

Theater review:

Town and Country Players tell important, well-acted story

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In foreground, Dr. Joseph Cardin, played by Ken Stephon, talks to young Mary, portrayed by Makayla McClintic, as Sandra Harman as Amelia Tilford looks on in the Town and Country Players production of “The Children’s Hour.”

October is Anti-Bullying Month, and the Town and Country Players in Buckingham have chosen to offer the classic production, “The Children’s Hour,” as a reminder.

Set in an all-girls school, the play has its share of bullying in the character of student Mary Tilford, portrayed by the talented Makayla McClintic, who uses her prolific acting skills to ably depict the young sociopath.

But the greater theme is one of the power of words to wreak havoc in this tale of two women teachers who are destroyed when the child lies and says she saw them engage in lesbian behavior. Playwright Lillian Hellman wrote the play in 1934, but her messages still resonate today.

The play relies heavily on youthful talent, which director Rob Rosiello has found locally in Town and Country’s Summer Youth Workshops and beyond. All of the girls do a good job with the roles, with McClintic and T&C favorite Julia Levy as Rosalie Wells as the standouts.

The show opens with the girls setting the scene for the heart of the play. That comes with the interaction of Karen Wright, played by Caitlin Riley, and Martha Dobie, played by Danielle Foley.

Riley and Foley are accomplished actors and perform their difficult roles with grace and empathy. Emotions swing wildly at times, but these women never falter or miss a beat.

Supporting them in their roles is Ken Stephon as Wright’s fiancé, Dr. Joseph Cardin, and Sandra Harman as his aunt and Mary’s doting grandmother, Amelia Tilford. Both are capable, believable actors well cast in their roles, as is Sally Donovan as Martha’s

Aunt Lily.

This is not a happy story with a warm ending, but it is one with an important message that has lost none of its power in the 94 years since its first telling.

With “The Children’s Hour,” Town and Country, and the company’s president, Rosiello, continue the mission of telling important stories even when they make us uncomfortable.

The show continues for two more weekends. See townandcountryplayers.org for times and tickets.

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