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CT School Students Raise Voices in Conflict July 11 at Vineyard Theatre

By Adam Hetrick
11 Jul 2007

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The students of Wilton High School return to the Vineyard Theatre July 11 with their acclaimed Iraq War-inspired play *Voices in Conflict*.

The Vineyard and Art Meets Commerce presented the New York premiere of *Voices In Conflict* on June 9 for a sold-out performance. Subsequent single-night presentations at The Public Theater and The Culture Project followed. However, because only a limited amount of the public was able to see the initial performances, The Vineyard is remounting the production July 11-13.

The documentary-style project created by advanced theatre students at Wilton High School, is a series of monologues based on the words of actual soldiers serving in Iraq. The monologues were culled from various interviews, blogs, letters and the book "In Conflict: Iraq War Veterans Speak Out on Duty, Loss and the Fight to Stay Alive" as well as the documentary "The Ground Truth."

The cast features Wilton High School students Sarah Anderson, Nick Basile, Erin Clancy, Afton Fleming, Devon Fontaine, Seth Koproski, Chris Kozlowski, Natalie Kropf, Nick Lanza, Cameron Scott Nadler, Jimmy Presson, Allie Rizzo, Tara Ross, Dagan Rossini, Taylor Telyan and Mike Ward. Their faculty advisor and instructor of the Advanced Theatre class, Bonnie Dickinson, directs.

Dickinson and her students received national and worldwide attention, including a feature in the New York Times, when school officials banned the work from being performed on school grounds this past spring. Wilton High School's principal feared the play could offend families of those in service, while the superintendent deemed *Voices in Conflict* "sensational and inappropriate."

The theatrical heavyweights who rallied around Dickinson and her class included Edward Albee, Christopher Durang, John Weidman, Marsha Norman, Doug Wright, John Guare and John Patrick Shanley, representing the Dramatists Guild of America, as well as the National Coalition Against Censorship, who formally called for the school district to allow the play to go on.

In addition, Music Theatre International, the New York musical licensing agency who licenses their productions to schools and various theatrical organizations worldwide, awarded Dickinson and her students the first-ever "Courage in Theatre Award" for their perseverance and theatrical ambition.

Voices In Conflict runs July 11-13 at 7 PM at Vineyard Theatre (108 East 15th Street). All tickets are free and must be reserved in advance through the Vineyard box office (108 East 15th Street, between Union Square East and Irving Plaza), by calling (212)353-0303 or by visiting www.vineyardtheatre.org

For more information visit www.voicesinconflict.com.

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