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"Of Mice and Men" opens in February

Summary: The UMM theatre discipline offers an evening of friendship, broken dreams and the exploration of how to truly love another human being during performances of John Steinbeck's classic "Of Mice and Men" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Feb. 26-28, and at 2 p.m. Saturday.

(January 26, 2009)-*"The best laid plans of mice and men go oft awry."* – Robert Burns, "To a Mouse"

UMM Theatre Publicity Office -- Keeping in line with the 2008-09 "Season of Classics" theme, Director and UMM Assistant Professor of Theatre Siobhan Bremer is reviving John Steinbeck's Depression-era classic, "Of Mice and Men." This February, the UMM theatre discipline invites you to an evening of friendship, broken dreams and the exploration of how to truly love another human being. Performances will take place Thursday-Saturday, Feb. 26-28, at 7:30 p.m. and at 2 p.m. Saturday, all performances in the Black Box Theatre.

"Of Mice and Men" may be more relevant to today's world than one would like to admit as the economy develops more parallels each day with the 1930s Depression. Within this heart-wrenching story about men with life dreams that are destined for failure, several of the most compassionate, tragic and lonely plotlines in literature are found. Such a breathtakingly touching example of humanity even under 'hard times' is something to which nearly any human being can relate.

The set, a realistic reflection of those ragged times, will be designed by Technical Director Jason Rasinowich. The ranch setting will leave audience members feeling as though they were peeking in on an intimate moment, rather than viewing a theatrical production. Costumes are designed by theatre arts major Marco Avila and will also follow a realistic approach.

"During the Depression the average monthly salary was 50 dollars," Bremer stated, "A good pair of boots would set you back three dollars. Those prices may not seem like much to us today, but back then it was more than many could afford. The lens of time tends to distort things. People today are struggling in many of the same ways, only the superficial details have changed."

In today's fast-paced culture, it sometimes is easy to forget that we are not alone, that we have our friends to catch us when we fall. This is the tale of two migrant workers, George Milton, (played by Peter Ray) and Lennie Small, (played by John Eisenrich) and the unconditional bond that ties their friendship. George is a fairly intelligent ranch hand who travels with and cares for Lennie. Lennie is a tall, overwhelmingly powerful man with a slow mind and failing memory.

"Besides emphasizing the desperate times of the 1930s," Bremer also wants to "focus on the friendship between these two men. Lennie is a flawed but innocent figure who is sustained by his only friend George, who ultimately has to make a terrible choice."

Ticket prices are \$8 for general admission and \$5 for UMM students and senior citizens. Special group discounts are

available for groups of 10 or more who reserve in advance. For more information and advanced tickets sales, contact the theatre box office at (320) 589-6249, or thrupub@morris.umn.edu.

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