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“Miss Julia” by Strindberg at Casa Ensamble  
Chasing Unhappiness

The play , performed by Tina Mitchell, Jhon Alex Toro and Gina Jaimes , will be open till August 31 .

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The power . Everything resides in power . Miss Julia's for being noble, Juan's for being a man, the Conde's for being a Conde and Cristina's because she has power over Juan, or at least she thinks she does. Everything resides in power . That's what Miss Julia is based on , Strindberg's play now on season at Casa Ensamble , and the core of its characters .

The room is a small space, rectangular , and the chairs are placed at two of its sides. You step in and get offered a glass of rum ; we are at San Juan's night . There is a metal table in the center of the space, a chair , and hanging from the ceiling a hook with a jacket on , there's no more . It's a kitchen . Music coming from the outside , people dancing , loudness, it's a party . It's hot . Juan and Cristina chatting in her service uniforms. The house owners left and there's only one behind , Miss Julia , who preferred to celebrate with the servants. She's criticized. How she came one step down, how they make fun of her . They feel pity for her.

Miss Julia comes in . Wants to dance with Juan . She takes him with her and Cristina stays there, in the kitchen, upset . Why her? Why with her Juan ? Despicable Miss Julia . They come back to the kitchen and talk. Cristina has fallen sleep and can't listen , can't see . The power and seduction game is on between Juan and Miss Julia . She starts, delivering orders. Give me a drink, come closer, kiss my hand , kiss my feet. And then he, pretending that is following the orders, with humbleness, while underneath is gaining power over her. Tension . There's always tension : she wants to step down , run away from a meaningless life. He wants to climb , reach a social class that he can't belong to . She is cocky on how she handles men , of getting over her condition as woman. He takes advantage of that to gain more power and drag her down. There is fear about the power over him , the Conde's, Julia's father, who may come back . Who's is present as a father , as a master , as a ghost between their tensions .

All this struggle it's given with words and body. Lines in Spanish and lines in English. The table that goes through the space, jumps and floor dance . Text and body at the same pace , sustained, never drops. Strindberg's naturalistic text is modified by the bodies in the representation ; tensions , besides the sights and tones , are intensified by the dance . The drama grows and is more strong .

Although that “true” is modified with the excited movement of the bodies , this staging still makes evident what Strindberg wanted with his play, what the naturalistic drama writers of that time wanted : represent, as in a portrait , how hostile and deterministic man can be . A man that has been build by society , class , gender, and who can't , not even by chance , run away from the conditions of birth that are imposed . All is

wanting and not getting . With this version of Miss Julia ,naturalistic theater keeps its essence , the one that belongs to the character it portraits : no one may , in any way , reach happiness .