

Performing Arts to present musical 'Once on This Island'

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The Division of Performing Arts at Alfred University will present the spring musical, "Once on This Island, Wednesday, April 11 through Saturday, April 14, in the C.D. Smith III Theatre, Miller Performing Arts Center. Show time is 8 p.m. and general admission is \$5; cost is \$1 for AU students. For reservations, please call 607.871.2828, or reserve by clicking on "Box Office" at <http://www/Alfred.edu/per...> or by e-mailing performs@alfred.edu. In making his decision on which musical to present, Stephen Crosby, professor of theater, took into account what kind of things he wanted to represent to the Alfred community. "Once on This Island," written by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, was very appealing for many reasons, he said, including its setting in the Caribbean, something that attracted Crosby because of his childhood memories of the islands. Crosby also wanted to celebrate AU's multicultural environment and finding a quality musical was essential. "Once on This Island" was nominated for eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Set in the French Antilles, it tells the mythic story of Ti Moune, an orphaned peasant girl who, as a small child, was the sole survivor of a devastating storm that wiped out the rest of her people. Saved by the gods and adopted and raised by a poor, elderly couple from another remote village, Ti Moune always felt she didn't belong, though believing the gods saved her for a reason. Unknown to her, Ti Moune became the centerpiece of a debate between the gods of water, earth, love and death: can the power of love conquer the fear of death? Set again a backdrop of class differences, Ti Moune's story unfolds. Through rousing and upbeat songs, poignant ballads and soaring melodies, the audience sees Ti Moune's mythic journey to find herself and how her decision have a profound impact on her and the future of her island with its divisive class structure. The musical brings together Division faculty members Crosby (director); Dr. Luanne Crosby (music director), associate professor of voice and chorus; Chase Angier (choreographer), assistant professor of dance; and Marketa Fantova (scenic designer), assistant professor of theater design, in this collaborative effort. Other members of the team include Laurel Buckwalter (pianist/conductor), technical specialist in music; recent AU theater graduate Carlos Bido (lighting designer); and senior Elizabeth Hart (costume design). The production features a cast of 21 students of many nationalities and cultures, two children and a live instrumental ensemble.