
Set on an indoor soccer field somewhere in suburban America, “The Wolves” unfolds over six wintry Saturdays as the players warm-up for each successive match. Working their way through drills and stretches, the 16- and 17-year-old teammates speak openly about what is on their minds: Cambodian history, weekend plans, boyfriends and much more. Their conversations are frank, raw, uncensored and as director Anderson points out, absolutely true.

“It’s a voice we haven’t heard. The teenage girl. It’s basically a locker room of 16- and 17-year-old women. And that’s a voice that I don’t think we’ve ever had the opportunity to peer in on,” Anderson said. “I don’t know any other play like it. It’s rare, and it’s raw, and sometimes relentless, and sometimes uncomfortable, like maybe we shouldn’t be listening to this talk.”
The sometimes surprising frankness of the dialogue is intentional and purposeful. In writing “The Wolves,” DeLappe was determined to create “young women as full-blooded athletes and complex characters, not reduced to types: daughters, sex objects, girlfriends.”

She explained: “I wasn’t interested in recreating any stereotypical version of female adolescents in the suburbs of America. I was interested in trying to treat them as complicated, multidimensional people. They’re just figuring out who they are and what the world is and what their place in the world is. I think a lot of the play is actually tracking these shifts in identity and this struggle to find out who they are within the peer group.”

A significant part of the success of DeLappe’s writing is the way the characters reveal themselves to each other through fast-paced overlapping dialogue that exposes their individual strengths and vulnerabilities as they seemingly banter about the quotidian matters of their lives.

“Young women love it; it rings really true to them. I’ve heard over and over, ‘that’s exactly how it is,’” said Anderson, who successfully directed a production at St. Louis Repertory last year. “We’re not used to seeing younger women talk like that. But I think there is power in it. They own their bodies. They own their words. They own everything about it. It can be shocking and jolting, but it’s absolutely the truth. You know that this is how they’re speaking to each other. Maybe not to their parents or their teachers, but yes to each other.”

With multiple conversations often occurring simultaneously, “The Wolves” presents exciting challenges for the cast and director. “It’s very much like conducting a nine piece orchestra,” Anderson said. It also makes for a particularly engaging experience for the audience.

“You never sit back,” she explained. “You’re like a detective. You’re leaning in trying to figure out what they are saying, what the relationships are.”

In addition, much of the time the players are warming up or practicing soccer drills as they verbally spar with each other. Anderson said DeLappe has written the play as if it were soccer match. “They pass the ball, they grab the ball, they play as a team, and they play very aggressively with their words. The form is completely fascinating to me.”

DeLappe said the physicality has been important to her since she started writing “The Wolves.” She likened the team to women warriors preparing for battle. The play, she said, is a story filled with young women in which they aren’t girlfriends or daughters or love interests or sexual objects, but athletes—where it was about their bodies, but about their ownership of their own bodies, and the strength of their own bodies.

“When I started writing ‘The Wolves,’ I knew I wanted it to be my version of the WWII movie, only on a soccer field rather than a battlefield,” DeLappe said. “As a kid, I would see so many superhero movies, Westerns, sci-fi movies, all, of course, with almost all-male casts, except maybe for the obligatory girlfriend, the mother back home or the prostitute with the heart of gold. All of these films depict how these disparate men became one organism. They had to in order to survive. I wanted women to have access to the same material, with no limitations.”

Throughout the run of “The Wolves,” Syracuse Stage will partner with the YWCA of Syracuse & Onondaga County’s “Soccer for Success” program, offered nationally by the U.S. Soccer Foundation. Soccer for Success, like “The Wolves,” is less about soccer than it is about something much deeper—teaching critical life skills and healthy habits through trained coach-mentors, building confidence and collaboration and sharing new skills that may even provide a pathway to college. The program provides no-cost soccer
instruction and uniforms to area children each year, focused on those for whom the costs and location of private soccer development programs would be a barrier. As part of Syracuse Stage’s commitment to community partnerships, a cleat drive for Soccer for Success will be held at the theatre throughout the production. Please consider donating new or gently used soccer cleats, which can be placed in the collection bins in the lobby.

