

ALLEY THEATRE

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New Play and Pilot Drama **Grounded** by George Brant Lands at Alley Theatre

Alley Company Artist Elizabeth Bunch appears in spellbinding solo show in the Neuhaus Theatre, March 25 - April 17

HOUSTON, TX – Alley Theatre Artistic Director Gregory Boyd announces the cast and creative team for George Brant's tour de force production, **Grounded**. Director Jackson Gay collaborates with Alley Company Artist Elizabeth Bunch in this riveting one-woman show about a female fighter pilot's struggle to return to civilian life.

Alley Company Artist Elizabeth Bunch plays an ace fighter pilot who has been reassigned to a new position flying a remote-controlled drone from an Air Force trailer. Her 12-hour shifts hunting terrorist targets in the Middle East are followed by 12 hours at home, struggling as a wife and mother in suburban Las Vegas. The mounting pressure to track a high-profile target blurs the boundaries between the desert she lives in and the one she patrols, half a world away.

Elizabeth Bunch has appeared in more than 50 productions at the Alley Theatre. Audiences recently watched her take on the role of Dolly in *One Man, Two Guvnors*, and previous roles as Lucy in *Dracula*, Ann Deaver in *All My Sons*, and Bev/Kathy in *Clybourne Park*. She also participated in the first Alley All New Festival, as Elizabeth Taylor in a reading of Lawrence Wright's *Cleo*. A graduate of New York University's Tisch School, Elizabeth's additional Alley roles include portrayals of Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Margaret in *Good People*, and Joss in the World Premier of *Fool* by Theresa Rebeck.

Director Jackson Gay returns to the Alley after directing *Other Desert Cities, August: Osage County* and the Alley's 2010 World Premiere of *Intelligence-Slave*.

Playwright George Brant, who earned an M.F.A. at the University of Texas at Austin, makes his Alley debut with **Grounded**.

Winner of the National New Play Network's 2012 Smith Prize for plays focused on American politics, **Grounded** was described as "Top Notch – a chilling portrait of future war..." by *New York Magazine* and the play was named a Top 10 London Play of 2013 by the *London Evening Standard*. *The Guardian* describes **Grounded** as "A searing piece of writing" while *The New York Times* calls the play "Gripping."

The **Grounded** creative team includes Scenic Design by Takeshi Kata (Alley's *Other Desert Cities, Venus in Fur*), Costumes by Erica Griese, Lighting Design by Paul Whitaker (Alley's *Other Desert Cities, Red, Moon for the Misbegotten*), Sound Design by Broken Chord (Alley's *All the Way*) and Projection Design by Nicholas Hussong (*These Paper Bullets*).

The themes of war, family and powerful storytelling extend through the Alley Theatre building as The Telling Project, a Texas-based, national performing arts non-profit, makes its Houston debut, in conjunction with **Grounded**. Houston veterans will take to the stage and perform their own personal stories of service in a three-act play. *Telling: Houston* premieres Friday, March 25 at 8 p.m. at the Alley Theatre (Texas Room), with six performances scheduled through Sunday, April 3. *Telling: Houston* performances are free and advance reservations are required.

WHEN: Grounded, by George Brant (Alley Debut) and directed by Jackson Gay begins performances March 25, opens March 30 and runs through April 17 on the Neuhaus Stage. Recommended for mature audiences.

TICKETS: Tickets to **Grounded** are now on sale and start at \$27. Discounted tickets are available for any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for \$16 for designated performances in designated sections. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. A military discount is offered at \$29 per ticket to active duty and veteran military personnel and their immediate families. Must present ID when picking up tickets. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

SPECIAL EVENTS: The Telling Project: Houston Military Veterans and Family Members take the stage to share their stories in *Telling: Houston*. *Telling: Houston* premieres Friday, March 25 at 8 p.m. at the Alley Theatre (Texas Room), with six performances scheduled through Sunday, April 3. Performances are free. Advanced reservations are recommended and can be made now online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

Following the April 2 (2:30pm) and April 5 (7:30pm) performances of **Grounded**, the Alley will offer a special Artist TalkBack post-show event. The TalkBack will feature actors from the production talking about their experience and process.

The Alley Theatre will also present Alley In Context following the April 10 (2:30pm) and April 17 (2:30pm) performances of **Grounded**. These discussions will feature civic leaders, local academics, and community members discussing the themes of the play and how they are reflected in our lives today. Artist Talk-Backs and Alley In Context are free and open to the public.

SPONSORS: Grounded is generously sponsored by Honorary Producer Beth Madison. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2015-2016 season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE

The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading not-for-profit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company lead by Artistic Director Gregory Boyd and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. The Alley produces up to 16 plays each year in our newly renovated theatre, ranging from the best current work, to re-invigorated classic plays, to new plays by contemporary writers. The Alley is home to a Resident Company of actors. In addition, the Alley engages theatre-artists of every discipline – actors, designers, composers, playwrights – who work on individual productions throughout each season as Visiting Artists.

The current renovation of the Hubbard Theatre at the Alley was completed in October 2015 – and created a new 770 seat state-of-the-art performance venue. Matched with our 299-seat Neuhaus Theatre, the Alley offers nearly 500 performances each season. The Company reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance and education programs. Our audience enrichment programs include pre-show and post-performance talks, events, and workshops for audience members of all ages.

ABOUT THE TELLING PROJECT

The Telling Project is a national performing arts non-profit that employs theater to deepen our understanding of the military and veterans' experience. Greater understanding fosters receptivity, easing veterans' transitions back to civil society, and allowing communities to benefit from the skills and experience they bring with them. For more information please visit www.thetellingproject.org.