

UNH to Present "8"

Thursday, February 2, 2012

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Q & A with David Kaye, associate professor and



director of the production of “8”

UNH will present the play “8” on Feb. 7 and 10, 2012. The UNH production, directed by associate professor David Kaye, is based on trial transcripts from California’s 2010 court fight over Proposition 8, the initiative that outlawed same-sex marriage in the state. It has since been overturned.

“8” will be performed Tuesday, Feb. 7, at 7 p.m. in the MUB Strafford Room at UNH. Tickets are free but must be reserved through the MUB ticket office. Seating is limited. The UNH cast will perform a second reading of “8” Friday, Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m. at the historic Palace Theatre in Manchester. Tickets are \$20 and can be reserved at www.palacetheatre.org.

The play features a diverse cast made up of UNH faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The UNH reading is being presented in partnership with the Department of Theatre and Dance, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, the UNH Alliance, the Discovery Program and the student organizations Mask and Dagger and WildActs: Theatre for Social Justice, with American Foundation for Equal Rights (AFER) and Broadway Impact.

UNH Today: Why is it important for UNH produce “8”?

DK: This play simply presents a logical argument to a very emotional issue. But by doing this, it will allow our university community the opportunity to rationally and critically address a very important topic that is about to come to the New Hampshire legislative floor. This exemplifies the spirit of the academy.

UNH Today: Marriage equality is a social justice issue. What is UNH’s history of presenting other social justice issues in the theatre?

DK: In many ways, the heart of most theatre is connected to social justice because theatre deals with empathy. That is to say, seeing the world through another person’s eyes. That is certainly at the core of the play “8.”

This is actually the second time we have addressed the issue of marriage equality. The first time was about 7 years ago when we created a play called “Caught in the Middle”

which we brought to area Rotary clubs. This 10 minute play also posed a simple question- Should everyone be given equal rights when it comes to marriage, or not? Social Justice focuses on ending oppression in all its forms. Denying rights is a form of oppression. Many of our plays address such issues.

UNH Today: Why is theatre a particularly effective method of presenting this and other social justice issues?

DK: Theatre invites you to see a point of view, not through a lecture, or the silent page of a book, but through a living human being caught up in the action of the topic. It is life as art, and because it is art, it offers an effective platform for interpretation, thought and dialogue.

UNH Today: What has been challenging about producing “8”?

DK: I would say it has been mostly exciting. We are one of the first universities to mount a staged reading of the play, so a lot of eyes are on us.

UNH Today: What has surprised you about producing “8”?

DK: Just how big this project is. With the George Clooney reading in Los Angeles coming up soon, and reading about all the major theatre companies and universities that will be having performances after ours, I am amazed at how truly national this project has become.

UNH Today: Why should community members see “8”?

DK: This is what a university is all about. Come hear a provocative argument about an important issue as presented through a fascinating story about real people acted by members of our community!

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