



Alton Little Theater Presents Children of a Lesser God

October 11 2011 2:02 PM

Alton Little Theater will produced the compelling drama, CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD by Mark Medoff November 11th through 20th. The play, which won the 1980 Tony Award for Best Play had historical significance because it was the first Broadway Production featuring a deaf actress in a leading role. Today it is relevant because while deaf actors and actresses have gone on to more and more film and stage work, the nature of human beings is that we all struggle with embracing dissimilarities in each other. CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD is a mesmerizing love story about a speech teacher who falls for a beautiful but distant girl in a small New England School for the Deaf and the obstacles they face due to their differences. The story pivots on moments of humor and tension, passion and discovery . "The trick of telling a love story is deceptively simple", says the playwright. "You find a core of romantic energy so strong that nothing-not the events of the story or the circumstances of the characters intrudes. And incidentally, one of the lovers is deaf". Medoff's commitment to the work, which included writing the screenplay for the award-winning film starring Marlee Matlin and William Hurt, focuses on the communication breakdowns that all relationships face. The use of sign language in the production reminds the audience of the eloquence of gesture and glance and that the language of real love goes beyond mere words.

Director, Kevin Frakes, has found a talented ensemble cast of seven and he describes the experience of working with the deaf actors in the cast to be "exhilarating". Aidan Combs of Alton and Kathryn Senseman of St. Louis take on the central roles of James and Sarah. They are supported by actors taking on the roles of family, adversaries, advocates and colleagues; Jacob Gill, Pat Kulish, Julia Frazier, Casey Turner and Jeff Heil comprise the ensemble. Some cast members drive a great distance and sought out roles in a play that represents "the best of drama". All of the cast is highly invested in the successful portrayal of these iconic characters and "handling the complex emotions

of Medoff's script", says Director Frakes.

Reservations for the production are available through the Alton Little Theater Box Office Voicemail at 618-462-6562 and are now available for online purchase through the ALT website: altonlittletheater.org. All nine performances will be signed by students from Southwestern Illinois College who are seeking certification. The cast has worked with signing instructors headed up by Becki Combs at least four hours every week since October 1st in addition to five nights of rehearsal. The cast's commitment and love of the production will surely enrich the lives of audience members who attend this lovely fall production at the Showplace, located at 2450 N. Henry Street in Alton. Interviews with the Director and cast can be arranged by calling 618-377-7104 or through the ALT office 618-462-3205. Groups of 20 or more receive special discounts and groups attending on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening (all evening performances at 7:30 pm) receive additional savings. Tickets for adults are \$15 and student tickets (thru college with ID are \$8).