

‘Maggy’ At The Mount

Play Gets U.S. Debut At MMC

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Life can bring people together. But it can also pull them apart.

Those themes are explored during the course of five years in the lives of the characters in the Mount Marty College Theatre Department’s spring production, “Remember, Maggie?” The play will run from Thursday through Saturday, March 1-3.

The story revolves around the complex relationship between two 40-something sisters. One is a housewife, while the other is an alcoholic actress. Already in turmoil, the relationship between the sisters is complicated by the progression of their mother’s Alzheimer’s disease.

“It’s about these sisters who are disconnected, and there are a lot of reasons for the disconnect,” said director Andy Henrickson, an associate professor of speech and theatre at the college. “The past is a disconnect. The present is a disconnect. Mom is a piece of that because there is a conflict between the alcoholic daughter and mom.”

“Remember, Maggie?” was written by the mother/son duo of Carol Anne Murray and Matt Murray. Carol Anne first wrote the play more than 20 years ago as a one-act production. However, she re-worked it with the help of her son into a two-act play for the 2011 Toronto Fringe Festival. This will mark the first time the play has been performed in the United States.

“We want to bring new works to the college, whether it’s readings or productions,” Henrickson said. “It’s a piece of what we want to do in the department.”

Although they were invited, the playwrights will not be able to attend a performance, and Henrickson said he has had no other contact with them.

“I suppose in some way that’s a missed opportunity,” he stated. “There may be some questions I have that I could have asked. At the same time, if there are questions, it’s up to us to answer them.”

“Remember, Maggie?” consists of a string of short scenes and has a total running time of about 90 minutes.

The production is a big departure from Mount Marty’s fall musical extravaganza, “Once Upon a Mattress.” It’s in part a practical matter — much of the department’s budget was used to make the fall production the most elaborate in Henrickson’s 14 years at the college.

However, the more intimate “Remember, Maggie?” offers students an opportunity to dig into meatier parts involving women that are at least twice their age, Henrickson said.

“It’s very challenging in that way for young actors,” he stated. “What drew me to this piece is, it is dramatic, yes, but it’s also a total mix. There is comedy, drama. It has it all. It’s just life.”

Henrickson said it is inevitable that audience members will relate to one of the four female characters.

“It will be interesting to see who you relate with,” he said. “People won’t be removed from it. They are going to be tied into one of the characters. In that way, it’s very accessible.”

One thing Henrickson is very upfront about is that the play is rated PG-13 for mature language and themes.

“I don’t want anybody coming in not knowing there is going to be language,” he said. “The purpose is not to offend and shock people. But to scrub the language would lose who that character is. She doesn’t think twice about it.”

The cast includes Alyssa Duncan, Sioux City, Iowa, as Maggy; Sally Schwedhelm, Hoskins, Neb., as her sister, Kate; Morgan Hanzlik, Spearfish, as their mother, Niamh; and Julia Schrier, Sioux Falls, as the neighbor, Irene.

Besides the directing of Henrickson, scenic design is done by student Nicholas C. Rokahr, Yankton; lighting design is done by Stephen English, instructor of Theatre; and costume design is done

by student Samantha Tobey, Norfolk, Neb.

Each performance begins at 7:30 p.m. each night in the newly-renovated Marian Auditorium on the Mount Marty College campus.

Tickets may be reserved by calling the Theatre Box Office at (605) 668-1234, Monday through Friday between noon and 5 p.m.



LEFT: Maggy (played by Alyssa Duncan, left) argues with her sister Kate (Sally Schwedhelm) during a scene from Mount Marty Theatre’s production of “Remember, Maggie?” MMC will give the American premiere of this Canadian play next weekend at Marian Auditorium. RIGHT: Irene (Julia Schrier) confides in Maggy about dreams of stardom and hopes for the future.

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