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College's Dark Comedy Will Push Boundaries By Justyna Tomtas jtomtas@chronline.com | 0 comments

An edgy play addressing the “no man’s land” between adolescence and adulthood will soon be hitting the stage as the Centralia College Theatre Department takes it upon themselves to enlighten the audience on relevant issues.

The play, aimed toward a mature audience, attempts to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”

The dark comedy, “Speech & Debate,” focuses on three teenagers, each with a secret.

The misfits discover they are linked to a sex scandal in town and as they try to make sense of everything, their secrets are divulged and shared. As the private information comes to light, the teens find a common ground and learn to trust and depend on each other.

“I think the play deals with, in a very relevant 2014 fashion, all of the struggles that teenagers go through in trying to become adults,” Director Brian Tyrrell said.

He said the play, written by Stephen Karam, is “incredibly relevant.” The purpose of this production is not only to entertain the audience, but to start a conversation.

“Sadly it’s rare to have a piece of theater that does anything but entertain,” Tyrrell said. “The job is in part to enlighten and encourage discussion when we get an opportunity to go there, and this show certainly does that.”

The cast of four has had five weeks of practice, with only a handful of rehearsals left before the opening. Their hard work combines comedy, music and dramatic literature into a play never before performed in Centralia.

Tyrrell encourages his audience to think back to the awkward transition time to really bring the relevance home.

“I think that for those of us who are adults, I think we’ve forgotten just how tenuous it is to be a teenager who wants to be taken seriously,” he said, “and I think if we allow ourselves to go back to those perhaps very difficult days we survived and see our existence again through the eyes of these three teenagers, I think everyone will have a wonderful experience.”

The play will be the 197th production at Centralia College since Margaret Corbet directed “Polish Pebbles” in 1926. It will be one of three productions put on by the theater department, which will also perform a winter and spring production.