



## Virginia Stage Company Awarded NEA Artistic Excellence Grant

NORFOLK, VA- Virginia Stage Company announced today it has been awarded an Access to Artistic Excellence grant in the amount of \$40,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of VSC's Military Family Project. VSC has commissioned and will produce a new play by author Deborah Brevoort exploring the dynamics of family life in our nation's military as part of VSC's American Soil series.

The new play, with a working title of *The Comfort Zone*, is slated to be the fourth production in the Company's American Soil series. The Series is a multi-year new play development project that explores the cultural and historical foundations of Southeastern Virginia by fostering community conversation and creating compelling theatrical art. Other plays presented under the American Soil banner have included *A Line In The Sand* by Chris Hanna, *Alive and Well* by Kenny Finkle, and *SCKBSTD - A New Musical By Bruce Hornsby*, which will premiere in January 2011. The plays are taking the stories of Hampton Roads to a much larger audience: *Alive and Well* recently finished a successful run at The Old Globe in San Diego and *A Line In the Sand* received critical acclaim and national press coverage.

"Virginia Stage Company's American Soil project reflects our Company's commitment to nurture new works that will not only tell our area's stories, but will also add to the national repertoire of plays," said VSC Managing Director Keith Stava. "Hampton Roads is home to the largest concentration of military families in the nation. *The Comfort Zone* will explore the challenges and joys that families face when a loved one is serving their country. It's a story that will resonate for so many here and all across the country."

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts by bringing the arts to all Americans and providing leadership in arts education. The NEA is the largest annual national funder of the arts in the United States. This season, NEA is distributing more than \$97.5 million through 1,323 grants to nonprofit national, regional, state, and local organizations nationwide. Since 1965, the NEA has awarded grants totaling more than \$4 billion. For more information, please visit <http://www.arts.gov>.

Newly appointed NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman said, "Everywhere I have traveled over the past 9 months, I have been encouraged by the resilience and adaptability of our arts organizations, as they strive to fulfill their missions in the midst of a challenging economy. I've learned that a thriving arts sector brings with it economic and cultural vitality that helps drive community sustainability. These NEA grants will help sustain art work and keep it working for the organization, its community, and the nation."

Virginia Stage Company is Hampton Roads' only fully professional resident theater company, serving an audience of nearly 90,000 yearly. Over 31 seasons, VSC has made significant contributions to the quality of life in the region: presenting more than 185 plays through more than 3,700 performances; revitalizing and renovating the historic Wells Theatre; providing educational programs for students of all ages; and preserving the legacy of live theater for future generations.

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Media Release

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