FAIRBANKS
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by Gary Black

Theatre UAF tackles LGBT issues with the play “Stop Kiss”

One minute, Callie and Sara are walking down the street, getting to know one another, and stopping to share their ýrst kiss. The next, a savage attack changes the course of their burgeoning relationship, leading them to examine their lives, friends and families, and each other.

That is the theme throughout “Stop Kiss,” the fall mainstage production by Theatre UAF and directed by professor Carrie Baker, who’s tackled socially conscious topics before such as income inequality in “Speech & Debate” in 2013 and the death of gay college student Matthew Shephard in ñThe Laramie Projectò in 2008. ñStop Kiss,ò written by Diana Son and ýrst premiering in 1998, is Bakerôs sixth Theatre UAF production as director way.ò

The production stars senior theater students Katrina Kuharich and Sierra Trinchet in the roles of Callie and Sara, respectively. Both are using the play as their thesis projects. That means the two actors are delving into the psyche and mechanisms of the playwright, the play and their characters.

“The most interesting thing for me is actually the writing of the play,” Kuharich said. ñShe creates these two tracks of the story — the A track of Sara and Callie falling in love and the B track of the attack and the aftermath. My take is it’s a story about not only two people ýnding their relationship but all of the things that come into creating a relationship. Itôs been a huge process trying to go back and forth between these two tracks. Itôs incredibly challenging, which makes it a great thesis role.ò

The play is told in a nonlinear format, meaning it jumps around chronologically, hence the reference to two ñtracksò in the production.

“That’s also the beauty of watching the show as an audience,” Kuharich said. ñYouôre creating the story and putting it together for yourself since you’re not seeing it in a linear timeline. The nonlinear storytelling is multipurpose. Itôs used to push actors and used to tell the story of the couple.ò

Despite the underlying story — two women who are attacked for being gay — the production consists of a well-written play with a funny and tender side as well, Trinchet said.

ñItôs beautiful,ò she said. ñIt looks good, it sounds good and I love the story. Itôs a story lots of people can connect with.ò

The role of Sara is one Trinchet called the most technically difýcult role she’s tackled to date because of the quick scene changes and timing on stage because of the nonlinear format. The issues addressed in the play are also ones Trinchet said she has no problem standing up for.

Kade Mendelowitz, Theatre UAF Photo

Cast
Nate Cole — Detective Cole
Corey Dirutigliano — George
Cynthia Jones ð Mrs. Winsley/Nurse
Katrina Kuharich — Callie
Mallory Smyth — Peter
Sierra Trinchet — Sara
Crew
Carrie Baker — director
Kade Mendelowitz — scenic and lighting designer
Stephanie Sandberg — costume designer
Chris John George — sound designer
Colby Freel — stage manager
Sam Thompson — assistant director