

Southeastern brings on romantic crime thriller “Big Love”

Rachel Folse, Staff Reporter November 8, 2021

Southeastern’s theatre department will premiere the murder mystery “Big Love” on Nov. 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m.

The play will take place in the Strawberry Stadium Parking Garage. The Vonnie Borden Theatre, where shows are normally held, was damaged due to Hurricane Ida.

Dr. Anne-Liese Fox, theatre instructor and director of “Big Love,” talked about how and why this venue was chosen.

“It was Steve Schepker’s first choice, who has been working for Southeastern as our production manager and scenic designer for over thirty years. With the garage, we already have a natural ‘raked’ seating and it is an excellent fit for the larger-than-life sequences of Charles Mee’s play such as smashing of china, a cake fight, wrestling matches and a vehicle,” she said.

The play is based on what is believed to be the oldest extant text of theatre on the planet, Aeschylus’ “The Suppliants.” It is a story of four brides fleeing the unwanted betrothal to their cousins and arriving in Italy to seek refuge. Ultimately, they are forced to marry their cousins but the sisters carry out the decision to murder their husbands on their wedding night.

Fox said, “The play was written 20 years ago, but still verges with wide swings of hilarity as well explores the darker themes of domination, oppression and gender role expectations. I explored in my research that the Ancient Greeks had eight words for “love” and started looking at the characters through the lens of how each operated with different concepts of love following those Greek words.”

Shelby Grantham, a junior middle school education major who plays the character Lydia, talked about what she did to prepare for her role.

She said, “When preparing, I mainly just took a lot of time to dig into the script. It was the only thing I could do during our month off. Constantly rereading it allowed me to easily put myself in her shoes and think about it from her point of view.”

Rayna Myers, a freshman chemistry major, also discussed her character in the play.

Myers said, “I am playing Bella. She is an old Italian woman and the matriarch of the show. She has so much love in her heart and is the kind of person that would give you the shirt off her back.”

She mentioned the dramatic aspects of the play as well.

“In approaching this role, I knew the way I moved would be a big key to Bella’s creation. I knew she would have to be a very visual and larger-than-life character. Outside, I have to double that to make it readable to the audience and we have to focus our voices upstage a lot more in order for them to travel,” she added.

Fox encourages everyone to come out and see the show.

“This is a show for everyone. It has rants of frustration and murder, it features longing for love- these are themes that everybody can identify with,” she said.

“Big Love” will be shown for two nights only. Admission is free, but seats are limited. Get there early to make sure you get a seat.