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Meiningens' production, "The Embryos" brings new plays to life

Summary:

(April 18, 2005)-“The Embryos” is a collection of short plays written by University of Minnesota, Morris student Alyssa Herzog (Montgomery), directed by UMM student Victoria Pyan (St. Paul), and produced by Meiningens Student Theater at UMM.

Performances for “The Embryos,” which showcases the culmination of the new play development process and the collaboration between a director and playwright, will be at 7:30 p.m. April 30 in the Black Box Theatre, Humanities Fine Arts and also at 7:30 p.m. May 4 in Edson Auditorium, Student Center, both on the Morris campus. A post-show discussion with the cast and crew will occur after each performance. The May 4 performance and discussion will be followed by Meiningens’ Evening of Fun Arts, comprised of entertaining scenes and songs performed by UMM students.

“The Embryos” production contains four plays, all of which UMM sophomore Alyssa Herzog wrote earlier this year. Since rehearsals began in early March, each of the plays has undergone a vigorous revision process. This production grew out of a “desire to see more theater in Morris,” according to director Victoria Pyan. She stated that she has “enjoyed working on this project, because it doesn’t feel like work.” Herzog expressed a similar sentiment when she said that this process was like “an intellectual and productive hanging-out session with your friends.” Herzog thanks the cast and Pyan for their “open honesty and insightfulness” that enabled her to move her plays “from the page to reality.”

The first play of the evening, “RUSH Home,” redefines the term “brother” for Samuel, a young man struggling to overcome the social stigmas associated with his brother’s autism. The cast of “RUSH Home” includes Alex Carlson (Cottage Grove) as Samuel, Todd Janssen (Hampton, IA) as Anton, and Megan Losure (Apple Valley) as Mother. The next play, “informational osmosis,” explores the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to trust the knowledge that we receive. Paul Carlson (Plymouth) and Mina Ounchith (Warroad) portray Bill and William, respectively. “Little Woman” then takes the stage, a story that displays the conflict of gender and creation. Sara Herman (Vadnais Heights) plays Little Woman opposite Paul Carlson as Big Boy. “The Embryos” will conclude with a play entitled “Snow Angels,” previously premiered at the Undergraduate Research Symposium, held April 15 at UMM. This play focuses on cycles of behavior between a mother and daughter, namely that of pregnancy and abortion. The cast of “Snow Angels” includes Maggie Alexander as Lauren, the mother Asha Agar (Minneapolis) as Emily, the daughter and Megan Wroblewski (Circle Pines) as Mom.

In addition to the actors, many people helped behind the scenes to bring this production to its feet. Stage managing the production is Jane Wallace. Designers for the show include Amanda Holter (sound), Alisha Saulnier (props), and Lydea Aurentz (lights). Assistant Theatre Professor Siobhan Bremer also acted as faculty adviser for the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Donations will be accepted at the door for Tsunami Relief. For more information, email Victoria Pyan at

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