

AU's 'American Doll' to grace regional festival stage in Pittsburgh

12/06/07

Alfred University's production of "American Doll" has been selected for performance at the Region 2 Festival of Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival (KC/ACTF) in Pittsburgh. In addition, Laura Jantzi, costume designer, a junior history and theater major from Buffalo, has been awarded a certificate of merit for creating the cast costumes dating from 1959 to the present for the three male and 12 female actors portraying fashion "dolls." The "for adults only" production investigates the essence of dollhood and dollism. Based on poems by Denise Duhamel, "American Doll" was adapted for stage by Becky Prophet, professor of theater at Alfred University, who also directs this production. The play will be remounted, rehearsed, and then toured to Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, the Region 2 festival site, for performance between Jan. 3 and Jan. 6, 2008. Prophet will restage "American Doll" for the larger proscenium theater. Chosen as one out of six productions for the festival, "American Doll" was one of 200 plays entered in KC/ACTF Region 2 this year. "This is a great honor for the entire Division of Performing Arts and Alfred University," said Prophet. "It is a great opportunity for the faculty and students in theater to perform before a large audience of professional and college programs from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; Delaware, Maryland, and Washington, DC." As in the campus production, scenery will be designed by Marketa Fantova, assistant professor of theater design, who will also do lighting. Thomas Rein, a sophomore ceramic engineering major from Amherst, NY, designed lighting in the original play this fall. "American Doll" will be stage managed by April Nell from Box Elder, SD. Sara Egan from Hanson, MA, and Christina Hogan from Chicago assisted her on campus. In the festival production, Zach Hamm, technical director in the AU Performing Arts division, will serve as the production manager and road manager. Duhamel's poems about fashion dolls, collected and published in 1997 under the title of "Kinky," provide the attitudes and the text for an examination of the toys we give our children and the industry that thrives through our willingness to pursue an eternal line of new adventures and accompanying wardrobes, all the while missing the reality of the true experiences available to us. The students who made the ensemble piece so effective include "fashion dolls" Kari Aldrich, a sophomore from Franklin, MA; Melanie Baker, a first-year student from Greenwich, CT; Zhenia Bemko, a first-year student from Cranford, NJ; Tabatha Bettin, a sophomore from Wellsville; Cortney Bryant, a sophomore from Lynden, WA; Caitlin Casey, a junior from Edina, MN; Amy DeNisco, a sophomore from Fairfield, CT; Caitlin Gallagher, a junior from Carlisle, PA; Amanda Holland, a junior from Lakewood, Ohio; Logan Kjep, a senior from Sherman, CT; Kate Naron, a junior from Oswego; Justin Pietropaolo from Goshen, NY; Rachel Rutledge, a first-year student from Parsippany, NJ; Sanders Sikorski-Schneider from Coopersburg, PA; and YiMeng Zhu, a sophomore from Santa Fe, NM. Danielle Bowie, a junior psychology major from Minneapolis; Margo James, a freshman art and design major from Littlestown, PA; and Meryl Stone, a senior theater major from Hebron, CT, worked on costumes and makeup for the original production.