Movie, play versions differ for ‘Amadeus’

By Beth Harig
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Brighton fine and performing arts students and faculty are hard at work preparing for "Amadeus," which begins at 8 p.m. and end of February.

The play was cast last semester before Thanksgiving. Because of the play's difficulty, some of the performers met with Dr. Suzanne Dieckmann over Christmas break.

The cast of 18 features fine arts instructor Klem as Salieri, Arts senior Dan Schuler as Mozart and Arts freshman DuBe as Constanza.

Play, movie different

Dieckman, associate professor of fine performing arts, said that structurally the movie and play are very different.

For instance, in the play the audience is the part of confessor, while a priest is the part in the movie. This enables Salieri to establish a close relationship with the audience because he talks directly to them asking for their sympathy.

Another difference between the movie and the play is that in the play the audience not actually see the opera, but instead sees the cast playing part of an opera audience.

Dieckman said she thought the opera slowed down the movie and feels play version works better. Although Schaffer wrote both the play and the movie, Dieckman said, the differences are interesting.

Assistant director Brian Kokensparger said he thinks audience comparison to the movie is inevitable, but doesn’t seem to worry him.

"Overall there is always a difference between the movie and live acting. The worlds is to see both. You just can’t beat a live performance," Kokensparger said.

"Part of appreciating the art is comparing it to other things and contrasting it so you can get more out of the performance."

Popularity will help

Dieckman said that in terms of interest, the popularity of the movie will help the production of "Amadeus" because people will be enthused about it.

According to Dieckman, the cast seems to be having fun. She stressed that the play is a group creation to which everyone contributes.

"The play is like a piece of music and everybody on stage is making music," Dieckman said. "Everybody's part of the music."

Kokensparger also mentioned how well the members of the cast work with each other. He said the cast has learned lines early and generally meet difficulties with a very professional attitude.

Several strong themes

"Amadeus" has several strong themes. Dieckman said more things will evolve during the rehearsal process.

One theme of the play is evil, and it contrasts the different types of human behavior.

Dieckman said Mozart represents the fact that human beings can work out their problems, be forgiving and show brotherhood. Salieri represents jealousy and the inability to forgive and shows how evil can control a person.

Other themes in the play include the child's need for love and how society treats its artists.

"If in any way this play helps people think about what it means to be an artist, I'd be very pleased," Dieckman said.