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A Message from the Director of *Red Devils*

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—Often, in the process of choosing a play, directors consider the message or messages that they want to send to the audience so that there is a connection between the story and what happens after the final curtain closes and members of the audience return to their daily lives.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts Christopher Connelly, who is directing *Red Devils*, knew the message he wished to deliver from the moment the play was selected. He wants the audience members not only to realize their limitations, but also to fight against setbacks, just like the strong characters of the play.



Phil, played by Rachel Grimes '13, threatens Nita, played by Chantericka Tucker '13, in a scene from *Red Devils*.

Red Devils, which was written by Debbie Horsfield, plays tonight, Feb. 6, at 8 p.m. in the E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick Laboratory Theatre (304 E. Graham St., Bloomington). Tickets are available for purchase at the McPherson Theatre Box Office (2 Ames Plaza East, Bloomington). General admission and senior citizen tickets will cost \$3. Student tickets are \$2 with a valid school ID.

The play, tells the story of four 18-year-old female soccer players, who face personal struggles: Nina, a gentle Pakistani who is a target of racism and the only one of the four with a job; Alice a trusting individual, who sees marriage as a solution to all of her problems; Beth, a feisty free-spirited woman, who desires to dominate everyone around her and Phil, the toughest of the girls, but inwardly, the most vulnerable. The group of friends is accustomed to disheartening limitations, but their passion shines through when it comes to their beloved soccer team, Manchester United, aka the Red Devils. They must do what it takes in order to see the Red Devils take on Arsenal in the Cup Final.

In directing the play, Connelly also intends for the audience to be active participants of the production.

"The audience will be directly addressed, sometimes aggressively. I hope after someone sees this play they will start to question their own sense of privilege, that having the opportunity to progress and have a career is not necessarily the same as having the ability to do that. I think that's a really important aspect of the play," said Connelly.

However, it is not just the audience that he wants to understand the message, it is the actors as well. Connelly feels the actors must be able to convey the message to the audience through their performance, and the first step to achieving that is for them to comprehend the message themselves. In his opinion, the ultimate goal is for the actors to be able to see how the play applies to their own lives and grow from the experience.

"I think the students have really grown as a group," said Connelly. "They are learning about the world they live in."

For additional information or to purchase tickets, contact the McPherson Box Office at (309) 556-3232.

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