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SUMMERWORKS THEATRE FESTIVAL: RESPONDS TO *HOMEGROWN* 'CONTROVERSY'

As part of the SummerWorks Theatre Festival 2010 wrap up, the festival's Board of Directors wishes to publicly respond to criticism regarding the *The Homegrown Project's* production of Catherine Frid's play "Homegrown".

The mandate of SummerWorks is to provide a forum for high-quality, original, entertaining and relevant plays that reflect the broadest possible spectrum of Canada. It encourages submissions from all demographics and is proud of the vast range of styles and voices presented each year. All submissions to the festival are juried by a selection of professional theatre artists, including the Festival's Artistic Producer, Michael Rubinfeld. This diverse group of artists work diligently to ensure the independent projects that constitute the festival line-up meet the festival's mandate to "intrigue, excite and entertain an audience."

The Board of Directors supports the jury's right to select works, which meet this goal, and supports the individual artists' right to produce their art.

The SummerWorks 2010 play "Homegrown" has been criticized publicly as being sympathetic to terrorism. These criticisms were made prior to the play's first performance and could only have been made by someone with little knowledge of the play. The play in no way supports or condones acts of terrorism. The SummerWorks Board of Directors has no doubts as to the appropriateness of the play being included in the SummerWorks 2010 line-up; they believe it has very successfully met the festival's mandate by engaging its audience, and the Canadian public in general, in a dialogue about the issues surrounding Canada's response to terrorism.

"We've been extremely grateful to many of our major sponsors for their vocal support of SummerWorks, and furthermore to the majority of all mainstream media, who, after seeing the work, have all confirmed our position that the work does not glorify or support terrorism in any way", said Summerworks Artistic Producer Michael Rubinfeld.

With the inclusion of "Homegrown" in the SummerWorks 2010 line-up, questions have also been raised regarding the appropriateness of public funding for SummerWorks. One criterion that the jury does not consider is how funders will perceive a play, nor would the SummerWorks board ever wish them to do so.

"It would be a sad day for the festival and for all Canadians if access to artistic funding requires silencing the voices of specific groups of Canadians", said SummerWorks board Chairman David Taylor.

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For more information on SummerWorks visit www.summerworks.ca