



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:

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**Theater at Monmouth's Fall Series *WAR: THEN AND NOW*
Reveals How War on the Ground Brings About The War in Ourselves**

Monmouth, Maine – Theater at Monmouth presents two shows this fall for the series titled, **WAR: THEN AND NOW**, featuring *An Iliad* by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare based on a translation of Homer's *Iliad* by Robert Fagles, and *Grounded* by George Brant. Coming off the heels of the 2021 Summer Rep Season, these two plays continue the *(R)evolutionary Redux* Season as we take a look at two individuals who have seen and been through war, and back. Join this odyssey in *An Iliad* September 2nd through 11th, and *Grounded* September 16th through 26th.

An Iliad, set in the present, a lone figure onstage, The Poet recalls the nobility, savagery, and valor of Trojan War battles and warriors, while exploring the human costs of war through the centuries. This tour-de-force adaptation of Homer's classic poem weaves humanity's unshakable attraction to warfare with the music of the muses, capturing the contradictory conditions of glory and violence with spellbinding modernity.

Visionary creators Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare have crafted a sprawling yarn based on Homer's epic poem of love, battle, gods, and honor. TAM favorite Mark S. Cartier spent the pandemic months memorizing the words and getting the soul into his bones to perform this tour-de-force account of humanity's unshakable attraction to violence, destruction, and chaos. Has anything really changed since the Trojan War?

Grounded tells the story of an American fighter pilot who becomes unexpectedly pregnant, she is reassigned to operate military drones from a windowless trailer outside Las Vegas. By day, she hunts terrorists. By night, she enjoys a quiet family life in suburbia. As the pressure to track a high-profile target mount, the boundaries begin to blur between the desert where she lives and the one she patrols half a world away.

George Brant's *Grounded* explores the story of an unnamed fighter pilot in the US Air Force who becomes pregnant unexpectedly, forcing her to give up her wings. On returning from maternity leave, she's co-opted into "the chair force" as a reluctant drone operator. "I stare at grey," she says glumly; 12 hours a day, seven days a week. After each shift, she drives home to family life, a process that becomes increasingly dislocating. The play delivers a ferocious climax, as the pilot's state of mind unravels.

Brant came across a photograph showing a fighter pilot in her mid-to-late thirties. She's in her flight suit, carrying a helmet. She stares down the lens without smiling, both assertive and at ease, but the first thing you notice is her belly. Her suit's open and she's pregnant. Her bump is the same shape as her helmet. "It's just this amazing photo: maternity, sexuality and the warrior." Brant had needed an "in," a figure to embody the dilemmas drones posed. As he says, "it's very hard to write a machine as a protagonist." The image helped the play fall into place.



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The pilot was Maj Stephanie Kelsen, Vapor to her peers, and pregnant at 37. She'd been in the US air force for 20 years, one of the few women flying military jets, and was facing the possibility that she might not fly again. By the time she asked photographer Shlomit Levy Bard to take her portrait, her suit wouldn't zip up. Behind her, the background is bleached out in a blinding white sky. The photographer told the New York Times that she had wanted "a feeling of the vastness that [Kelsen] experiences while flying". Brant clung to that. His pilot struggles to sum up the sensation of flight. "You are the blue," she stutters. "You are alone in the vastness and you are the blue."

On choosing these plays in continuation of the *(R)evolutionary Redux* Season, Producing Artistic Director, and director of *Grounded*, Dawn McAndrews shares, "In part, I was looking for ways to honor veterans and their experiences; in part, I was looking for stories that explored the experience of war. I'm a parent of two young men who have grown up in a country continuously at war somewhere in the world, and sometimes closer to home. The war on drugs, the war on terror, the war on democracy, this is the state of our world. These two plays together through the words of *The Poet and The Pilot*, weave an experience of war and its consequences—both large and small."

An Iliad features Mark S. Cartier as The Poet. Directed by Bill Van Horn; Set Design by Jim Alexander, Costume Design by Michelle Handley, Lighting Design by Erin Fauble, Sound Design by Rew Tippin, Stage Management by Aaron Louque.

Grounded features Amber McNew as The Pilot. Directed by Dawn McAndrews; Set & Lighting Design by Jim Alexander, Costume Design by Michelle Handley, Sound Design by Rew Tippin, Stage Management by Aaron Louque.

Performance Calendar: *An Iliad* PREVIEW 9/2 OPENING 9/3 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 9/4, 9/8, 9/9, 9/10, 9/11 at 7:30 p.m., 9/4, 9/5, 9/9, 9/11 at 1:00 p.m.

Grounded PREVIEW 9/16 OPENING 9/17 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 9/18, 9/22, 9/23, 9/24, 9/26 at 7:30 p.m., 9/18, 9/19, 9/26, 9/27 at 1:00 p.m.

Engagement Programs

Tickets, Subscriptions, and Ways to Save. A TAM subscription offers the greatest savings and exclusive benefits like priority seating and ticket exchanges. Gold, Flex, General, or Senior Passes are available for purchase, so whether you want a ticket for each show or five tickets to one show, there's an option for you. Single tickets for the Summer Repertory and Fall Plays are \$36 for adults, \$31 for senior citizens, and \$22 for students (18 and under). Family Show tickets are \$17 for adults, \$12 for children. Due to limited capacity this year, individual tickets must be bought at a minimum of two tickets.

Opening Nights are Educator Nights. Educators receive 20% off the general ticket price with a valid photo ID at the Box Office.



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Individual Day-Of Tickets: To help with capacity limits, Theater at Monmouth is restricting the purchase of one individual ticket to day of show. Please call the Box Office at 207.933.9999 to purchase these tickets.

For calendar and reservations, please contact the TAM Box Office at 207.933.9999 or visit www.theateratmonmouth.org.

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Theater at Monmouth, founded in 1970, was named the Shakespearean Theater of Maine by the State Legislature in 1975. The theatre's mission is to present innovative approaches to Shakespeare and other classic plays through professional productions that enrich the lives of people throughout Maine. Since its founding, TAM has produced expertly crafted, engaging productions in its three-month Summer Repertory Season entertaining audiences from 36 states and through Education Tours annually reaching more than 15,000 students statewide.

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