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Play "Kiss Me Kate" is Challenging Production for Department

ROCK HILL, S.C. - The Department of Theatre and Dance is pulling out all the stops to celebrate theatre's 50th anniversary at Winthrop with the musical "Kiss Me Kate," running Feb. 16-19. To commemorate 50 years of productions, the department knew it wanted to do something special and challenging, and "Kiss Me Kate" fit the bill.

"Kiss Me Kate" is based on a book by Sam and Bella Spewack, with Broadway composer Cole Porter providing music and lyrics. A fast-paced 'play within a play,' the musical tells the story of two feuding couples performing Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew." Romance, gambling, and gangsters combine to produce a crazy mix of onstage drama and backstage comedy. The play was first presented at Winthrop in 1963 when it was directed by Chris Reynolds.

Danelle Smith, assistant professor of theatre and the musical's director, explained one of the production's challenges.

"This is a very difficult show, musically speaking. It's all syncopated, it's off-the-beat and really jazzy," Smith said. "We are very excited that we have students from theatre, dance and music represented in the cast. They have worked diligently to learn and grow in all three disciplines."

The Department of Theatre and Dance made the decision to double-cast the role of Kate, the female lead, because of its demanding nature. Junior Maggie Monahan of Goshen, Conn., and sophomore Anna Moore of Lake City, S.C., were chosen to share the role of Kate.

Monahan, a theatre major with a concentration in performance, is enjoying the experience. "I love having a double-cast. It gives you someone to balance off of...someone who understands," Monahan said.

The cast is practicing almost daily, preparing for their big night. "Kiss Me Kate" will be performed Feb. 16-19 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. in Johnson Theatre. Tickets are $10 for general admission and $5 for students with ID.

For more information, contact the department at 803/323-2287.

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