Two backgrounds blend well for ‘Amadeus’ lead actors

By Beth Harig
Entertainment Editor

Alam Klem and Dan Deschler are two very different people who play very different roles in Creighton’s production of “Amadeus.” But according to Deschler, a bond has formed between the two actors.

Deschler, who portrays Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, is a senior who has been in four of Creighton’s past productions and directed “The Ugly Duckling” last semester. As a pre-med student, he said, he finds drama a nice change of pace and a good outlet for creativity.

On the other hand, Klem, who plays Antonio Salieri, is a performing arts instructor with professional acting experience.

But Klem said that this has not caused any problems because, in acting, there is a job to be done and it does not matter if one is a professional.

“The whole cast has been professional,” he said. “I have been very impressed with Dan as an actor. He’d be a wonderful theater major.”

Klem said Deschler brings a tremendous amount of intelligence to the stage, is committed to his character, has a professional attitude and is constantly coming up with new ways to do things.

“It has been a challenge. He has kept me on my toes,” Klem said.

Deschler also spoke highly of Klem.

“It’s been a real pleasure,” he said. “There is an openness between us. He doesn’t treat me as a student and I don’t treat him differently because he’s a professional.”

Both Klem and Deschler said they have found their roles to be more challenging than others they have encountered in the past.

Klem said his role is different because he must constantly play to the audience as well as the other characters and switch back and forth from the younger to the older Salieri.

Other factors that make the role difficult one include the play’s structure, which offers Klem no opportunity to leave the stage, and the subject matter.

“Two and a half hours of condemning God is not an easy thing to do morally,” Klem said.

Deschler said his role as Mozart is very challenging because it encompasses so much and requires many emotional changes in a short period. The role also required historical research.

To prepare for the role, Deschler began reading biographies on Mozart over Christmas break. He said he has tried to develop how the character feels and interacts in different situations and has had many discussions with director Suzanne Dieckman.

Klem said personal association has been very helpful with his portrayal of Salieri.

“There are times when we have all felt unjustified.”

Klem said Salieri experiences the pain of a broken heart because he has been deceived by God — someone he loved and someone he thought loved him. Klem has gone back to the things that have happened in his life that will help him relate to this feeling of pain.

Deschler said he hopes people will enjoy the play while Klem said he hopes people will take a harder look at the concepts of good and bad. He said, to Salieri, everything is either good or bad with no shades of gray. What occurs in the play destroys this concept.

The play concludes this weekend with shows at 8 p.m. today and Saturday and at 2:30 p.m. Sunday.