

COURAGE ON THE HIGHWIRE

Musical follows unlikely friendship between young girl and tightrope walker

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UNK Theatre students told the tale of courage and conquering one's fears in their production of "Mirette." Based on a children's book, the musical follows a 10-year-old girl and a tightrope walker.

When the famous tight-rope walker comes to hide at her mother's boarding house, Mirette asks Bellini to teach her his craft. While she learns how to tightrope walk, Mirette helps Bellini learn to believe in himself again.

Janice Fronczak, director of the musical, said the production was both magical and tinged.

"Because they're closing our program, every single thing we do has got a heightened awareness and a heightened joy and a heightened sadness at the same time," Fronczak said. "It's one of those that's the beginning of the end."

Fronczak said she hasn't worked with a lot of the actors in "Mirette" but has had fun watching them grow.

"I've directed a lot of shows and I think the community that we have built with us, with our designers, our cast and our mu-

sical director, I mean, it's really tight," Fronczak said. "There's been some ups and downs as there always are, but the whole cast rallies around each other and it's really quite awesome."

One of those actors new to the UNK stage is Isabelle Kathol, a freshman history education major, who plays Mirette. Kathol wasn't planning on auditioning for the show but was encouraged to by her voice instructor Anne Foradori, the musical director for the production.

Kathol said her character starts as an innocent little girl but becomes more headstrong and independent as the story goes on.

"She has a lot of character development and I really like that," Kathol said. "I like being able to kind of shape her into the girl that she turns out to be at the end. It's really cool to do that."

A friend of the UNK stage, Brianna Linden, a soph-

omore theatre major, plays Mirette's mother in the production. Her role as Madame Gateau is her sixth appearance in a UNK production.

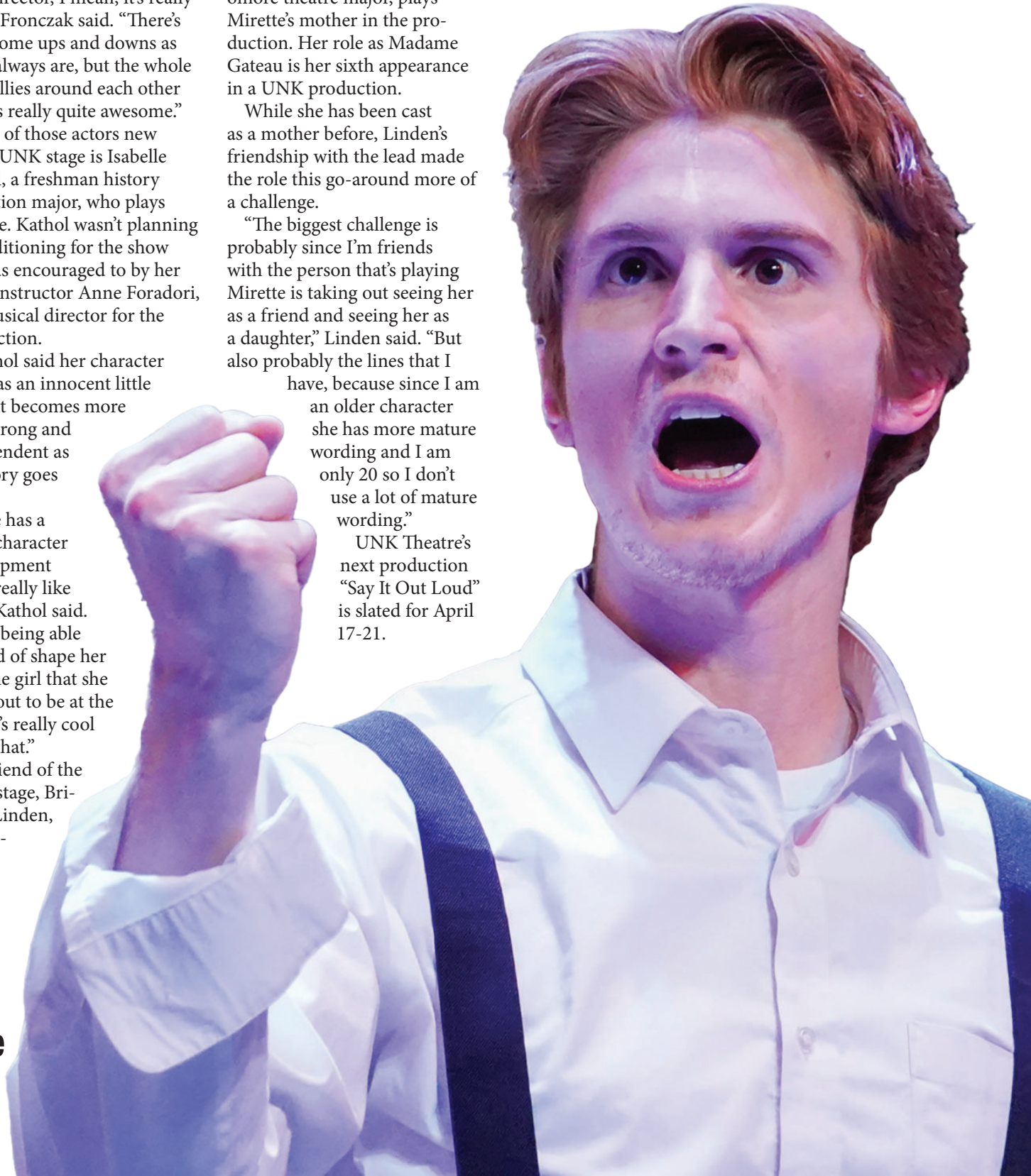
While she has been cast as a mother before, Linden's friendship with the lead made the role this go-around more of a challenge.

"The biggest challenge is probably since I'm friends with the person that's playing Mirette is taking out seeing her as a friend and seeing her as a daughter," Linden said. "But also probably the lines that I

have, because since I am an older character she has more mature wording and I am only 20 so I don't use a lot of mature wording."

UNK Theatre's next production "Say It Out Loud" is slated for April 17-21.

Bellini, played by Chris Terry, speaks passionately on the ways of the tightrope



Tabac, Tetsuhito Tsutsumi, and Madame Rouspenskaya, Victoria Nimneh, encourage Mirette's, Isabelle Kathol, newfound passion.



Camembert, Daniel Con, sings somberly about his love for Gaby, a dancer who does not share his feelings.



Madame Rouspenskaya, Victoria Nimneh, sings Irkutsk, a traditional Russian folk song.



Gaby, Emma Jahn, receives a jewelry box as a gift from Camembert, Daniel Con, while he pines for her affection.

PHOTOS BY SHELBY BERGLUND / ANTELOPE STAFF