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Third production of A Noise Within's 2017-2018 Season

***Mrs. Warren's Profession* by George Bernard Shaw**

October 8 –November 18, 2017

Press Opening October 14

Directed by Michael Michetti

(Pasadena, CA –September 25, 2017) **A Noise Within (ANW)** presents the third production of its 26th season, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Michael Michetti, performing October 8 through November 18, 2017 (Press Opening October 14). Judith Scott, known for her role as Claudia Crane on the current FX series "Snowfall," makes her ANW debut as the titular Kitty Warren.

Mrs. Warren's Profession explores what happens to a family when Cambridge-educated Vivie discovers that her genteel upbringing has been funded by her mother's illicit (but successful) business dealings as a prostitute and madam.

Even though it's set at the turn of the 20th century, Director Michael Michetti said that *Mrs. Warren's Profession* "feels shockingly modern. It's a play that examines Kitty Warren's choices from different perspectives and without judgment. Shaw was brazen to put the plight of women front and center in his art; it's a choice none of his contemporaries made. This is a protofeminist play before that terminology was even commonplace."

"Despite its name, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* isn't about the sensationalism of prostitution. It's about gender parity, the perils of capitalism, and the economic choices available to the marginalized," says ANW Producing Artistic Director Julia Rodriguez-Elliott. "And it's those themes that still resonate. More than that modernist feminist perspective, the play is an honest exploration of the complicated nature of mother and daughter relationships. The courage expressed here comes in being honest about who you are, what you want for yourself, and how you see your future."

Mrs. Warren's Profession runs in rotating repertory with *A Tale of Two Cities* (closing Nov. 19) and *The Madwoman of Chailot* (closes Nov. 11). Operating in a state-of-the-art theatre complex in East Pasadena, A Noise Within annually produces seven main stage productions from Sept-May. It is a cultural and artistic mainstay in the San Gabriel Valley, and is the largest employer of local Equity Actors in Los Angeles County.

Tickets for *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, starting at \$25, are available online at www.anoisewithin.org and by phone by calling 626-356-3100. A Noise Within is located on the corner of Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Villa Avenue at 3352 East Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107, just north of the Madre Street exit off the 210.

The cast of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* includes Judith Scott* as Mrs. Kitty Warren, Peter James Smith* as Mr. Praed, Jeremy Rabb* as Sir George Crofts, Martin Kildare* as the Reverend Samuel Gardner, Erika Soto* as Vivie Warren, and Adam Faison as Frank Gardner. *denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association

ABOUT MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION

Shaw, wanting to write about a *realistic* woman, wrote in a letter to Ellen Terry in 1897, "It's much my best play; but it makes my blood run cold: I can hardly bear the most appalling bits of it. Ah, when I wrote that, I had some nerve." In 1893, before it could be produced, Lord Chamberlain, Britain's theater censor, banned it as immoral and, otherwise, improper for the stage. Shaw would have been quite aware of censorship regulations, and did not think there was the least chance of the play being licensed. Shaw said, "Ordinary commercial theatres would have nothing to say to me." Shaw included it in his 1898 collection *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*.

Sarah Wansley in program notes for the McCarter Theatre, wrote, "The scandal surrounding *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was not the fact that Shaw wrote about prostitution, but how he did it ... while other plays of the era dealt with prostitutes, they inevitably regretted their behavior and made a bad end."

"The morally impugnable part of Shaw's play to his society, is that Mrs. Warren lives, unrepentant ... that as a fallen woman, Mrs. Warren 'is not wicked enough.' These critics, Shaw insists, have entirely missed the point. Rather than place the guilt of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* on Mrs. Warren herself, Shaw explains, 'The whole aim of my play is to throw that guilt on the British public itself.' The tumultuous production history and heated public reception of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* demonstrates that whether or not he succeeded in throwing guilt, he certainly managed to make a significant portion of the public uncomfortable."

In 1902, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was performed by the London Stage Society at the members-only (thus outside the censorship ban) New Lyric Club, which "rather courted a pleasantly scandalous representation," for a single matinee and evening performance. The *St. James Gazette* said, "That the tendency of the play is wholly evil we are convinced. The second act contains one of the boldest and most specious defenses of an immoral life for poor women that has ever been written." Shaw was delighted with the "shock to the foundations of morality, which sends a pallid crowd of critics into the street shrieking that the pillars of society are cracking and the ruin of the State at hand ... truly my play must be more needed than I knew."

In 1905 in New Haven, pandemonium broke out in the upper galleries at its rowdy opening night (after all, the Yale Football Team had just beaten Princeton) when Vivie demands to know the identity of her father. Wansley wrote, "A silence fell over the theater and when the curtain closed [there were] rapturous applause sounds."

