

KeizerCommunity

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MHS junior Best of Show

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

When Elizabeth Russell, a McNary High School junior, was given a photography assignment with the theme of "reflection" earlier this year, she came up with a unique take.

She took her 13-year-old sister, Nicole, out into a field on a sunny day and took a picture of her looking at herself in a large mirror. Then, with a bit of Photoshop magic, she superimposed that image over one of a gray day at the Oregon Coast.

"Until we all saw that, it wasn't something anyone was thinking of," said Todd Layton, McNary's graphic arts and photography instructor. "Pretty soon everyone else in the class was trying something similar."

Earlier this month, another portrait Russell took of her sister won Best of Show in the McNary High School art show at the Keizer Art Association.

Russell said she enjoys working with her sister more than anyone else.

"She's been a fun model to work with. My friends feel critiqued when they model for me, but she feels like I'm dolling her up," said Russell. "I like capturing her happiness and the seriousness she can portray."

Russell began taking pictures before she landed in Layton's photography classes.

"I like looking back on the places I've been and I think places and people are beautiful," she said.

However, her work took on a new life once she was enrolled in an actual class.

"I was forced to take pictures and that made me spend more time thinking about the pictures I took," Russell said. "I started focusing on getting the best picture."



Photos by Elizabeth Russell

Top: A self portrait by McNary High School junior Elizabeth Russell. Above: Russell's photo of Nicole, her sister, that won Best of Show in the student art show at the Keizer Art Association.

Layton had high hopes for Russell's entry in the art show.

"She's got a good eye, but she sometimes lacks confidence. For me, the art show award was the greatest thing ever. She needed that recognition," Layton said.

For Russell, who was

out of town on the day the awards were announced, the award came as a surprise.

"I was sitting in my aunt's house when I got a text. I was super happy and very excited. Mr. Layton has told me I'm a good photographer, but I always thought that was just him saying it," Russell said.

Homegrown's newest is Tony-nominated *Time Stands Still*

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For Chris Torres, Keizer Homegrown Theatre's latest production, *Time Stands Still*, is intensely personal.

Time Stands Still is a Tony-nominated play by Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Margulies. The play is the tale of a couple, Sarah and James, who work together as war correspondents — she's a photographer, he's a writer. Sarah is severely hurt in a car bombing and returns to the Brooklyn loft she shares with James to recuperate from her physical and emotional injuries.

While James is content to be away from the front line, Sarah misses the adrenaline that comes with the job. The pair's editor also drops in with his younger, pregnant girlfriend from time to time while the couple tries to sort out their conflicting emotions about their jobs and life together.

Torres, the stage manager, saw something similar play out in his own home.

"My dad went away to war and was suffering from severe post traumatic stress disorder when he came back. My parents tried to exist in a normal relationship and it didn't work out," he said. "I find this play to be incredibly beautiful because of how real and raw it treats the relationship between Sarah and James."

The play is being staged at Chemeketa Community College's Auditorium, 4000 Lancaster Drive, Building 6. Evening performances are March 3-5 and 10-12 at 7 p.m. A matinee is slated for 2 p.m. Sunday, March 6. Tickets are \$15 and will be available at the door or can be reserved by e-mailing keizerhomegrown@gmail.com. The troupe is encouraging new patrons to come and check out the show, mention it's your first time at a KHT production and you'll get two-for-one tickets.

Taylor Pawley, who has had roles in several

KHT productions, is making her Homegrown directing debut with the play, and chose this one specifically out of about 10 Tony-nominated plays.

"It was the most interesting because of the way the characters are portrayed. The dialogue sounds like something you could overhear. They were so much more relatable and the relationships are very vivid," Pawley said.

Pawley chose to go with a minimalist set — black curtains and spartan apartment furniture — in part because it gave her more leeway to work with the actors.

"I find this play to be incredibly beautiful."

— Chris Torres
Stage manager

"I spend a lot of time on character work because I want them to be fully formed on the stage, which is different for community theatre because you usually spend most of the time getting the staging right and everybody to rehearsals on time," Pawley said.

KHT veteran Christa Karschnia is playing Sarah. Karschnia joined the cast in recent weeks, but said a strong

script has made it easier to dig deep.

"The material in regards to PTSD is so good and Sarah has to maintain a human connection while trying to shut it off. For this character, the trauma is everywhere," Karschnia said. "These are people dealing with things that those of us born on this side of the planet don't have to deal with. It's not political at all, but it touches on the humanity of the inhumanity that's going on in other parts of the world."

Despite the sometimes heavy nature of the story, much of the plot deals with relationships more generally. It's not a play that leaves the audience feeling morbid, Pawley said.

"I don't want people to come out of it feeling unhappy, but I would like them to come out of it feeling as though they've seen some of the issues they've heard about on the news from a new perspective," she said.



KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy

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