

The Draft - Reviews

"A monumentally important new play. Has the potential to reach history classrooms and new generations while bridging to veterans and current soldiers."

- *ArtsImpulse*

"Striking . . . powerful . . . freighted with pain [yet] healing."

- Edge Media Network

"I was privileged to watch a performance of *The Draft* with a group of students, which allowed me to fully appreciate how brilliantly the play made events that happened 50 years ago both real and relevant to the current generation. For our students, the experience was a revelation: they began to understand both the Vietnam War and current conflicts in a profoundly new and personal way. As a member of the generation whose lives the play explores, I found the experience was no less powerful: the memories it calls forth, some long forgotten, are simultaneously heart-breaking and affirming."

- Elizabeth Preston, Interim President, Westfield State University

"*The Draft* could not be a better introduction to a conflict that today's students know little if anything about. Alternately poignant and electrifying."

- Steven Bauer, Emeritus Professor of English, Miami University, OH

"Provocative, sad, enraging, beautiful. I was moved to tears and riveted throughout."

- Hillary Goodridge, Roslindale, Massachusetts

"Beautifully written and performed. *The Draft* is one of the best tools for understanding the broad human context of the Vietnam War era and the racism and militarism at the root of U.S. foreign policy then and now."

- Maggie Martin, Co-Director, Iraq Veterans Against The War, Iraq War Veteran (2003, 2005)

"Moving, inspiring, soulful."

- Pat Hynes, Director, Traprock Center for Peace and Justice, Greenfield, Massachusetts

"I was a child when the men in my community went off to the war, or didn't. You captured the confusion in my community so carefully and exactly. I feel so grateful to

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get to review/re-see that time in a way that feels healing to me. I pray many people get to see this work.”

- Laura Ruth Jarrett, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

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A 4+ minute trailer for the play can be experienced here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnYqvRNUgBw>

The whole play is available here, at the Media Education Foundation website (www.mediaed.org), but it has “FOR PREVIEW ONLY” on the screen.

<https://shop.mediaed.org/the-draft-p662.aspx>

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Finally, here is an article about the play from when one of its first of 11 performances in Boston, at Trinity College, at Westfield State University and at the Academy of Music. It was the recipient of these awards/nominations:

Winner, Best Ensemble in a Play - ArtsImpulse 2015

Finalist, Best New Work - ArtsImpulse 2015

Finalist Best New Work (Small Stage) - Independent Reviewers of New England (IRNE) 2015

Behind the Scene: “The Draft” - Boston Globe – 9-11-2015 Terry Byrne

When playwright Peter Snoad approached Diego Arciniegas to direct Snoad’s new play, “The Draft,” Arciniegas said he was captivated, but challenged too.

“The Draft,” which is adapted from the book “Called to Serve,” chronicles the true stories of eight men and two women confronted by the draft during the Vietnam War. Snoad’s adaptation crosses time and space, including iconic photos and evocative music of the era in an effort to capture the emotions surrounding conscription. To add to the challenge, after its run at Hibernian Hall in Roxbury, “The Draft” is

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embarking on a tour of colleges, so whatever director Arciniegas envisioned had to be portable.

“Diego understood right away that this is a movement and dance piece,” says Snoad. “The stories move quickly, and we need to find a way to keep the energy going.”

Arciniegas’s solution: a collection of garment racks covered with fabric. The racks, which are lightweight and move easily on wheels, serve as projection screens, offer opportunities for shadow puppetry, hide props, can be grouped in combinations to become set pieces, and even provide places for actors to make quick changes.

“Some of the best ideas come from the constraints we have to work within,” says Arciniegas. “The stories in ‘The Draft’ speak for themselves, and we didn’t want to weigh them down with too much stage design, so we decided to forgo a set designer and focus on Roberto Mighty’s projection design.”

Mighty, a Boston-based video artist, musician, and teacher, compiled an array of documentary footage as well as atmospheric projections to help set the scenes. Mighty’s imagery, Arciniegas says, inspired him to think about borrowing film techniques that could be adapted to the stage.

“We are able to suggest crowd scenes or secondary locations with shadow puppetry behind the screens,” Arciniegas says. “I was also inspired by the opportunity to use a graphic novel quality, projecting line drawings or simple images to help create the connections between the stories and provide a frame for the ideas.”

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the war in 1975, and yet, Snoad says, it is still difficult for Americans to come to terms with it.

When he visited a college classroom to talk about the play and ask students about their familiarity with the Vietnam War, Snoad said he was shocked that so few students had any real knowledge of it, let alone of the draft.

“Without getting caught up in a history lesson, we need to communicate some basic information,” says Snoad. “But the play explores the universal and timeless question of what we do when we’re faced with a situation that demands a choice.”

Terry Byrne