"The next day, however, the mayor of New Haven, John P. Studley, received calls that something improper had played at the Hyperion ... the police chief revoked producer Arnold Daly's license and the company packed their bags for New York City. [There] the scandalous reputation of the play preceded it, and the production's opening night in New York was sold out. At the end of the third act, Daly gave a speech to the audience, suggesting that children should keep to simplified codes of morality, but for an adult audience, 'surely there should be room in New York for at least one theater devoted to truth, however disagreeable that truth may be.'"

The *New York Herald* said, "It defies immorality. It glorifies debauchery." The New York police commissioner arrested Daly and his company for "offending public decency," and cancelled all future performances (they were eventually acquitted by The Court of Special Sessions -- "there is nothing in the words themselves, nor in any particular phrase or expression, which can be said to be indecent").

Wansley continued, "Among the press's critique is the fact that women are present at the performance, which supposedly is improper for the ears and eyes of the weaker sex. Countering this allegation, Shaw points out that he not only wrote the play for women, but also that it had been performed and produced mainly through the determination of women. In 1907, Daly and his company, having been vindicated, produced *Mrs. Warren's Profession* at the Manhattan Theatre, followed by a national tour."

In 2005, on the centenary of that production, Ben Brantley wrote, "Shaw was cutting a calculated, irresistibly dangerous figure as a firebrand critic, polemicist and soapbox orator long before his plays were first produced in London. It was a fire-breathing persona, stoked over seven decades, that expected, nay demanded, to be caricatured: 'the Celebrated G.B.S.,' as he put it, 'about as real as a pantomime ostrich.' No one expects to be shocked by Shaw anymore, but there's always the hope that he'll once again prove himself the provocateur par excellence, as well as a master practitioner of flashing wit."

ABOUT GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950)

Shaw was a Nobel Prize and Oscar-winning Irish playwright, critic and socialist whose influence on Western theatre, culture and politics stretched from the 1880s to his death in 1950.

Originally earning his way as an influential London music and theatre critic, Shaw's greatest gift was for drama. Strongly influenced by Ibsen, he successfully introduced a new realism into English-language drama. He wrote more than 60 plays, among them *Man and Superman*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Major Barbara*, *Saint Joan*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, and *Pygmalion*. With his range from biting contemporary satire to historical allegory, Shaw became the leading comedy dramatist of his generation and one of the most important playwrights in the English language since the 17th century.

"Shaw was also the most trenchant pamphleteer since Swift, the most readable music critic in English, the best theatre critic of his generation, a prodigious lecturer and essayist on politics, economics, and sociological subjects, and one of the most prolific letter writers in literature," sums up Stanley Weintraub in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

As a young man raised in poverty, Shaw embraced socialism and became an early and lifelong force in the Fabian Society, a highly influential British organization, founded in 1884, to promote a gradual, as opposed to revolutionary, socialism, that was the foundation for the British Labor Party in 1900. He tirelessly wrote and spoke on behalf of its wide-ranging vision to transform British society, advocating a minimum wage for the working-class, universal healthcare, women's right to vote, and the abolition of hereditary privilege. Not quite a pacifist because he justified war when a necessary evil (as in fighting the Nazis in WWII), he worked for a peaceable world and supported the establishment of the League of Nations.

He publicly opposed Britain's entry into both World Wars. He is the only person to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize (Literature, 1925) and an Academy Award (Best Adapted Screenplay, 1938), the first for his contributions to literature and the second for his film adaptation of his most popular play, *Pygmalion*. The story of a pedantic British linguist who turns a Cockney flower girl into a lady was immortalized after his death in the 1953 Broadway musical *My Fair Lady*. Shaw refused all other awards and honors, including the offer of a knighthood.

MORE ABOUT ANW'S PRODUCTION

Michael Michetti has previously directed *Figaro*, *The Guardsman*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *Don Juan* at A Noise Within. He is the Co-Artistic Director of The Theatre @ Boston Court. There he directed Deborah Stein's *God Save Gertrude*; Jason Grote's *1001*; Carlos Murillo's *dark play or stories for boys*; Eric Whitacre's *Paradise Lost: Shadows & Wings*; his own adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *A Picture of Dorian Gray*; Sinan Ünél's *Pera Palas*; Charles L. Mee's *Summertime*; and *Romeo & Juliet: Antebellum New Orleans, 1836*. Elsewhere: *Carousel*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Li'l Abner* (Reprise); *Ouroboros* (Road

Theatre); *Anyone Can Whistle* (Matrix Theatre); *A Life in the Theatre* starring Hal Holbrook (Pasadena Playhouse); *Edward II* (Circle X). He is the recipient of two Ovation Awards and four LADCC Awards.

