

Performing Arts presents Revolution-era comedy 'The Contrast'

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How are honesty and integrity sustained in this age of extravagance and greed? Where does patriotism belong in our discussion of truth and values in a national election year? What practices of democracy and egalitarianism are possible in the context of a rush for self-gratification that makes a joke of self sacrifice? "The Contrast," opening at Alfred University on Wednesday, Nov. 12, engages these questions. A student production of the American Revolution-era comedy, will run through Saturday, Nov. 15 at 8 p.m. in the C.D. Smith III Theatre, Miller Performing Arts Center on the Alfred University campus. General admission tickets are \$5. AU student admission is \$1. Area students will pay \$3. Reservations are recommended and may be made by calling 607.871.2828 or by e-mailing performs@alfred.edu. The production is sponsored by the Division of Performing Arts with the support of the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences. "The Contrast" is a comedy of manners which compares the materialism, greed, snobbery, and affectations of English pretenders with the genuine and original American ideas of liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. The play was written by Royall Tyler and was first performed in 1787, making it older than the Constitution of the United States and reputedly the first play written by an American that was performed by professional actors. Directed by Becky Prophet, professor of theater, "The Contrast" is acted and designed by an array of student actors and student and faculty designers. Set in its own late 18th century time frame, the costumes for "The Contrast" are designed by Jamie Walsh, a junior theater major from Cape Elizabeth, Maine. The scenery is designed by Reesa Martin, a junior art and design major from Morrisville. Stage managing this play of five acts in 10 scenes is Michelle Courter, a junior geology major from Centereach, NY, assisted by Zhenia Bemko, a freshman political science major from Cranford, NJ. Marketa Fantova, assistant professor of theater, is the faculty design adviser and lighting designer. Zachary Hamm, AU technical director, and Debra MacCrea, AU costume shop manager, are providing their expert services to the production. The role of the heroic Colonel Manly is played by sophomore Jonathan Hamolsky from Rindge, NH, in high contrast to the rake Dimple, played by Stephen Patterson, a sophomore from Hornell. Letitia, a wealthy young woman is created by senior Amanda Holland of Lakewood, Ohio, while the companion Charlotte is created by Melanie Baker, sophomore from Greenwich, CN. The good Maria, unhappily engaged to the devious Dimple, is portrayed by sophomore Emily Dowd of Arcata, CA, while her father, the merchant Van Rough, is created by Fernando Bolles a first-year student from Brooklyn. Anna Kowalczyk a sophomore from Scarsdale plays Jenny, companion of Maria. Contrasts in comic characters emerge between Jessamy, Dimple's servant, played by sophomore Justin Pietropaolo of Goshen, NY, and Jonathan, Manly's companion, portrayed by first-year student Nicholas Jimenez of Montville, Maine. Katie Barlow, a sophomore from Binghamton and Hope Barnum, a first-year student from Fairport round out the cast as Netty and Mandy, two young Americans waiting on New York's wealthy. Prophet received a bachelor of arts degree in English from Alfred University and continued her education at the University of Michigan where she received both master's and doctoral degrees. She has spent nearly three decades teaching and working in theater. Before her return to Alfred, she acted, directed, and taught in Massachusetts, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Atlanta.