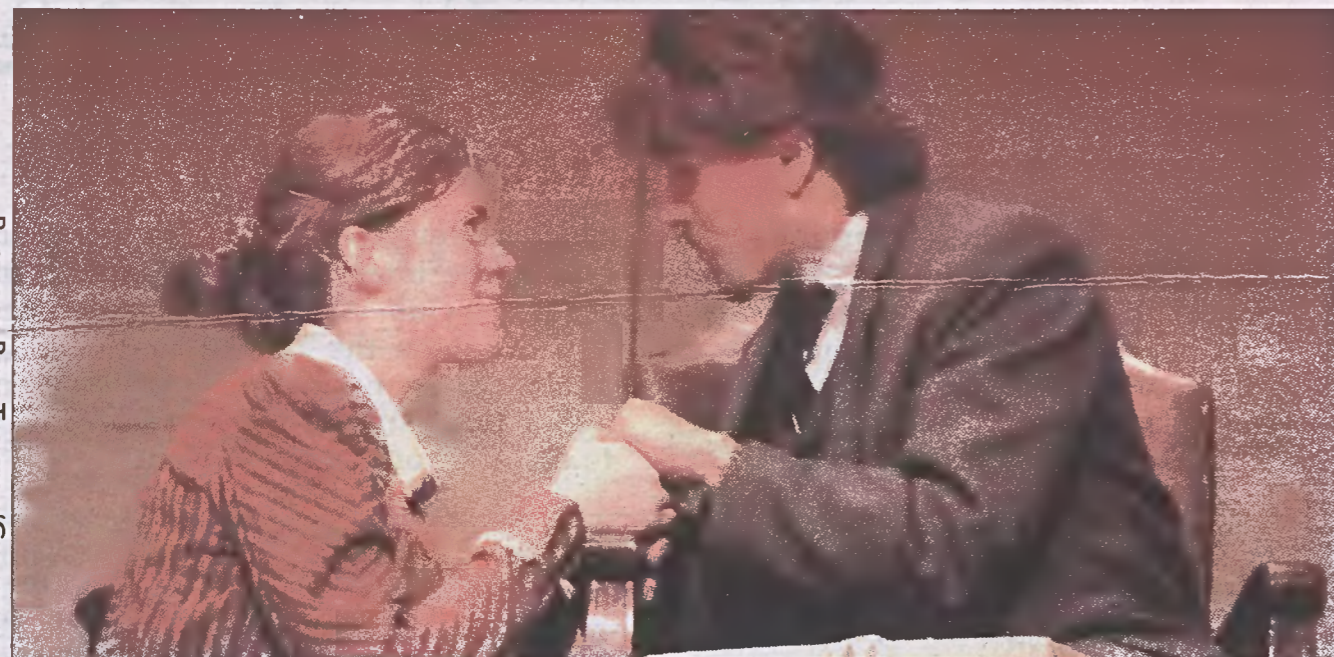


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## Hammond debuts at Guilford

CARLY PERRIN | STAFF WRITER

Scandal, love and macaroons.

These are the things that good theatre is made of – or at least Henrik Ibsen seemed to think so when he penned “A Doll’s House” over a century ago. Most of us know this play from our high school English classes. Others know it as the slammed door heard round the world that ends both the play and Nora Helmer’s life with her husband.

Truly, “A Doll’s House” is one of the first plays that dealt with the ideologies sparked by the feminist movement and was echoed by the voices of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Kate Chopin. On Feb. 16, the first performance of the Thornton Wilder acting version of the play was performed at Guilford.

The premiere is not the only first but also marks a number of beginnings, the most publicized of which is the directorial debut of David Hammond. This is Hammond’s first year teaching at Guilford, after a distinguished career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and he brings with him his experience as well as a freshness that only a new professor can bring.

While talking about the premiere, Hammond expressed a low-level hum of excitement and possibility, especially when he talked about teaching undergraduates and what it has brought to his life.

“Teaching itself is very pure. It’s about the work and process. It is also the most exciting to teach undergraduates, because graduates take your class almost like window-shopping. Undergrads, you open up the door and they leap through it.”

Eliza Yeager, sophomore and leading lady said, “I used to think that the piece was dated and more on the prim and proper side, and I

didn’t believe that I could connect with Nora. Because of David, though, I didn’t have to struggle with her. I realized that the themes are still relevant to women and relevant to how you think. She (Nora) is so empowered and I love that.”

It is also Yeager’s first leading role in the Guilford College drama department, but she is no stranger to the stage. She has already been in six Guilford plays and has been acting ever since age 12.

“I have never felt prouder of a play that I have been involved in,” Yeager said, and she received quick agreement from co-stars Scott Lyman (Dr. Rank) and Bram Crowe-Getty (Nils Krogstad).

Crowe-Getty went on to say, “The attention to detail is key. Everything down to the smallest element was planned out, the setting, the sound ... everything. We really worked hard on this play. I have never felt closer to a character.”

Given the level of work that was put into the play, “A Doll’s House” does not disappoint. The set designer, Daniel Thobias, has created an authentic Victorian scene down to the furniture, with small surprises, like being able to see into other rooms, that one wouldn’t often think to include in a single-setting play.

The players are all believable and they change throughout the play. As Thorvald Helmer (Derrick DuBois) grows more unlikable, Nora grows up. As Dr. Rank’s love for Nora is revealed, Nils Krogstad proves that he has a heart. It is hard not to have affection for all of the characters that are involved, which really brings out the humanity of the play.

As for the director, Hammond should be proud of his debut, and hopefully it will open the door for many more opening nights to come.

## “A Doll’s House”