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Contact: Maureen Q. Wolyniec
Director of Institutional Development
860.443.5378 x213
maureen@theoneill.org

NEWS FROM THE O'NEILL

O'NEILL ANNOUNCES SELECTIONS FOR FIFTH ANNUAL YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL - MAY 7-9 *Four Local Student Playwrights to Participate*

Waterford, Connecticut – **The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center** today announced the five selections to be developed and presented during its **Fifth Annual Young Playwrights Festival**, May 7-9. During the Festival, student playwrights will use the principles and techniques of the O'Neill's National Playwrights Conference to further develop their own scripts. A free public presentation of the selected plays will then take place.

Selected Young Playwrights Festival plays are: ***SOCKS DON'T CURE COLD FEET*** by **Casey Corrado, Waterford High School**; ***THE FOXWOODS DILEMMA*** by **Micah Greenleaf, Clark Lane Middle School, Waterford**; ***EL DIA DE GRACIAS*** by **Amanda Jengo, Fitch High School, Groton**; ***THE RHYME-SPACE CONTINUUM*** by **Nicholas Rieger Kennedy, Fitch High School**; and ***THIS JUST IN*** by **Erin Bilir, Colorado Academy, Denver**.

During the Young Playwrights Festival, student playwrights will spend two days working collaboratively with a creative team consisting of a director, dramaturg, and actors – alumni of the O'Neill's National Theater Institute – to explore, revise and develop their plays, bringing their written words to life. The Festival will culminate with a script-in-hand public reading of the students' work at 5:00 pm on Sunday, May 9 in the Dina Merrill Theater, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, 305 Great Neck Road, Waterford; the performance is free and open to the public.

The Young Playwrights Festival, which includes in-school playwrighting workshops for middle and high school students, is supported in part by the Buscetto Family & Friends Fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut, and the Bodenwein Family Foundation.

Sophia Chapadjiev, Young Playwrights Festival Director, said: "*Once again, we received a record number of submissions. There is a wealth of young and eager talent locally, and nationally, and I am happy that the O'Neill is taking a part in nurturing it.*" Chapadjiev, a playwright herself, has most recently been produced at the York Theater in New York City and in May her work makes its Australian debut.

For more information on the Young Playwrights Festival, visit www.theoneill.org or e-mail Sophia Chapadjiev, Festival Director, at sophia@theoneill.org.

This year's selections, chosen for development from among 128 submissions, include:

- **SOCKS DON'T CURE COLD FEET** by Casey Corrado, Waterford High School
On the night before her wedding, Lucy walks into a bar and strikes up a conversation with Owen, the bartender. The two of them share a beautiful night together, and come to realize they might actually have found their true love. But will they be able to tell each other in time?
- **THE FOXWOODS DILEMMA** by Micah Greenleaf, Clark Lane Middle School
Isaac Foxwoods, a crazed scientist, is attempting to genetically replicate one of the last iguanas on the planet. However, he must be careful not to reveal too much with his brother, Francis, lurking about.
- **EL DIA DE GRACIAS** by Amanda Jengo, Fitch High School
Family issues ensue when Alma decides to bring her boyfriend, Jake, over for Thanksgiving dinner. Everyone at the table seems to be holding onto a secret, but who is willing to spill the beans?
- **THE RHYME-SPACE CONTINUUM** by Nicholas Rieger Kennedy, Fitch High School
In order to seek one girl's attention, Absalom and Seamus agree to help their friend, Rich, win her over by competing in their school's talent show. It's sure to work - that is, if they're brave enough to go through with it.
- **THIS JUST IN** by Erin Bilir, Colorado Academy
A young girl claims she is pregnant through Immaculate Conception. Worldwide belief is divided. One reporter struggles to uncover the truth.

The O'Neill, founded in 1964 in honor of Eugene O'Neill, four-time Pulitzer Prize Winner and America's only playwright to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, is the country's preeminent organization dedicated to the development of new works and new voices for the American theater. The O'Neill has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and 2,500 emerging artists. Scores of projects developed at the O'Neill have gone on to full production at other theaters around the world, including Broadway, Off-Broadway and major regional theaters.

O'Neill programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, National Critics Institute, National Puppetry Conference, the Cabaret & Performance Conference, and National Theater Institute, which conducts semester-long, fully accredited intensive theater training programs and Theatermakers, a six-week accredited summer program.

In addition, the O'Neill owns and operates Monte Cristo Cottage as a museum open to the public. Childhood summer home of Eugene O'Neill, the Cottage is a National Historic Landmark.

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center has received a special Tony Award, the National Opera Award, the Jujamcyn Award for Theatre Excellence and the Arts and Business Council Encore Award. For more information, visit the O'Neill website, www.theoneill.org or email theaterlives@theoneill.org.

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