

Student production invited to prestigious theater festival

12/20/00

Alfred University's student production of "Sylvia," a comedy by A.R. Gurney, will be traveling to Pittsburgh for a Jan. 6, 2001, performance at the American College Theater Festival (ACTF) at Carnegie Mellon University. "Sylvia" is the first AU production to be invited to the prestigious regional festival, said Director Becky Prophet, professor of theater. "This is a hard-earned artistic opportunity that we have been offered, owing to a combination of good luck and a history of excellent work in theater in the past and present." Prophet credited AU Dean William Hall, Provost Susan Strong, the Performing Arts Division, Gene Bernstein, chair of the University's Board of Trustees, and his wife Pamela Bernstein for the support that will allow 24 students, three faculty members, and an entire production to hit the road. "Sylvia" is a comic romp through the lives of a middle-aged New York City couple and the stray dog that bounces into their marriage. Greg (played by senior Joe Miller from Sutton, MA) and Kate (junior Laura Randall of Rochester) have just moved back into the city after raising their children in the suburbs. Kate is looking forward to a blossoming career of teaching, while Greg is struggling with the future of his career in stocks. The title character, Sylvia (Danielle DiPillo, a junior from Warren, NY), bounds into Greg's life as he sits on a park bench. Man and dog fall in love. Greg takes Sylvia back to the apartment and to Kate, unwilling to resume the role of mother even to a dog. Three other characters, all played by senior Clinton Powell of Hornell, round out the cast: a macho dog owner, a college friend of Kate's, and a marriage counselor whose gender is chosen by his or her clients. The cast and crew will mount a dress rehearsal at Alfred University Jan. 2, 2001, the night before they leave for Pittsburgh; time and place will be announced. The actors will return early from Christmas break to continue rehearsing, and the crew will return to campus Dec. 31. Working on rehearsals, scenery, lighting, design, stage management, and costumes are the student cast and crew, with direction and help from Michael Dempsey, technical director for the production and associate professor of scenery and lighting; Debra MacCrea, costumer for the Performing Arts Division; and Steve Crosby, Division chair and professor of theater. Listed on the playbill for the festival, along with Prophet as director, will be Earl T. Stephens, scenery designer; Harold F. Preston III, lighting designer; and Jason L. Shattuck, costume designer, all students; the cast listed above; and other members of the production staff, as follows: Jack D. McDowell, stage manager; Jennifer Havey, assistant stage manager; Emily Tucker, assistant director; Kadie Midlam, assistant to costume designer; Lauren Tannenbaum, master electrician; Kristin Grillo, assistant electrician; Stephen Crosby, sound load-in; Harold F. Preston, electrics load-in; Earl T. Stephens, scenery running crew head, Kate Reilly, light board operator; Kit Paulson, sound board operator; Joshua First and Kristin Grillo, costume and makeup run; Sarah Thomas, props; Sarah Haggett, Julia Shapiro, and Sarah Thomas, run crew; and Jenn Randall, Division secretary, programs.***