



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harlequin's take on *A Doll's House* is as modern as they come

Olympia, WA – April 8, 2019 – Harlequin Productions presents Henrik Ibsen's classic drama *A Doll's House*, May 2nd through May 25th at the State Theater in downtown Olympia. Artistic Director Aaron Lamb will direct.

Henrik Ibsen's 1879 belief that "a woman cannot be herself in modern society" comes to life in a startlingly contemporary way in this modern staging of one of the most celebrated classics of the theatre canon. Nora and Torvald Helmer believe they are happily married and on the brink of a new phase of life. But Nora has a secret. The unraveling of this secret, and Nora's realization of her own position as a "doll" in her husband's house, rings harrowingly true – as Nora says – to "hundreds of millions of women" today.

Henrik Ibsen's work was so visionary in the 19th century that it is only now, in the 21st, that his themes have begun to resonate as he intended. As he did for Harlequin's 2016 production of *Hedda Gabler*, director Aaron Lamb will highlight Ibsen's thoroughly modern sensibilities by setting the production in the present day.

Of the choice to include *A Doll's House* in this year's season, Lamb says, "This is the year for *A Doll's House*. With everything that has been happening in post #MeToo America, this play speaks to us in a different way than we would have been able to receive it five years ago. I think we can really see ourselves in this play right now. Torvald's failings are our own."

While the production is set in the present day or even a few years in the future, Lamb has chosen to keep almost all of the language from the original translation. Using the music of Ani DiFranco and with designs by Darren Mills and Jeannie Beirne, he seeks to highlight that first-world women have only advanced about 20 years in the 150 years since the play was written. "Come see how we do that," says Lamb.

Aaron Lamb is the Artistic Director of Harlequin Productions. Last season, Lamb directed *Three Days of Rain*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Ruthless!* and *The 1940s Radio Hour*. In ten seasons as an actor and director with Harlequin he has also directed *August: Osage County*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Time Stands Still*, *Middletown*, and *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*. As an actor, he most recently appeared in the 2018 season, as Gary Essendine in Noel Coward's *Present Laughter*. Lamb has worked in Seattle for Village Theatre, Taproot Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company, and has worked regionally throughout the country. He holds an MFA in Acting from California State University, Fullerton, a BA from Washington State University, and is a member of the Actor's Equity Association.

The cast of six stars **Jenny Vaughn Hall** as Nora (*August: Osage County*, *Time Stands Still*, *Middletown*) and **Matt Shimkus*** as Torvald (*Time Stands Still*, *A Stardust Homecoming*), with **Russ Holm** (39 Harlequin shows over 20 seasons including *August: Osage County* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*), **Marianna de Fazio** (*The Art of Racing in the Rain*, *Present Laughter*) and **Brian S. Lewis** (*Dry Powder*) rounding out the seasoned cast of local and Seattle-based actors.

WHAT: Harlequin Productions presents *A Doll's House*, a startlingly modern take on Henrik Ibsen's classic drama, directed by Aaron Lamb.

WHEN: May 2 – May 25, 2019

WHERE: State Theater, 202 4th Ave East, Olympia, WA 98501

TICKETS: Tickets are available online at harlequinproductions.org, by phone at **360-786-0151**, or in person 12-6pm, Tuesday-Friday and 2 hours before performances at the Harlequin Box Office in the State Theater.

General admission tickets are \$35

Senior 60+/Military \$32

Student/Youths Under 25 \$20

Rush Tickets (half-hour prior to showtime) General \$15; Senior/Military/Student/Under 25 \$12

SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE:

Opening Night: Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 8:00pm

Pay-What-You-Can: Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 8:00pm

Ladies' Night Out: Friday, May 10, 2019 at 8:00pm

Post-show Talkback: Sunday, May 12, 2019 at 2:00pm

Pride Night: Friday, May 17, 2019 at 8:00pm

CATEGORY: Classic Drama

AGE RECOMMENDATION: All ages with guidance

CAST:

Jenny Vaughn Hall	<i>Nora Helmer</i>
Matt Shimkus*	<i>Torvald Helmer</i>
Brian S. Lewis	<i>Nils Krogstadt</i>
Marianna de Fazio	<i>Kristine Linde</i>
Russ Holm	<i>Dr. Rank</i>

* Indicates membership in the Actor's Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Harlequin Productions is a professional not-for-profit theater company in Olympia, WA. We seek to invigorate, educate, and empower our community and all people to feel more, think more, play more, and judge less through the mirror of real live theatre.

PR: Helen Harvester, Marketing and Communications Director
helen@harlequinproductions.org