

Play Examines College-Aged Relationships

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Why do we try to mold and mend the people closest to us? What are the consequences of such transformations? These questions are central to *The Shape of Things*, the latest production to hit the boards of the Lupin Theater.



Cast members who star in the new Lupin Theater play are students (from left) John Bowman, Caroline Zinser, Jennie Stumpf and Ben Piemont. (Photo by Martin Sachs)

"We're obsessed with externals. We're obsessed with the outside of things," said director Buzz Podewell, an associate professor of theater in the [Department of Theatre and Dance](#).

The play, written by Neil LaBute, premieres tonight (Feb. 23) and runs through Sunday (Feb. 28).

While larger themes like the Pygmalion myth and the Fall of Man inform the script, the play is essentially the story of four college students and their relationships with one another. Evelyn, played by junior Jennie Stumpf, transforms Adam, played by sophomore Ben Piemont, from a frumpy, literate geek into a stylish, attractive man. Phillip, played by junior John Bowman, and Jenny, played by senior Caroline Zinser,

are engaged, but Jenny cannot help but notice Adam's sudden conversion.

The performances themselves did not require such a major transformation for the actors. Being close to the age of the characters gave the students a chance to infuse aspects of their own lives into their roles. During rehearsals, Zinser says the cast discussed their characters in terms of their own relationships and friendships.

"Being able to breathe real-world emotion onto the stage is kind of liberating," Zinser said.

As a work of modern American realism, *The Shape of Things* embodies in its production a distinctly different sensibility than some of the period pieces that the Department of Theatre and Dance often produces.

"This past fall, I was in the *Tartuffe* production ... where everyone's wearing corsets and dresses, so this is a very big step," Zinser said.

Show times are at 8 p.m. from Feb. 23 to 27, and at 2 p.m. on Feb. 27 and 28. Tickets are available through the Lupin Theater box office by calling 504-865-5106. General admission is \$12. Discounted tickets are available for Tulane faculty, staff and students and senior citizens.

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