

Podtalk: Playwright Hannah li-Epstein of Nothing Without a Company's 'Not One Batu'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 6, 2018 - 5:41pm

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CHICAGO – The State of Hawaii may be one of the most misunderstood in America. Because of its reputation as a tourist mecca, the fact that native peoples live and work there like any other place is hard to imagine. Also unimaginable is the drug use of island residents, but playwright and Hawaiian native Hannah li-Epstein wrote about it in her stage play “Not One Batu,” now in its Premiere Chicago run at the Berger Park Coach House through July 28th, 2018. For more information, including tickets, [click here](#). [17]

“Not One Batu” is presented by Nothing Without a Company (in partnership with Lanialoha Lee and Aloha Center Chicago), the theater group that specializes in using outside-the-box spaces to do their staging. For this play, they begin with a luau party in the Berger Coach House, and weather depending perform the play outside with Lake Michigan as an ocean stand-in backdrop.



Honey Girl (Maria Tredway) in 'Not One Batu,' Written by Hannah li-Epstein (inset)

Photo credit: NothingWithoutACompany.org

“Batu” refers to the meth product itself, and the playwright pulls no punches in the gut-wrenching creation of the character Honey Girl, an ex-addict who stills sells meth to islanders to eke out a subsistence. Hannah li-Epstein is familiar with the scenario as a recovering meth addict herself, and as a representative of her native people. The play is primarily performed in authentic (and understandable) Hawaiian “pidgin English,” to fulfill what li-Epstein calls “a fully realized people.”

In the following Podtalk with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, playwright Hannah li-Epstein speaks about her connection in writing the play, the people of Hawaii and how academic study helped formulate the story structure.

Nothing Without a Company, in partnership with Lanialoha Lee and Aloha Center Chicago, Presents “Not One Batu” through July 28th, 2018, at the Berger Park Coach House, 6205 North Sheridan Road, Chicago. Featuring Lelea’e “Buffy” Kahalepuna-Wong, Marie Tredway, Scott Hanada, Jae K. Renfrow, Ian Voltaire Deanes, Gloria Alvarez, Tony Rossi, Bobby Wilhelmson, Heather Jencks and Korydell Galima. Written by Hannah li-Epstein. Directed by Rachel Slavick. For more information about Nothing Without a Company, [click here](#). [18]



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