“The Wolves”
By Sarah DeLappe
Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson
Scenic Design by Anya Klepikov
Costume Design by Suzanne Chesney
Lighting Design by Nathan W. Scheuer
Sound Design by Jacqueline R Herter
Assistant Director: Rachael Logue
Soccer Consultant: Carmen Masalin
Production Stage Manager: Stuart Plymesser*
Casting: Harriet Bass Casting
Co-produced with Syracuse University Department of Drama

Cast
Alessandra Casanova†.................................................................#14
Claire David†..................................................................................#00
Allison Gabriel*................................................................................Soccer Mom
Rachael Logue*..............................................................................#25
Maggie McPherson†........................................................................#7
Camila Pentland†.............................................................................#8
Emily RudolphΨ...........................................................................#2
Emily Shackelford*..........................................................................#11
Cassia Thompson*...........................................................................#13
Ali Whitwell†................................................................................#46

Understudies
Ruthanne Evans†(#2, #7, #14)
Alexa Kerner†(#8, #13, #46)
Bridget Perrotta†(#00, #11, #25)

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.
ΨStudent, Syracuse University Department of Drama, appears courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association
†Student, Syracuse University Department of Drama

Special Events
Jan. 22 Pay-What-You-Will Performance @ 7:30 p.m.
There will be 76 tickets available for whatever price patrons wish to pay. Pay-what-you-will tickets must be claimed in person at the Box Office on the day of the performance, subject to availability. The Box Office opens at 10 a.m. and will remain open until the start of the show. There is a limit of two tickets per person.

Jan. 24 Opening Night Party (free for ticket holders)
Join the cast for a post-show celebration with live music presented by CNY Jazz, featuring Scott Dennis and Rick Montalbano, food and drinks.
Jan. 26  **Prologue at 1 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
An intimate, pre-show discussion with “The Wolves” actors one hour prior to curtain. Prologues will be held in the Storch Theatre.

Jan. 29  **Wednesday @ 1 Lecture** (free for ticket holders)
Join Teresa MacDonald, Ph.D., for a deeper look into the whole athlete in “The Wolves” during the Wednesday @ 1 lecture in the Storch Theatre. Dr. MacDonald most recently taught courses in human development and sport, child and youth development at Syracuse University’s Falk College departments of Sport Management and Human Development and Family Science.

**Open Captioning at 2 p.m. Performance** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Jan. 30  **Happy Hour at 6 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
Enjoy complimentary light fare from local restaurants, half-priced drinks and $5 drink specials at the bar.

Feb. 1  **Prologue at 1 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
An intimate, pre-show discussion with “The Wolves” actors one hour prior to curtain. Prologues will be held in the Storch Theatre.

**ASL Interpreted Performance at 2 p.m.** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Feb. 2  **Actor Talkback** (free for ticket holders)
A Q&A session with the actors following the 7:30 p.m. performance. The talkback will be held in the Storch Theatre.

Feb. 5  **Dinner & Show** ($60, includes dinner and show admission)
Enjoy a buffet dinner at 6 p.m. with fellow theater lovers in the Sutton Pavilion. Seasonal fare prepared by Phoebe’s Restaurant followed by great theater.

Feb. 6  **Prologue at 6:30 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
An intimate, pre-show discussion with “The Wolves” actors one hour prior to curtain. Prologues will be held in the Storch Theatre.

Feb. 7  **Last Call**
The Syracuse Stage bar will remain open after the show. Mix and mingle with fellow patrons—the perfect chance to chat about the show!

Feb. 8  **Audio Described Performance at 2 p.m.** for patrons who are blind or visually impaired.

**Open Captioning at 7:30 p.m. performance** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Feb. 9  **Open Captioning at 2 p.m. performance** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**ABOUT SYRACUSE STAGE**
Founded in 1974, Syracuse Stage is the non-profit, professional theatre company in residence at Syracuse University. It is nationally recognized for creating stimulating theatrical work that engages Central New York and significantly contributes to the artistic life of Syracuse University, where it is a vital partner in achieving the educational mission of the University’s Department of Drama. Syracuse Stage’s mission is to
tell stories that engage, entertain and inspire people to see life beyond their own experience. Each season 70,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays, and bold interpretations of classics and musicals, featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves more than 15,000 students from 14 counties. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regent Association. Syracuse Stage is a member of The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country.

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Syracuse Stage  I  Artistic Director: Robert M. Hupp  I  Managing Director: Jill A. Anderson