

## "Hedda Gabler" at Antaeus Theatre | ColoradoBoulevard.net



Nike Doukas in "Hedda Gabler" at the Antaeus Theatre (Photo – Facet Photography).

**First, good news about the Antaeus Theatre – although it is already convenient to Pasadena at its location in North Hollywood, it is [moving to Glendale](#) soon, so we'll have another excellent small theater within 15 minutes of home.**

*By Carol Edger Germain*

Antaeus' niche in the small theater world is assembling a company of actors dedicated to presenting classical theatre, plays from all periods with enduring themes. And they have certainly met that mission in their production of "Hedda Gabler," Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's play, first presented in Germany in 1891, about a restless, selfish, and psychologically flawed woman of the 1800's trying to control her world and create its trappings as her somewhat indecipherable mind dictates.

A unique twist presented by Antaeus is that the play has two separate groups of actors performing on different dates. I saw the production presented by the group named the "Pistols." The other ensemble is the "Generals," and I hope to get back to the theater to see this play again with the other cast.

Although I enjoyed the Victorian setting of the 1963 movie version of this play, starring Ingrid Bergman, I was happily surprised to see that director Steven Robman and writer Andrew Upton have moved the action to the 1920's, which automatically shifted the audience's perception a bit, as women of that period, although not "liberated" or equal, were certainly getting out and about more, getting flashier and sexier, and I enjoyed Mr. Robman's vision. Leah Piehl and Se Hyun Oh were very much in sync with the director with their costume design and set design, respectively.

"Hedda Gabler" at the Antaeus Theatre (Photo – Facet Photography).

We first meet Hedda as she returns from her honeymoon, bored already with her predictable future, presumably children, fussing about the house, formal dinners and parties, and enduring endless chatter from her dedicated husband with an extremely unexciting (to her) career, about which he loves to share exciting (to him) tidbits. Immediately the irregular and under-oiled gears of her somewhat askew brain begin turning, letting her ability to plot and justify her actions without remorse unleash itself and guide her toward making life a little more exciting.

Enter the pawns on Hedda's chessboard: Jorgen Tesman, Hedda's accommodating but rather socially clueless husband (played by JD Cullum), scurrying and squeaking and emoting about his project in the background, alternating between Hedda (Nike Doukas) and his doting Aunt Julle (Lynn Milgrim), whose sweetly presented but not-so-subtle prodding questions about when Hedda might be pregnant still manage to go over Jorgen's head at times; Ejlert Lovborg (Ned Mochel), a former lover of Hedda and primary competitor of Jorgen (for a professorship), drunkenly enjoying his 15 minutes of fame as a published author, and working on a sequel; the shady Judge Brack (James Sutorius); the dutiful servant Berte (Karianne Flaathen); Thea Elvsted (Kwana Martinez), a former classmate of Hedda and friend of Jorgen, who is now associated (personally and professionally) with Ejlert and shares Jorgen's enthusiasm for finishing Ejlert's project when the opportunity arises.



JD Cullum in the front as Jorgen; James Sutorius in the back as Judge Brack (Photo – Facet Photography).

Eavesdropping and peeping on the various combinations of characters and watching the wheels they set in motion, the detours they set for the wheels set in motion by others, and the inevitable meeting at the four-way stop where someone has removed the signs is delightful in a soap opera kind of way, thoroughly enjoyable as you judge each character on their merits, or lack thereof. Hedda may have no socially redeeming qualities in the end (you decide) but it's intriguing trying to figure out just where her flaws lie and what her psychological diagnosis might be in present day jargon.

Conniving, lying, lost manuscripts, misinterpretations, gunshots, manipulation, evil plans, illicit flirtations – I won't add any spoilers about who does what to whom, but there are surprises and shocks. I will just say treat yourself – this is unmissable! And a wonderful opportunity to get to know the Antaeus company, as I'm hoping my Pasadena neighbors will be as excited as I am about getting another close-by small theater and will be seeing

more productions when they move to Glendale.

### ***Hedda Gabler***

- **Written by Henrik Ibsen**
- **In a version by Andrew Upton**
- **Directed by Steven Robman**
- **Starring Tony Amendola, Daniel Blinkoff, JD Cullum, Elizabeth Dennehy, Nike Doukas, Karianne Flaathen, Adrian LaTourelle, Kwana Martinez, Lynn Milgrim, Ned Mochel, Ann Noble, Jaimi Paige, James Sutorius, Amelia White**

#### ***The Antaeus Theatre Company***

***5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood CA, 91601***

***(1½ blocks south of Magnolia)***

- **Thursdays at 8 p.m.: 23, 30; July 7, 14**
- **Fridays at 8 p.m.: June 24; July 1, 8, 15**
- **Saturdays at 2 p.m.: June 25; July 2, 9, 16**
- **Saturdays at 8 p.m.: June 25; July 2, 9, 16**
- **Sundays at 2 p.m.: June 26; July 3, 10, 17**

**\$8 parking in the lot at 5125 Lankershim Blvd. (west side of the street,) just south of Magnolia.**

**Also, street parking (read the signs).**

- **Thursdays and Fridays: \$30**
- **Saturdays and Sundays: \$34**

**(Also discount tickets available at [goldstar.com](http://goldstar.com)).**

- **Buy tickets [here](#).**