

Director's Note for *Stop Kiss*

Contrary to what Google will tell you when you type "*Stop Kiss*" in the search bar, this is not a play about lesbians. In fact, one of the unique and exciting aspects of the show's central relationship is that Callie and Sara *don't* define it. Both shy away from the label "lesbian," possibly because they are newly out to themselves, possibly because they are not ready for the stigma that accompanies adopting that label, but most likely because it simply does not describe their life experience. Son's honest portrayal of their relationship leaves room for the fluidity and discovery that so often goes hand in hand with coming out to oneself.

Moreover, though, *Stop Kiss* is a play about coming into maturity. Callie and Sara are perhaps too old to "come of age", but like most present-day millennials, they are in the nebulous phase recently dubbed "emerging adulthood." Callie and Sara find themselves at a crossroads where they must, for the first time in their lives, make truly difficult decisions that have significant repercussions. *Stop Kiss* is especially resonant for the group of young theater artists that comprise the A.C.T. Fellows as we too are learning to make our way in the world. Callie and Sara's story is part of a larger narrative that transcends their particular circumstances and speaks to the near-universal experiences of American twenty-somethings trying to figure out who they are.

That said, Callie and Sara's queerness cannot and should not be overlooked. Too often, stories about LGBTQ+ people focus exclusively on their identities, which presents an incomplete picture queer people. These types of stories, while better than no representation at all, separate the experiences of LGBTQ+ people from those of the general population and can be incredibly isolating. *Stop Kiss*, on the other hand, is a story about two young women who are dealing with the challenges of being young adults and who also *happen* to simultaneously discover their queerness. That *Stop Kiss* places Sara and Callie's relationship within the larger context of their lives is crucial in elevating the play as a truthful, poignant, and powerful piece of theater.

--Allie Moss