

Cast has high hopes for play about Holocaust

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Good people, with kindness in their hearts, helped Jews during World War II.

That's what "Hiding in the Open" is all about, according to Morgan Kowalewski who plays Helka in Gothenburg High School's one-act production.

"Even though the bad outshone the good, there was still hope and kindness," Morgan said.

The story is from Sabina Zimering's memoir, adapted into a drama by Kira Obolensky, and tells the true story of two Jewish sisters.

Morgan's sister, Amanda Kowalewski, is also her sister (Sabina) in the play.

The sisters are from Poland and assume false Catholic identities. They work in a Nazi hotel in Germany where they live in constant fear of having their identities revealed. Along the way, the sisters experience human kindness despite horrific atrocities.

For both Kowalewskis, portraying the sisters as they should be is the biggest challenge.

"So people believe it's actually the character," Amanda said. "It's hard to portray it realistically."

The Kowalewskis, and the rest of the cast, hope people see the production because "we shouldn't forget" the Holocaust, Amanda said.

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'HIDING IN THE OPEN' CAST (in order of appearance)	
Sabina —Amanda Kowalewski	German Soldier —Zach Wolf
Mother —Rachel Rice	Chorus:
Father —Cody Cooper	Elsie —Courtney Brown
Helka —Morgan Kowalewski	Herman —Drake Brand
Natek —Hayden Hubbard	Rose —Kayla Trevino
Neighbor 1 —Shaylee Scott	Esther —Carli Stevens
Danka —Carlin Daharsh	Martha —Kynn Leviner
Mrs. Justyna —Amanda Larson	August —Dylan France
Neighbor 2/American Soldier —Dylan France	Carl —Gage Taylor
Employment Officer —Drake Brand	Christian —Hayden Hubbard
Herr Uhlmann/Uncle Sam —Roman Schmidt	Paul —Archer Jensen
Anya —Abbie Mazour	Ruth —Rabecca Miller
Frank —Gage Taylor	Mabel —McKinley Harm
Mrs. Haas —Bailey Gibbens	Wilhelmina —Alayna Collins
Gestapo —Preston Franzen	Edith —Ashley Wilkerson
Frauline —Alayna Collins	Molly —Mallory McCoy
Frau Withner —Betsy Potter	Caroline —Shelby Mannel
Irma —Madison Costello	Elizabeth —Jessica Hoba
Joseph —Brett Lindholm	Nazis/Crew —Zach Wolf, Garatt James, Tyler Block, Dylan Folkers, Archer Jensen, Connor Schewartz, Trenton Long
Waiter —Archer Jensen	Lights —Ray Slack
Herr Cherry —Brett Mann	
Anthropologist —Drake Langley	

“We must remember it because not very many people who lived it are still alive,” she explained. “Their stories help portray and keep the memory that it actually happened.”

Maddy Costello, who plays Irma—a mean German who works in the hotel—said the production honors the people who were Jewish and in the war.

Morgan added that the play is educational and shows another side of the Holocaust and that good people existed during that time.

One-act director Lori Long said it’s a good portrayal of Thanksgiving.

“It’s about hope and forgiveness and all of the people who brought light to and nurtured those girls’ lives,” Long said. “The girls had a future and were not faceless sisters who disappeared.”

In fact, she said the sisters immigrated to the United States after the war, noting that Sabina is still alive and living in Minnesota.

Long said the drama is very episodic in structure and the first of that type students have performed since “The Triangle Factory Fire Project” six years ago.

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The play "The Diary of Anne Frank" will be produced at the performing arts center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The production is being announced.