

What: George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House*
Directed by Robert Estes

Who: Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

When: Fridays and Saturdays, January 21st through February 19th at 8 p.m.
Special Matinee Performance February 13th, at 2 p.m.
Special Thursday Performance February 17th at 8 p.m.

Where: Live Oak Theatre, 1301 Shattuck Avenue (at Berryman), Berkeley, CA

Actor's Ensemble of Berkeley opens its 54th Season with *Heartbreak House*, George Bernard Shaw's comedy of fancy, game playing, heartbreak, illusion, and finally, joyful destruction. *Heartbreak* is set just before World War I, when the moneyed classes were oh so sure of themselves and their appetites - so sure that a World War might be an interesting diversion. The house in question is that of Captain Shotover - retired ship captain, current inventor, and forever opinionated eccentric. His daughters have married badly in his eyes - one to a dim-witted plodder, one to a sharp-witted layabout. Enter into the house one Ellie Dunn, daughter of a failed businessman, who intends to marry the ruthless capitalist who ruined her father - for reparations, if for nothing else. All - the husbands, the fathers, the wives, the daughters, the aging playboy, the burglar - come together in "this silly house, this strangely happy house, this agonizing house, this house without foundations." Shaw said about the play, "It has more of the miracle, more of the mystic belief in it than any of my others."

Robert Estes made his directorial debut with Actors Ensemble of Berkeley with our well-received 2010 production of Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* (quite a different kind of house!) He also recently directed *Other People's Money* for Masquer's in Point Richmond, and is well known for his Grove talks before performances at Orinda's California Shakespeare Theatre.

Our production includes Michele Delattre as Hesione, Taylor Diffenderfer as Ellie, Amaka Izuchi as Lady Utterwood, Keith Jefferds as Mangan, Brian McManus as Randall, Joseph O'Lougalin as the Burglar, Lynn Sotos as Nurse Guinness, Stanley Spenger as Hector, Matthew Surrence as Mazzinni, and Jeff Trescott as Captain Shotover, with costumes by William Curry, set design by Jerome Solberg, and lighting design by Alecks Rundell.

Heartbreak House opens Friday, January 21 and runs Friday and Saturday evenings at 8pm through February 19th. There will be a special Sunday matinee performance at 2 p.m. on February 13th, and a special Thursday performance at 8 p.m. on February 17th.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for students and seniors. There is a special rate of \$10 for groups of 15 or more. Tickets are available through the Actors Ensemble of Berkeley website (www.aeofberkeley.org). Reservations for purchase at the door may be made by calling the box office at 510-649-5999 (cash or check only at the door).