

Performing Arts to stage human rights production, ♡Widows♡

11/10/09

Alfred University Performing Arts Division presents "Widows," co-written by Ariel Dorfman and Pulitzer-prize-winner Tony Kushner, Wednesday through Saturday, Nov. 18-21, in the CD Smith III Theatre, Miller Performing Arts Center. Show times are at 8 p.m. General admission is \$5, student admission is \$3, and AU student admission with ID is \$1. For tickets and reservations, please visit the Performing Arts Box Office by e-mail performs@alfred.edu, going to the Web Box Office at <http://las.alfred.edu/per...>, or calling 607.871.2828. Directed by Stephen Crosby, professor of theater, "Widows" is set in a small Chilean town, gripped by oppression and absent of men due to a forcible war draft or abduction by government for political reasons, leaving the town completely populated by women and children who await their return. 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. This smoldering political allegory dramatizes the consequences of human rights abuses in Chile during the ruthless regime of Dictator Augusto Pinochet. Although the play's setting is in Chile, the strong political message applies to the countries around the world where severe human rights abuses are an ongoing way of life. "Widows" explores diseased societies where conflict between the few in the ruling classes who control land, money, and the military and the many who are oppressed, driven finally to resistance at the risk of death in demand for fundamental human rights. Civil disobedience, activism, struggle, community, and the willpower to maintain free speech, despite their circumstances, are all themes in this play. Playwright Dorfman contends there is an innocence, a very dangerous innocence about Americans." This play "is an attempt to jar audiences into thinking about their own history, their own amnesia about history, their incapacity to see what is happening outside their borders, almost the incapacity to understand evil". 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.