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CAMPUS NEWS

GWU Department of Theatre Arts Begins Season with Ibsen's 'Hedda Gabler' on Sept. 30

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2021



▲ Faith Augustine plays the main character, Hedda Gabler.

Early Realism Play is Artistically Demanding for the Cast

Written By Sarianna Miranda-Rosado, '24, Intern for Communications

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—For the first play of the 2021 Fall Season, the Department of Theatre Arts at Gardner-Webb University will present the artistically demanding play, “Hedda Gabler,” written by Henrik Ibsen in 1890. Dr. Chris Nelson, director and assistant professor of theatre arts, said the early realism play is one of the hardest GWU students have attempted in several years in terms of acting it out realistically. The play will be performed on Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 3 at 2:30 p.m. in Dover Theatre.

This complicated play tells a story about Hedda Gabler, the daughter of a general, and her newlywed husband, Jürgen Tesman. It encompasses seven main characters, Hedda, Jürgen, Juliane Tesman, Thea Elvsted, Judge Brack, Ejlert Lövborg, and Bertha (Berte). Hedda finds herself pregnant after their six-month honeymoon, but at the same time realizes she has no interest in Jürgen or the house he went great lengths to buy for her. Jürgen's rival, Ejlert, returns and throws their lives into chaos. Once Ejlert and Hedda come in contact again it is apparent they are former lovers.



- ▲ From left, Ejlert Lovborg, played by Joel Dahm, Jorgen Tesman, played by Marshall Townsend, Judge Brack played by Markus Byrd and Hedda Gabler played by Faith Augustine, practice a scene from Hedda Gabler. Photos by Lindy Lynch / GWU Photo Team

The main character, Hedda, who is played by Faith Augustine, is very unusual. “In a sense, she really lives in a different world than the people around her,” Nelson explained. “A lot of the interest in this story, I think, will be just how differently she behaves in general, and how the audience will react to this.”

Nelson and his cast have lighthearted rehearsals that are comprised of friendly banter and inside jokes. However, just like when the house lights go down for the actual performance, the fun and games end and rehearsal starts. Nelson stops and starts scenes in order to make sure that his actors are enunciating their words and accentuating their body language. At some points, he yells, “Volume,” in a deep vibrato voice in order to get the cast to speak up. At other times, he refers to his stage manager, Isabella Yodice, to assure lines are being said correctly, and his assistant stage manager, Briana Bailey, to ask if actors are standing at the right point. In some instances, it’s the actors moving their stances, faces, hands, or stage position in order to bring their character to life.



Faith Augustine as Hedda Gabler and Isabelle Dudley as Aunt Julie (Juliane Tesman).



From left, Marshall Townsend plays Jorgen Tesman, Faith Augustine plays Hedda Gabler and Anna Sample plays Thea Elvstead.

He and the actors have practiced many hours to accurately portray the culture. Nelson expressed that the mannerisms of the characters make it a real challenge since the action is set in the early 19th

century. As the play is translated from Norwegian, the social dynamics of the characters can be different.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors, and free for GWU students, faculty and staff. For ticketing information, click [here \(https://ie1.glitnirticketing.com/ieticket/web/ev_list.php?section_id=15&refresh=1632834073&refresh=1632834074\)](https://ie1.glitnirticketing.com/ieticket/web/ev_list.php?section_id=15&refresh=1632834073&refresh=1632834074). (<http://gardner-webb.edu/theatre-series>).

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request prior to the event. Please call (704) 406-4270 or email disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

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