

The King and the Clown

The University of Toledo's Department of Theatre and Film is giving students and community members the chance to immerse themselves in a different culture in the form of theatre.

The stage production "The King and the Clown" was performed this past weekend, Feb. 17 – 19, and will be again this coming weekend, Feb. 24 – 26.

The production is written by Taewoong Kim and directed by a UT theatre student, Keeyong Hong.

Hong said that he was anxious for the show, since it is his first performance as an American actor; however, he is excited for this unique opportunity.

"I am very excited because I really want to share Korean culture and play," Hong said. "Through this show, I have a big chance to share our culture and play with an American audience."

First-year theatre major Xaverie Baker said she is very excited to be participating in this American debut.

"From everyone I've talked to who has seen it, they've really enjoyed it and they're really into the way it looks because visually the show is beautiful; it's really beautiful," Baker said.

Baker said since the original script was in Korean, some tweaks had to be made along the way.

"It's based off of a true story. It's basically just about a clown who is kind of struggling to rise in power," said Baker. "The way he does it is by coercing the king, because he's very feminine and the king eventually thinks he's beautiful. The king is very violent and kind of sadistic, so it's kind of like a power struggle to climb to the top of the food chain."

Baker, who will be playing Clown 1, explained that the type of “clown” used in the play is not the kind you see at the circus.

“They’re performers, essentially, of a lower class,” she said. “They didn’t have anything, and they’re dressed in a way that very much shows that they don’t have money. They’re regular people and they’re very afraid of the king, but they’re still funny like you would imagine a clown to be. It’s very much political commentary.”

Both Hong and Baker said that since the show relies heavily on dance and body movement, it is important to follow the main character’s desires and emotions to make the show more enjoyable as opposed to just watching it absent-mindedly.

“It’s a kind of connection you get watching real people perform in front of you versus watching on a screen, and you’re never going to have that connection unless you’re there,” Baker said.

Theatre and Film Department Chair Edmund Langan said that he has no worries about the performance and describes it as “almost Shakespearean.”

“This performance will lead to some great discussions about the issues in the play, and it will introduce people to a new playwright whose work has never before been presented in English in North America,” Langan said.

He encourages students to attend the performance in order to better their understanding of culture and other important topics.

For tickets and showtimes please visit utoledo.tix.com.