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## **Reality Clashes With Youthful Idealism**

### **Moonchildren Set to Address the Intrinsic Conflict of Young Students During the 1960s**

The second act of Michael Weller's *Moonchildren* opens with seeming calm, but the dramatic events of the Vietnam War are just outside.

A young man is reading a book at a kitchen table, a redheaded woman is sitting on the unfinished checkered floor blowing soap bubbles, and in the living room two more students are playing chess.

The City College Drama Department will premier its rendition of *Moonchildren* in the Interim Theatre at 8 p.m. on March 17 on West Campus. Performances will continue through March 26.

The play is centered on eight college students living in a small apartment in an unnamed town in the middle of the 1960s.

“They live in a bubble,” said director Katherine Laris. “It’s their final year in college. They have a sense of what’s going to happen next. They are aware of Vietnam.”

1965 was the year when President Lyndon Johnson was sworn in for his second term. It was the year when the first American combat troops arrived in South Vietnam. It was also the year when Martin Luther King, Jr. marched with 3,200 Civil rights activists to the capitol in Montgomery.

“The big thing is that we have a brand new space,” Laris said. “We work in a trailer. The audience is like a fly on the wall.”

Weller is probably best known for his early plays *Moonchildren* from 1971 and *Loose Ends* from 1979. He also wrote the screenplay to the film adaptation of the musical *Hair* in 1979.

*Moonchildren* begins in the fall and ends at the beginning of the following summer. Each act follows one semester of school.

All actors are college students, Laris said, ages 18 to their 60s.

“I know they are all wonderful,” she said. “I really have a great cast. If you have a great cast, you have a great play.”

*Moonchildren* is “a fantastic play, very well written, a great quote of its time,” said Jess Hager, who plays Effing, a rookie cop.

“I love it,” said Hannah Wolf, who plays Kathy. She said the play is a “great representation of the period.” The actors’ task is to bring people back, Wolf said.

“My character is misunderstood,” she said. “She’s not a very nice girl. She’s a victim.”

Alfred Smith plays “Bob,” who has been described as a key character.

“He’s a very conflicted guy,” Smith said. “All the characters are extreme.”

A live feline also plays an important role in this drama. “My teacher told me, they need a cat for a play,” said Greta Lockhart, the cat’s owner. “I will get a unit for having the cat in the play.”

Santa Barbara City College Theatre Group started rehearsing *Moonchildren* at the end of January.

Ticket prices are \$10 general admission, \$8 for seniors, and \$6 for students. Call the Garvin Theatre Box Office at (805) 965-5935 for reservations and information. No late seating will be permitted.