

THEATER REVIEW

Epiphany's debut production a revelation

By MAE G. BANNER
For The Saratogian

Strong, nuanced acting, meticulous production values, and a focused reading of Ibsen's "A Doll House" speak well for Epiphany Theater's staging of this classic play, running through Nov. 11 at New Visions Theater at BOCES on Henning Road.

Epiphany, an Equity company new to Saratoga Springs, chose "A Doll House" for its debut on the basis of a community vote, so if this production has a feel of "This is good medicine for you; take a big swallow," we must remember we're getting what we asked for. The 19th century drama of falseness in marriage and a wife's self-discovery is drawn-out and talky, a little hard for modern playgoers to warm up to.

The main action is internal. It is Nora Helmer's maturation from a silly puppet/doll of a wife to a real woman intent on knowing herself.

Jenna Kalinowski inhabits the character fully and makes her slow unfolding into consciousness a heroic journey.

Nora enters the scene — a clean-lined, yet cozy drawing-room beautifully designed by Art Rotch — skipping and giggling, her arms laden with just-bought Christmas packages, her hoop skirt set off with a white fur muff. This is a silly, almost insufferable woman who seems without a care in the world. Yet, her constant laughter has a manic undertone, as if some deep trouble lies beneath her carefree manner.

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