UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

February 16, 2017
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The Price of Secrets

When secrets are exposed, can life ever be the same?

That question is at the heart of “Lydia,” the new production from UCSB’s Department of Theater and Dance, which also explores its answer. Under the direction of Irwin Appel, seven UCSB student actors come together in a charged and powerful performance. The play opens Friday, February 17th and runs through Sunday, February 26th in the Performing Arts Theater.

Set in El Paso, Texas during the Vietnam War, the work by playwright Octavio Solis explores family relationships and the impact of secrets brought to light by a stranger. Being staged in UCSB’s only black box theater lends the performance an intimacy not often felt in a larger venue.

“The ultimate goal is for the audience to absorb the atmosphere of the play and to remember the images long after they’ve left the space,” said Appel.

Coming back from the successful run of last season’s “The Death of Kings,” director Appel takes on a more in-depth and raw piece in “Lydia.” What happens when secrets are wrenchingly revealed and everything boils to the surface? This poetic and highly imaginative work is about loss, forbidden love, the pain of memory and identity, and unfulfilled hopes and dreams.

A production curated by many, “Lydia” is decidedly eclectic, bringing together the different talents and ideas of all artists involved. And with only seven actors, Appel said he and his cast were able to dig deep into the research required for such a play

to be successful.

“It is a contemporary piece and a period piece all rolled into one,” said Appel, who also is director of the BFA Acting Program at UCSB. “It’s set in the 1970s, and all of the actors have no idea about that time, so we needed to do the same amount of research for this as we would for a play from the 1800s.”

“Lydia” will play February 17 and February 21-26 at 8 p.m., with matinees February 18, 25 and 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets are available at the Theater and Dance box office, online, or by calling (805) 893-2064. Prices are $17 general admission, or $13 for UCSB students, faculty, staff, alumni, children and seniors.

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