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'TAKE ME OUT' THEATER PRODUCTION THROWS BASEBALL A CURVE

Tony Award-Winning Drama Deals Honestly with Issues Surrounding Homosexuality; Theatergoers Given Advance Notice that Performance Contains Some Nudity, Say Organizers

(MURFREESBORO)—Richard Greenburg's 2003 Tony Award-winning baseball drama, "Take Me Out," will open the **2006 CenterStage Series**, with performances at **7:30 p.m. March 31, April 1 and April 5-8** in MTSU's **Tucker Theatre**.

"Take Me Out" is the story of Darren Lemming, the young, rich and famous center fielder of the world champion New York Empire who is so convinced of his popularity that, when he casually announces he's gay, he assumes the news will be readily accepted by everyone. But it isn't.

Instead, friends, fans and teammates react with disgust. Luckily, however, Darren finds unlikely support in the form of friendship with his new business manager—a brilliant but repressed guy who is ecstatic in his personal discovery of baseball.

Regarding her selection of the Pulitzer Prize-nominated drama, **Deborah Anderson, professor of speech and theatre**, said, "When I read the script, I was intrigued by its nontraditional structure, having no unity of time. I also grew up loving baseball, and in this play the sport develops a mystical nature.

"I also believe," she added, "that there is no better time in our history to present a play that addresses society's view on homosexuality."

Nonetheless, presenting a play about baseball does create some difficulty, observed the show's producer.

"Our actors have to look like professional baseball players, so we have started a vigorous workout program for them so that they have the right look by performance time," said Anderson, who adds that aside from the physical challenges, the work's characters are multifaceted.

"The characters of 'Take Me Out' have many layers and so much is not expressed verbally," she continued. "The actors have to delve into every single corner of the play to bring out the depth of these characters in performance."

Another challenge in the play comes from staging the actors in shower scenes and in various states of undress in the locker room of the team clubhouse. The play, in fact, has scenes with brief moments of nudity. And for the young actors and for most in the audience, this is uncharted territory, noted the show's organizers. (*****Please note that this show is recommended for mature audiences only and MTSU does not contend that this drama is suitable for all ages.**)

"We are taking every precaution to protect the audience and actors from an uncomfortable situation," Anderson said. "But the nudity and the sense of realism created by it are important to the development of the relationships being built between the team members and Darren."

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Moreover, she added, “The playwright also believes that the nudity in the locker room is extremely important to the story as it shows how Darren’s homosexuality creates uneasiness and tension in the clubhouse.”

Scott Boyd, professor of scenic design at MTSU, also feels that “Take Me Out” is a top-notch script and is excited about the production.

“It is one of the best scripts I have worked with in a long time,” Boyd remarked. “The story deals with every aspect of humanity, and about being true to oneself.

“Every viewpoint on the issue of homosexuality is investigated here,” he continued. “(And) it is written so well that a liberal can appreciate the viewpoints of a conservative and vice versa. It really puts things into a different perspective.”

• **TICKETS** for “Take Me Out” will go on sale **March 27** at the **CenterStage Ticket Office**, located inside the Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building at MTSU. Office hours are noon-4 p.m. Monday-Friday. Tickets may also be purchased at the door. Ticket prices range from \$4 to \$8. MTSU students are admitted free of charge with a valid MTSU ID.

For reservations, please call (615) 494-8810.

ATTENTION, MEDIA—*For editorial needs, including interview requests with performers or faculty, photo requests or to obtain review tickets, please contact Lisa L. Rollins in the Office of News and Public Affairs at MTSU at 615-898-2919.*