus membership company, and structured for working professionals honing their craft, intermediate level artists, and for beginners starting their journey in the arts.

**Calendar Listing for
HEARTBREAK HOUSE
(A Fantasia in the Russian Manner)
Written by George Bernard Shaw
Directed by Nike Doukas**

Dates: October 11 - November 16

Run Time: 2 hours 38 minutes, with intermission

Price: \$55.00 per ticket, Seniors \$50, College Students \$40, High School Students \$35, Group Rates available. All preview tickets are \$35.00.

Pay What You Wish: Friday, October 23, 8:00 PM

Post-performance discussions: Monday, October 26 and Monday, November 2.

3-Play Season subscription: \$120.00

Tickets: www.antaesus.org

Email: tickets@antaesus.org

Phone: 818-506-1983

Venue: Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center, 110 East Broadway, Glendale, CA 91205

Dates:

Previews: October 11, 13, 14, 15, 16

Performances: October 17 – November 16

- Sundays at 2 p.m.: Oct. 11 (preview); Oct. 18, Oct. 25; Nov. 1, Nov. 8, Nov. 15
- Tuesday at 8 p.m.: Oct. 13 (preview) ONLY
- Wednesday at 8 p.m.: Oct. 14 (preview) ONLY
- Thursday at 8 p.m.: Oct. 15 (preview) ONLY
- Fridays at 8 p.m.: Oct. 16 (preview); Oct. 23 (Pay What You Wish); Oct. 30; Nov. 6; Nov. 13
- Saturday at 7 p.m.: Oct. 17 (Press Opening) ONLY
- Saturdays at 2 p.m.: Oct. 24, Nov. 7
- Saturdays at 8 p.m.: Oct. 24, Nov. 7, Nov. 14
- Mondays at 8 p.m.: Oct. 26*; Nov. 2*; Nov. 9; Nov. 16 (Closing)

**Post-performance discussions on Monday, Oct. 26 and Monday, Nov. 2.*

***No performances Oct. 19–22, Oct. 27–29, or Oct. 31.*

#