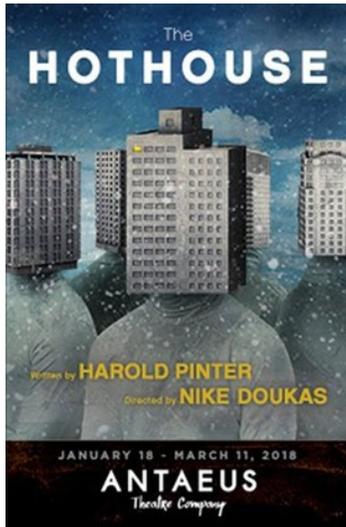


## Antaeus Tackles Harold Pinter's Little-Known Dark Comedy THE HOTHOUSE

by BWW News Desk Jan. 3, 2018



Chilling, sinister, thought-provoking - and wickedly funny. Antaeus Theatre Company presents a fully partner-cast production of Harold Pinter's seldom seen dark comedy, *The Hothouse*. Directed by Nike Doukas, *The Hothouse* opens on Jan. 25 and Jan. 26 (one opening for each cast), running through March 11 at the Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center in Glendale. Low-priced previews begin on Jan. 18.

Written in 1958, but put aside by the author until 1980, *The Hothouse* is a wild, impudent and blisteringly comic look at a government-run mental institution in which the wardens may be madder than the inmates. Under a veil of devilish wit and subversive humor, Pinter's biting political commentary on the perils of unchecked power is as vital and pertinent today as when he first wrote it.

According to Antaeus co-artistic directors Bill Brochtrup, Rob Nagle and John Sloan, "Although probably unfamiliar to most audience members, *The Hothouse* is a true 'hidden gem' - a searingly comic indictment of institutional bureaucracy ambiguously set in a 'rest home' or 'sanitarium' where the unscrupulous staff prey on the patients, and corruption and red tape are rampant. Nike's talents as an actor, director, teacher, dialect expert and coach are well known to everyone at Antaeus, so it's thrilling to have her on board to helm this wild ride."

In the Antaeus tradition known as "partner casting," Josh Clark and Peter Van Norden share the role of Roote, the ex-colonel in charge who, on Christmas Day, finds himself confronted by a dual crisis: one of his numerically identified patients, 6457, has died while another, 6459, has unexpectedly given birth. Graham Hamilton and Leo Marks partner as his second in command, the Machiavellian Gibbs, while Melanie Lora and Jocelyn Towne play Miss Cutts, Roote's calculating and shrewd mistress. Other characters include the appropriately named Lush (Adrian LaTourelle and Rob Nagle), the hapless Lamb (JD Cullum and Steve Hofvendahl), Lobb (John Apicella and Gregory Itzin) and Tubb (John Bobek and Paul Eiding).

Pinter himself directed the first production, which opened on April 25, 1980 at the Hampstead Theatre before transferring to the Ambassadors Theatre on June 25. The play was also first published in 1980, by Eyre Methuen. It received its American premiere at the Trinity Repertory Company in 1982. Pinter himself played Roote in a 1995 production staged at the Minerva Theatre in Chichester, which later transferred to the Comedy Theatre in London.

"It was fantasy when I wrote it, but now it has become, I think, far more relevant. Reality has overtaken it," he said.

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Harold Pinter (1930 - 2008) remains one of the most influential modern British dramatists, whose writing career spanned more than 50 years. His best-known plays include *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming* and *Betrayal*. He wrote 21 screenplays including *The Servant*, *The Go-Between*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Sleuth* as well as adaptations of his plays *The Homecoming* and *Betrayal*. He was also a director and an actor. Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2005. Other awards include the Companion of Honour for services to Literature, the Legion D'Honneur, the Laurence Olivier Award and the Moliere D'Honneur for Lifetime Achievement. In 1999 he was made a Companion of Literature by the Royal Society of Literature. He received honorary degrees from seventeen universities.

Antaeus is a cooperative theater ensemble founded to empower the actor and to bring classical theater to Southern California. The company exists to create a family of artists and audiences and is dedicated to exploring stories with enduring themes. Taking their company name from the Titan who gained strength by touching the Earth, Antaeus members - many of whom are familiar to film and television audiences - regain their creative strength by returning to the wellspring of their craft: live theater. Members of the company span a wide range of age, ethnicity and experience; they have performed on Broadway, at major regional theaters across the country, in film, television and on local stages, and are the recipients of numerous accolades and awards. Audiences, who never see an understudy due to Antaeus' trademark "partner casting," frequently return to see the same play in the hands of an equally excellent but very different set of actors.

The new Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center complements Glendale's ongoing commitment to integrate vibrant arts space into the fabric of city life, ensuring the arts remain accessible to all. Located just a few blocks away from The Americana at Brand and the newly remodeled Glendale Central Library as well as the Alex Theatre, the center promises to build upon Glendale's growing reputation as an arts and entertainment destination. The center includes an 80-seat theater, a reconfigurable 45-seat performance/classroom space, a theater classics library and a lobby art gallery. All the artwork on display is available for purchase, and a portion of the proceeds goes to Antaeus Theatre Company.

Performances of *The Hothouse* take place Jan. 25 through March 11 on Thursdays and Fridays at 8 pm; Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Sundays at 2 p.m. (no matinee performance on Saturday, Jan. 27). Tickets are \$30 on Thursdays and Fridays, and \$34 on Saturdays and Sundays. Six preview performances take place Jan. 18 through Jan. 24. Preview tickets are priced at \$15. Antaeus Theatre Company has partnered with TodayTix, the free mobile ticketing platform, to offer a \$5 preview lottery; a limited number of \$5 tickets will be made available through the TodayTix app for previews.

The Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center is located at 110 East Broadway, Glendale, CA 91205 (between N. Brand Blvd. and Maryland Ave.). The first 90 minutes of parking is free, then \$2 per hour, in Glendale Marketplace garage located at 120 S. Maryland Ave (between Broadway and Harvard). The theater is air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible.

For reservations and information, call 818-506-1983 or go to [www.antaeus.org](http://www.antaeus.org) (<http://www.antaeus.org>).