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For Immediate Release

GSU Students Have a Positive Message for the Community in *The Scarlet Letter*

October 23, 2017 (University Park, IL): Governors State University Theatre and Performance Studies (T.A.P.S.) students have a positive message to share about acceptance and strength in the face of adversity through their modern portrayal of Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic work, *The Scarlet Letter*, on Saturday, November 4 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, November 5 at 2 p.m. Assistant director and GSU student Therese Caldwell said the performance addresses the concept of group think as society sees it manifest in new and alarming ways.

"Our production brings into light that the mob mentality is not confined to a single era. While we're telling a story that traditionally takes place in colonial America, the conflicts of the story translate across time as we show how easy it is for a community to turn against that which they perceive as a common enemy," Caldwell said.

Sarah Saltwick's adaptation paints the familiar struggles—between judgment and freedom, desire and sin, the head and the heart—red. The scarlet "A," meant to be a symbol of shame, becomes a reclaimed symbol of identity. With vivid characters and iconic symbolism, this play exposes the complexity of human nature and the capacity for both love and betrayal in all of us.

Visiting Director Jess Hutchinson wants audience members to know that as "a story many people first encounter in high school literature classes, it's often seen as a historical snapshot, but that's not true of our production. Without renaming the original given circumstances, we're working to bring this story into this present moment, in a world created by and for GSU and the neighboring community. In Hawthorne's original, he offers one view of Hester, the main character, and then another and another, never making up his mind. She remains enigmatic. This production hopes to bring Hester, and indeed all the characters, to life in their full contradictory powers."

The lead character Hester Prynne is played by Maya Shelton, a senior in the T.A.P.S. program at GSU. She said audience members should expect the show "to challenge us to reconsider how we treat one another. It's exciting, raw, and real."

The Scarlet Letter is an empowering, positive theatrical experience for students and adults alike.

Maya Shelton as Hester Prynne
Magali Souffrant as Pearl Prynne
Angel Jackson as Ann Hibbins/Martha Endicott
Bernadette Carter as Ruth Campbell
Melanie Morris as Beatrice Brown/Mercy Wilson
Milan Harris as Meg Wilson
Lardell Clark as Minister Arthur Dimmesdale
Dante Silguero as Doctor Roger Chillingworth

Ronald McDowell as Governor Bellingham/Judge Endicott
Kevin Kohn as Henry Wilson

When You Go

Tickets are \$15 and \$10 for students with valid I.D. at the box office. For tickets, information, and the complete cast list, please visit **CenterTickets.net** or call **(708) 235-2222**.

The box office is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and two hours prior to performances (the box office is open until 6 p.m. on Thursdays). This performance is supported by funding from Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. Governors State University is located at 1 University Parkway in University Park.

About Theatre and Performance Studies at GSU

This play is produced by GSU's Theatre and Performance Studies (T.A.P.S) Program. GSU's T.A.P.S. bachelor's degree is the only degree combining the two disciplines at a public state university in Illinois. For information on the T.A.P.S. program, contact Dr. Patrick Santoro at psantoro@govst.edu. Like us on Facebook [@tapsgsu](https://www.facebook.com/tapsgsu) for updates.

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Governors State University serves 5,200 undergraduate and graduate students with degree programs that prepare them for success in business, industry, healthcare, the arts, and education. As a state university, GSU is committed to providing high-quality, accessible, and responsible higher education opportunities. GSU is located 35 miles south of Chicago in University Park, IL and committed to embracing diversity and academic excellence while transforming student passion into lifelong purpose.