

## University production of ♡Widows♡ selected for presentation at Kennedy Festival

1/14/10

Alfred University's production of "Widows" was selected for performance at the Region 2 Festival of Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) 2010 hosted by Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Jan. 12-16. AU's production, which played to local audiences on campus in mid-November 2009, is scheduled for two performances in the Waller Theatre, a 240-seat proscenium house, on Saturday, Jan. 16, at 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. "Widows" was selected from among entries from Region 2, which includes colleges and universities from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. "This is tremendous news and quite an accomplishment for our Theater Department," which has had three productions invited to the Festival in the last five years and four in the last 10, said Dr. Stephen Crosby, professor of theater who is the production's director. "My guess is that this accomplishment has been achieved by very few schools of our size anywhere in the country," he added. Other members of the AU "Widows" production team include Marketa Fantova, assistant professor of theater design; Zachary D. Hamm, technical director in Performing Arts; Zach Grosser, a junior art & design major from Painted Post, providing video imagery; and costume designer Sophie Schneider, a senior fine arts major from Cooperstown. "Widows," by Ariel Dorfman, is a smoldering political allegory that dramatizes, in a semi-mythic way, the conflict that arises out of ruthless tactics used by oppressive governments in their attempts to stifle dissent and fundamental human rights. Set in a small, war-torn South American village entirely peopled by women and children due to the "forced disappearances" of their men, "Widows" illustrates how social change can begin with one individual who refuses to abandon her quest for justice, but not without a price. Struggle, pain and tragedy go hand-in-hand with civil disobedience, but ultimately, the voice of the people cannot be ignored. An Equity actor, director, and writer, Crosby has worked professionally in New York, Los Angeles, and in regional theaters. In the last few years he has returned to the stage as an actor, playing the role of Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol," and performing and touring Alaska with the Fairbanks Shakespeare Festival. He holds a master of fine arts degree in directing from Florida State University. Fantova has a master of fine arts degree in scene design from Wayne State University, Detroit. Hamm has a master of fine arts degree in technical theater production from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The cast consists of 20 AU students and an Alfred-Almond student, Sawyer McFadden, playing Alexis, the boy. The Alfred University players are: Kristen Ruisch, a senior political science and communications dual major from Lebanon, PA, as Sofia; Melanie Baker, a junior theater and English dual major from Greenwich, CT, as Alexandra; Anna Kowalczyk, a junior theater major from Scarsdale, Yanina; Keriann Bellamy, a freshman academic exploration student from Olean, Fidelia; Sanders Sikorski-Schneider, a sophomore fine arts and English dual major, who will play Alonso and The Doctor; Also, Ramona Kingsley, a junior theater major from Wellsville; Hope Barnum, a sophomore academic exploration student from Fairport; Emily Dowd, a junior theater and psychology dual major from Arcata, CA; Haley Kosup-Kennedy, a freshman academic exploration student from Sheboygan, WI; Katie Barlow, a junior theater major from Binghamton; and Kara Maillie, a freshman academic exploration student from Honeoye Falls, who will all play Women of the Valley. Kosup-Kennedy will also play Beatrice. Also, Andrea Castro, a freshman academic exploration student from Brooklyn will play Cecilia Sanjines; Tyler Cummins, a junior English and theater dual major from Kennebunk, Maine, will play Philip and Father Gabriel; Justin Pietropaolo, a junior English major from Goshen will play The Captain; John Hamolsky, a junior theater major from Rindge, NH, will play The Lieutenant; Javier Pritchard, a junior academic exploration student from Wyandanch will play Emmanuel; Jon Kane, a freshman academic exploration student from Brandon, VT will play Brother and a soldier; Wayne Cadet, a freshman academic exploration student from Springfield Gardens will play a soldier; Martin Wong, a freshman business administration student from Hong Kong, will play a soldier; and Humberto Bonilla, a freshman theater major from Brooklyn, will play The Narrator. Begun in 1969 by Roger L. Stevens, the Kennedy Center's founding chairman, the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival is a national theater program involving 18,000 students from colleges and universities nationwide which has served as a catalyst in improving the quality of college theater in the United States. The KCACTF has grown into a network of more than 600 academic institutions throughout the country, where theater departments and student artists showcase their work and receive outside assessment by KCACTF respondents. Through state, regional, and national festivals, KCACTF participants celebrate the creative process, see one another's work, and share experiences and insights within the community of theater artists.