

THE STANFORD DAILY

BREAKING NEWS FROM THE FARM SINCE 1892

[NEWS](#)[SPORTS](#)[OPINIONS](#)[INTERMISSION](#)[MEDIA](#)[RAGS TO ROSES](#)

SATURDAY JULY 20, 2013

SEARCH

‘Spring Awakening’ shakes up Stanford theater

By [Katharine Schwab](#) April 12, 2013

Tweet

Like

107

Ram’s Head presents “**Spring Awakening**,” a rebellious rock musical that packs an emotional punch. Based on the 1891 play, “Spring Awakening” follows young adolescents as they struggle to reconcile their emerging sexuality within the contexts of authoritarian parental and academic pressure in a small German town. The musical, in which the play’s monologues and intellectual discourses are transformed into emotionally-driven rock numbers and ballads, follows Wendla, Melchior and Moritz, three youths as they begin the sexual-awakening transition from childhood to adulthood.



MADELINE SIDES/The Stanford Daily

The Broadway show won eight Tonys, and licensing rights were recently released. Director Brendon Martin '13, who has spent two years thinking about and working on the production, believes that its thematic content will resonate deeply with a college audience.

“We’re interested in using this as a way to create conversation about themes that the play brings up, not just something to absorb as entertainment,” Martin said. “I think the show gives something to everyone across the board.”

“It’s about youth culture and rebellion,” he added. “It’s about sexual awakening. It’s about academic pressure. It’s about a lot of things that really resonate on a college campus. It’s an f-you to the establishment, in a way. It’s about people learning their way in the world.”

“Spring Awakening,” which discusses issues such as sexual abuse, suicide and abortion, has partnered with the Sexual Health Peer Resource Center (SHPRC), the Bridge Peer Counseling Center and the Bay Area Youth Summit, a local LGBT organization, all of which will have tables set up during intermission.

Artistically, Martin’s vision for this production accommodates the show’s recent Broadway run by recognizing that “Spring Awakening” at Stanford is a different beast entirely.


While the original occurs in a small, intimate space (audience members even sit on stage), Memorial Auditorium makes this kind of intimacy impossible. The show’s striking and memorable set design by

Annie Dauber ‘13 embraces a different aesthetic. The set is based on an abandoned church, complete with stained-glass rose window. The church represents the establishment, and the set’s grandeur and openness become oppressive and daunting, paralleling the thematic oppression of the characters. The actors move pew-like wooden benches to create each scene, revealing their characters’ attempts to manipulate and appropriate an institutional space for their own expression.


“Spring Awakening” is also reimagined through its inventive choreography, meant to cater to the larger space and the expanded cast. Jamie Yuen-Shore ‘13 uses precise movement to effectively enhance the music’s emotive power and supplement character development. Stars Arianna Vogel ‘14, graduate student Buddy Gardineer and James Seifert ‘15 lead an extraordinarily talented cast, skillfully navigating between raw, emotionally heavy scenes and scenes of irreverence and rebellion.

This is a production that all Stanford students should see. Beyond being musically and emotionally rich and visually stunning, “Spring Awakening” is intimately relevant to the pressures we face as young adults beginning to navigate the world. And if you don’t go for the German teenage angst, go for the sex. In the words of producer Brandon Powell ‘14, “People who like musicals love this show, and people who don’t like musicals love this show. It’s not a standard musical: there’s a rock band and they say ‘fuck’ and they sing ‘blah’ and they have sex on stage.”


OTHER ARTICLES



Stanford Summer Theater gears up for 15th season



The Daily 2013 Draw Guide



School of Education changes name