



Monsters, fantasy and 90s culture coming to Carousel Theatre with ‘She Kills Monsters’

To fans of the cult favorite Dungeons and Dragons game and those with a general interest in dramatic comedies, consider heading a door down from the Clarence Brown Theatre to the Carousel Theatre to catch a performance of “She Kills Monsters” from March 23 to April 10.

Written by award-winning playwright Qui Nyugen, “She Kills Monsters” tells the adventures of Agnes Evans as she explores Dungeons and Dragons, an imaginary world she once mocked but ends up taking an interest in after the passing of her sister.

The play is set in the 1990s and deals with heavy concepts such as bullying and homophobia. It also includes moments of violence, usage of profanity and mild sexual content. While a comedic tone is evident throughout the show, especially susceptible audiences may want to proceed with caution.

A well-rounded cast and creative team was needed to put together UT’s production of “She Kills Monsters.” Second year MFA candidate in costume design, MJ Hromek, was among them.

As the production’s costume designer, Hromek was in charge of getting to know each character and understanding how they function in the story. Then came the time to create the character sketches and source their costumes.

“My biggest goal for the costumes in this show was to show how the real world affects the fantasy world of the Dungeons and Dragons game and vice versa,” Hromek said. “I wanted to combine high fantasy influences with styles of clothes seen in 1995 — when the play takes place — to create a unique look that reflects the imagination of not only Tilly, the nerd younger sister, but eventually Agnes.”

As a player of Dungeons and Dragons, Hromek felt “She Kills Monsters” was the perfect premier project to get involved in with the Clarence Brown Theatre. A year has passed since Hromek first started working on the play, and now the time for their hard work to shine is finally fast approaching.

“I have put so much of myself into the design of each of these characters because I feel like I know where they’re coming from,” Hromek said. “They are all looking for some way to express themselves as they want to be, whether it’s as a powerful paladin who can shoot magic missiles or as someone who needs to open up and let themselves have a little bit of fun.”

Casey Sams, interim head of the department of theatre and professor of theatre, also played a crucial role in making a production of “She Kills Monsters” a reality at UT.



As the director of the play, Sams described the balance of directing, working, teaching and maintaining a healthy home life as challenging, yet maintained that being able to work with so many creative people makes it worthwhile.

According to Sams, rehearsals for “She Kills Monsters” take place six days a week and can run up until 11:30 p.m. on weeknights.

“‘She Kills Monsters’ is based on Dungeons and Dragons, so there’s lots of monsters and lots of fighting, but it’s also a show about what you learn when you try to see things from somebody else’s perspective, which is so important,” Sams said. “I’m excited that audiences will see a full-blown action/adventure story live and in-person.”

For those that express an interest in the world of theatre and wish to get involved themselves, Sams also offered some insight.

“People often think that the only reason to major in theatre is because you want to be an actor, but that’s not true,” Sams said. “There are lots of behind-the-scenes jobs in theatre that are very rewarding. Plus, the skills people learn doing theatre are the same skills that the top employers in the U.S. say they are looking for, so a theatre major can position you for a lot of different fields.”

Sams welcomes all students to get involved in theatre productions. Auditions are typically held at the beginning of each semester and are announced in theatre classes as well as on the Clarence Brown Theatre website.

A Pay What You Can Preview performance of “She Kills Monsters” will be held on the play’s opening night on March 23. Patrons will be able to name their own price for tickets, with half of the proceeds collected going to Girls Inc. of Tennessee Valley.

For more information or to purchase tickets, the Clarence Brown Theatre Box Office can be reached at 865-974-5161 or through their website.