Local weather

**THURSDAY**

- Rain
- High: 70°
- Low: 52°

**FRIDAY**

- Rain
- High: 54°
- Low: 30°

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**Theater, music students collaborate for play**

*By Cassie Buchman*

*City Editor @DEN_News*

Despite the fact that they rarely interacted with each other, two actors were able to portray the intense love and crushing loss in a couple's relationship in a production of the musical "The Last 5 Years" Wednesday in the Globe Studio of the Doudna Fine Arts Center.

"The Last 5 Years" focuses on one couple, Cathy (played by senior theater major Grace Munoz) and Jamie (played by freshman theater major Francis Monier). It follows their relationship, marriage and subsequent divorce.

The musical shows the deterioration of their marriage at different points in their relationship. Cathy begins her story at the end of the relationship, and Jamie starts at the beginning.

This play is unlike others as it only has two characters who rarely interact onstage. Instead, they sing their songs separately except for one moment where their stories intersect and they sing a short duet.

The play opens with Cathy singing a song called "Still Hurting" where she reflects on the end of her marriage, while Jamie sings "Shiksa Goddess," a song about how excited he is to have found Cathy.

"I'm covered with scars I did nothing to earn," Cathy sang.

Despite Jamie feeling as if things were moving too fast, the couple gets married in the song "The Next Ten Minutes," where they slow dance together while singing a brief duet.

As the play progresses, problems arise between the couple as Jamie begins finding success as a writer, while Cathy's career as an actress stays stagnant.

Fights begin to break out because of Cathy's jealousy and feelings of being ignored by Jamie in favor of his writing and Jamie's temptations at the hands of other women.

"In a perfect world, miracles would happen and every girl would look like Mr. Ed," Jamie sang.

Cathy continues to go to one unsuccessful audition after another, and Jamie publishes a book that is well reviewed at a young age, putting even more strain on their marriage.

Despite all these pressures, Jamie still proclaims his belief in Cathy and their marriage.

Richele Miller, a freshman education major, said she came to the musical to support her boyfriend who was working backstage.

"It was really great, with good music," Miller said. "It was lots of fun. I liked watching the guy and girl meet in the middle."

Alex Schmelzer, a senior biology major, also said she enjoyed the musical.

"There were two different timelines, which was confusing at first, but it wasn't bad," she said.

The director of "The Last 5 Years" was Imani McDaniel, a junior theater major. She said McDaniel heard the songs from it last summer and had the idea to perform it.

The musical was McDaniel's directorial debut, though she has experience in the technical aspects of productions and in performing.

"There's a lot of differences," McDaniel said. "I enjoyed it, and it's something I'm going to pursue."

She said she was friends with Monier and Munoz before they put on the musical, and they had to work with everyone's schedule because they all had things going on besides practicing.

Monier said he had to work on time management to be in "The Last 5 Years."

He said the biggest challenge was the fact that the musical had only two people in it that did not interact with each other.

"I didn't get to work off the other person," he said.

Despite this, he said he was still able to fight through the fatigue.

Munoz said this was her first time acting in a student-run production.

"It was a very exciting experience," she said. "I didn't realize how much we had to do."

Munoz helped McDaniel acquire the rights to "The Last 5 Years," which cost $1,000.

They raised the money themselves with the help of donations and scholarships.

Munoz said she believes the writer of the musical, Jason Robert Brown, is a genius.

"The way he tells the story is so involved; it's something that's so different for the theater department," she said.

Another performance is scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday in the Globe Studio.

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**Hunger Symposium to teach, raise awareness**