An alumna of Second City Theatre having performed for six years on the Chicago and Toronto main stages, **Judith Scott**, “Kitty Warren,” is currently recurring on FX’s “Snowfall” and appears in feature films “Guess Who,” “Fracture,” and “Flight Plan.” On stage, she played Adriana in *A Comedy of Errors* with The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles (formerly Shakespeare Festival/LA) and Caliban in *The Tempest* for the Los Angeles Women’s Shakespeare Company.

Symposium, Conversations, Pay What You Can

The run of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* includes a pre-performance symposium on Wednesday, October 11 at 6:45 pm, post-performance conversations with the artists on Friday, November 3 at 8 pm, Sunday, November 12 at 2:00 pm and Friday, November 17 at 8:00 pm, and a Pay What You Can performance on Thursday, October 12 at 7:30 pm.

MORE ABOUT THE 2017-2018 SEASON

This fall, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* performs in rep with *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, adapted by Mike Poulton, and directed by Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott (September 3- November 19, 2017), and *The Madwoman of Chailot* by Jean Giradoux, translated by Maurice Valency and directed by Stephanie Shroyer (September 17-November 11, 2017). Then ANW’s holiday tradition continues for the sixth year with *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, adapted for the stage by Geoff Elliott, directed by Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott (December 1–23, 2017).

Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, and *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry play in rotating repertory in early spring 2018, and the season closes with a revival of one of ANW’s most popular productions, *Noises Off* by Michael Frayn. With the exception of *Noises Off* and *A Christmas Carol*, all of the season’s plays make their A Noise Within debut.

This season’s theme is *Entertaining Courage*. “Regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, we’re certainly living in challenging, unprecedented times,” says Geoff Elliott, “It seems like many people are trying to figure out what the path forward looks like. While we certainly don’t have answers, we thought we’d face that national angst and fear head on by embracing courage and hope.”

Elliott continues: “These plays all feature characters who make bold choices to do something—anything—in the face of disaster.”

Julia Rodriguez-Elliott continues, “In addition to being very entertaining theatrical works, our plays examine courage from a variety of points of view, intimate and global, low-stakes and high-stakes; We also look at courage in terms of two different families who are trying to figure out how to be their best selves—one against a background of racial prejudice in *A Raisin in the Sun*, and the other against societal hypocrisy in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*.”

Geoff Elliott says, “This is a season that asks tough, if fascinating, questions about the nature of courage, and there are no easy answers. Spending time with these fascinating characters allows us to think about our lives, reflect and even be inspired by them.”

ABOUT A NOISE WITHIN

A Noise Within, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary last season, was called “an oasis for those who love classic stories” by *The Los Angeles Times*, and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, CA. ANW’s award-winning resident company practices a rotating repertory model at their state-of-the-art, 283-seat performing space. This venue, established in 2011, has allowed ANW to expand its audience, surpassing its previous box office, subscription, and attendance records each year.

In addition to producing world-class performances of classical theatre, the organization runs robust education programs committed to inspiring diverse audiences of all ages. Helmed by Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, who hold MFAs from San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre, A Noise Within truly delivers CLASSIC THEATRE, MODERN MAGIC.

<http://www.anoisewithin.org>

Calendar Listing: Mrs. Warren's Profession

By George Bernard Shaw

Directed by Michael Michetti

At A Noise Within, 3352 E Foothill Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107

Performances:

Sunday, October 8 at 2:00pm

Wednesday, October 11 at 7:30pm

(*Symposium* starts at 6:45pm)

Thursday, October 12 at 7:30pm

(*Pay What You Can*)

Friday, October 13 at 8:00pm

Saturday, October 14 at 8:00pm

(*Opening Night*)

Sunday, October 15 at 2:00pm

Sunday, October 22 at 2:00 and 7:00pm

Saturday, October 28 at 2:00 and 8:00pm

Thursday, November 2 at 7:30pm

Friday, November 3 at 8:00pm (*Conversations*)

Sunday, November 12 at 2:00 and 7:00pm

(*Conversations* after 2pm)

Friday, November 17 at 8:00pm (*Conversations*)

Saturday, November 18 at 2:00 and 8:00pm

Tickets and information:

Website: www.anoisewithin.org, Phone: 626-356-3100

Regular Prices: Single Tickets from \$25.00, Student Rush with ID an hour before performance \$20.00

Groups (10 or more): Adults from \$30/ticket; Students from \$18/ticket

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