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Peter Heacock/For the Coloradoan

**ANGUISH:** Brian Hughes as Dimmsdale, right, rehearses a scene from 'The Scarlet Letter' with Rebecca Spafford as Hibbins, center, and Charlie Ferrie as Bellingham at Bas Bleu Theatre.

# RED LETTER DAYS

Bas Bleu presents an updated version of 'The Scarlet Letter'

By **STACY NICK**

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To bring Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, "The Scarlet Letter," to life, Bas Bleu Theatre Company had one of the main characters do some major growing up.

In the novel, Hester Prynne's daughter, Pearl, is an infant and the story covers the first seven years of her life. In Phyllis Nagy's stage adaptation, Pearl vacillates from child to woman as she tells the story of her parents' forbidden love affair, said Flavia Florezell, who plays Pearl.

"She is a very unusual child; old before her time," said Florezell, adding that even when the story line states that Pearl is a youth, she is portrayed as an adult.

For those who have forgotten the tale from their high school English lit class, here's the Cliff's Notes version: "The Scarlet Letter" is the story of the forbidden love between puritan Hester Prynne and

the town's reverend. When Hester is found to be with child — her husband is believed to have died at sea — the town brands her an adulteress.

"Nagy makes the translation from the book to the stage beautifully," director Peter Anthony said. "She kept the true heart of the novel."

To intensify the scenes, the play is narrowed to seven characters. The company also replaced the archaic dialect with more modern speech, although it doesn't seem out of place, Anthony said. Still it keeps the passion, revenge and "all that wonderful stuff of stories," he said.

But while it sounds like a soap opera, the performance keeps true to the heart of the novel, Bas Bleu co-founder and executive director Wendy Ishii said.

"We try to do plays that give you a little more to think about on the way to the parking lot than where you parked your car," Ishii said.

## "The Scarlet Letter"

**When:** opens Feb. 18 through March 26, go online for specific show times

**Where:** Bas Bleu Theatre, 401 Pine St.

**Cast:** Heather Lawrence-Wescott, Greg Clark, Flavia Florezell, Charlie Ferrie, Rebecca Spafford, Brian Hughes and Marlin May.

**Cost:** \$17 for adults, \$12 for seniors (65 years and up) and \$10 for students; opening nights with reception are \$25

**Information, tickets and show-times:** www.bas-bleu.org or 498-8949