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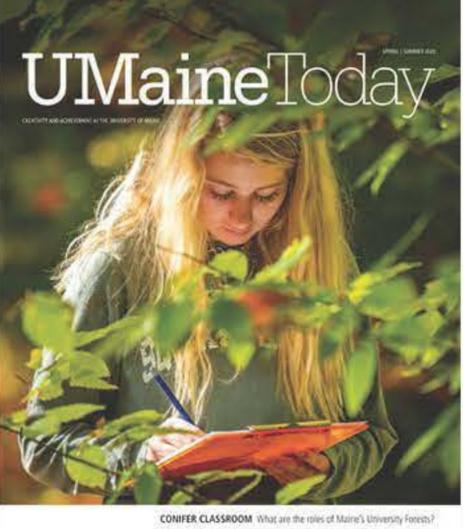
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The players gossip before a game. From left to right: #00 — Brooke Sossong, #11 — Neily Raymond, #25 — Bell Gellis Morais, #14 — Katie Brayson, #46 — Pooja Rawat, #7 — Jay Batsimm

UMaine School of Performing Arts offers 'The Wolves' as an on-demand, virtual production

March 1, 2021

The University of Maine School of Performing Arts will present an on-demand virtual production of its first spring show, "The Wolves," streaming online from March 5–14.

"The Wolves" by Sarah DeLappe follows a girls' indoor soccer team gathered in warm up. From the safety of their suburban stretch circle, the team navigates big questions and wages tiny battles with all the vim and vigor of adolescent warriors — a portrait of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for nine American girls who just want to score some goals.

"The Wolves" received the American Playwriting Foundation's Relentless Award, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama in 2017. It also was a New York Times Critic's Pick.

Associate professor of theatre Marcia Joy Douglas is directing the cast of 10. She has been a director, educator and choreographer at UMaine since 1999.

Virtual tickets are available for preorder for \$12, and provide 48 hours of access to view the performance March 5–14. For more information or to order tickets, visit: showtix4u.com/event-details/46822.

UMaine stage manager Laura Garfein, a theatre and psychology double major from Walnut Creek, California, reflected on the difficulties in producing a show during these challenging times. "It was a little challenging to work on this first real production, because we are still figuring out what limits we have due to COVID, and how best to work around them," Garfein says. "And we also had the additional challenge of not being allowed a live audience. We solved this through deciding to record the show for people to view, which creates a different visual end goal that worked well for this show but also was not a medium that any of us were used to working with."

Many of the cast members expressed appreciation that working on this production has been able to bring them a sense of normalcy, amid a world changed by a pandemic.

"COVID restrictions have made a large impact on everyone across the world, and have prevented a lot of the social gatherings that we're used to as humans," says Lydia Saltzman, a theatre major from Beverly, Massachusetts who plays soccer player #8. "Being able to get even some kind of normalcy in being able to spend time with people means so much."

The play really speaks to our pandemic lives, says Mary Jean Sedlock, lecturer in theatre, production manager and technical director at UMaine. "It is ultimately a story about how tragedy can shift your plans, your beliefs and your world view in an instant. For me, that really resonates with how the onset of the pandemic felt. Within a very short time, I was looking at my priorities differently—reassessing what was important through a whole new lens."

Julia Whinston, a philosophy major from Silverthorne, Colorado who is player #2, says the play resonates with our current time. "I think these are unprecedented times in that we are being continually surprised by our outside world, and it's leading us to be reaffirmed in our inner selves and our beliefs. We are continually being thrust into situations that demand we get to know ourselves in new and interesting ways. These girls are newly discovering their places in the world just as we are always trying to find our place in the everchanging, radical world."

Sedlock says one of the reasons for choosing the play was that it could meet the challenges of keeping cast members safe during a pandemic. "The show calls for minimal props and no costume changes," Sedlock says. "This means that we don't have as many objects being touched by multiple people. We also don't have to have actors and crew in close proximity for quick changes of clothing. Further, there are no moments of romance or physical intimacy in the play, so that allows us to stage the play with the actors maintaining greater distancing from each other."

Aja Sobus, a theatre major who plays a soccer mom, says the hope is that the show "can bring some happiness to not only those who have been missing theatre during these trying times, but to everyone who needs some happiness."

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