Theatre Department Explores Tough Political Issues in "Angels"

This weekend is your last opportunity to see the 20th-century faculty directed play, "Angels in America" by Tony Kushner. The play opened last weekend on Oct. 15, and will continue to play through Oct. 22, and will conclude with a special staged reading on Oct. 21 at 2:00 p.m., and tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the Norton Clapp Theatre. The Thursday performance of the play on Oct. 20, was followed by a Zoom Q&A, as well as brief performances with all proceeds going to the foundation.

Kushner's Angel's at the Lane Theatre was directed by Tony Kushner and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1993, as well as the Tony Award for Best Drama, along with various other honors. It was recently adapted into an HBO mini-series that gained critical acclaim for its depiction of gay life. Throughout its run, "Angels" has been praised as a provocative look into the world of two couples and those surrounding them. It is set in New York in the 1980s and deals with a political drama centering on the atmosphere of the political and the Reagan Era. The play explores the range from healthcare, religion, politics, and AIDS, and are still relevant today, with the issues apart from the average love story.

The play was chosen last spring due to its relevance to the current issues in society, including the production on, as well as this current American issue.

"We are currently in a world where we are seeing the consequences of an election," said director Jeff Frechel. "We're feeling an election that will shape our future. We're standing on the spectrum of political views, and no matter where you stand, your values are being questioned and potentially transformed by the upcoming election. We are all feeling the same fear, anger, sadness, and joy that this play is based on.

Director Jeff Frechel leads a team of eight actors as well as a large creative team in the approximately three-hour production. The characters range from a lawyer based on real-life lawyer Roy Cohen, to an agoraphobic and create a powerful look into the beginning of the AIDS crisis that many of us are too young to remember in great detail.

Campus interest in "Angels" will not end after the close of the production this weekend, as readings and a showing of "Angels in America Part II: Perestroika" are planned for the coming weeks as well. To keep up to date on upcoming events or to learn more about the play and events, visit the production website at library.ups.edu/research/angelsinamerica/index.htm.

** Quotations from are interviews conducted by Tony Corcoran, Theatre Arts Department Public Relations and Outreach Coordinator.

"Kushner provides wonderful opportunities for actors to explore the power of language, thought and feeling. I'm excited to work on these challenges with a tremendously talented group of students, both from and behind the scenes. And finally, to see what happens when we add the most important element of all: an audience."

—Geoff Frechel

"The play is about how people deal with crisis and how things don't go the way we want. It's about coming to terms with living and dying. Living with yourself as other people die."

—Ryan Tanney

"I want them to leave with a sense of hope. To acknowledge that there are these fears out there, but that we can take action and the final line of the play is so hopeful: "The great work begins.""

—Ellie McKay

"I want them to leave with an overwhelming sense of re-birth. A new sense of how the world around them is changed because this play represents the reality of how things are in the world. To realize the world the play is showing and for that to change them."

—agaris Guadian