

## **‘Anne Frank’ captures essence of familiar story**

### **THEATER REVIEW**

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The story behind “The Diary of Anne Frank” is so familiar as to hardly need retelling. The world has come to acknowledge that Anne Frank did indeed fulfill one of her expressed wishes — that she might live on in her writings after she had died.

In death this vivacious teenager became the icon of the Holocaust and its huge loss to the world.

Riverside Theatre’s current production, in collaboration with the Cornell College theater department, uses the revision of the book presented on Broadway in 1997. In this version, we see more of Anne’s conflict with her mother, as well as musings on her own developing sexuality. In the pivotal role of Anne, Cornell student Natalie Kropf captures the essence of the young girl who dreams of a bright future as a celebrated writer. Living for more than two years in the confines of the secret annex, her natural exuberance gets her into trouble more than once with the serious, frightened older generation.

Like the unfolding of a flower, the sweet romance that blossoms between Anne and Peter (played with sensitivity by Alec Hynes) seems to foretell hope for the future. Sadly, history tells us that all of them — Anne, her sister Margot, and Peter — died within days preceding the liberation of Europe.

The cast of six additional people who occupy the third floor hiding quarters are strong in their support, with special kudos going to Andrew Dawson as Otto Frank, and Jody Hovland playing the role of Mrs. Frank with quiet intensity. The production is ably directed by Mark Hunter.

‘The Diary of Anne Frank,’ continues through Nov. 8 with performances Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 to \$26 through the box office at (319) 338-7672 or [www.rivtheatre.com](http://www.rivtheatre.com).