

March 24 - April 8, 2006

## Stop Kiss

Reviewed March 31

Running time 1:40 - no intermission  
A poignant, personal drama presented  
in chronology-shifting short scenes

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Diana Son's drama of two women whose friendship blossoms into a deeper, sexual relationship gets a solidly satisfying production featuring sensitive performances from Amy Mihar Hard, winner of the Washington Area Theatre Community Honors (WATCH award) for [Sylvia](#) a few years ago, and Wendy Lamond-Broughton who makes her local stage debut. Director Zina Bleck finds a way to make each of the more than one dozen individual scenes that make up this one-act drama feel fully formed and distinct from the others. Perhaps the most impressive of them all is a completely wordless scene in which Hard's character adjusts the covers of Lamond-Broughton's hospital bed even though, as staged, neither Lamond-Broughton nor the bed are physically on the stage with Hard. It is a touch that lends a special feeling to the moment.



**Storyline: A perky traffic reporter for a New York radio station and a reserved grade school teacher from the Midwest who arrives to take a job at a school in the Bronx strike up a friendship. Both are heterosexuals but their friendship opens up an attraction neither expected. When, perhaps under the influence of a few too many drinks, they share a kiss in a public place, they are attacked in a vicious hate crime.**

This play was given a fine production about a year and a half ago by the small professional troupe [Didactic Theatre Company](#) at the [Warehouse](#). Now it is getting a good mounting in a community theater. Both demonstrate the strength of the written material. Son's drama is extremely well structured and stakes out an intriguing topic and sticks with it through to a conclusion that simply feels right. What is more, it offers two ideal roles for talented actresses. The other roles are properly referred to as supporting, their function is to move the story along, and these roles are handled nicely by the cast here, but it is the pair of Hard and Lamond-Broughton that bring the play to life.

Hard stakes out a more cosmopolitan, urban feel for the role of the New York traffic reporter. She has the perkiness necessary to believe she would be successful as a radio personality in a competitive market and she blends in just a touch of the fatalism that inner-city residents seem to adopt as a defense against the inconveniences of a crowded existence. Lamond-Broughton, on the other hand, has a Midwestern openness about her that rings true. The attraction between the two grows slowly, almost taking each by surprise in the scenes that progress chronologically from first meeting to the night of the attack. The interspersed scenes of the aftermath - the interviews by the police, the hospital visits, the arrival of the boy friend from home - all add spice and a sense of reality which keeps the play from being either a saccharine or prurient portrayal of a young lesbian affair.

The play doesn't require a great deal in the way of physical production. The set here is serviceable, displaying the somewhat messy, lived in looking New York apartment at center stage. There is a curtained wall to the right which is used both as an interrogation area for the scenes in which Tom Petecost does a nice job as the policeman, and, when the curtain is pulled, as the hospital.

*Written by Diana Son. Directed by Zina T. Bleck. Design: Joan A.S. Lada and Juan Filipe Rincon (set) Beverley Nicholson Benda (costumes) Eleni Aldridge (properties) Richard Schwab (lights) Keith Bell (sound) Douglas Olmstead (photography) Joan A. S. Lada (stage manager). Cast: Blakeman Brophy, Amy Mihar Hard, Wendy Lamond-Broughton, Tom Pentecost, Liz Schulz, Eric Sever, Janet Devine Smith.*