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Controversial Corrie play makes Edmonton debut

"The scariest thing for non-Jewish Americans in talking about Palestinian self-determination is the fear of being or sounding anti-Semitic."

—Rachel Corrie

EDMONTON—Heralded as a humanitarian by many, yet vilified as a terrorist by others, Rachel Corrie continues to spark heated debate five years after her death. Yet the controversy concerning the 23-year-old American—killed by an Israel Defence Forces bulldozer while trying to block the destruction of a Palestinian residence in 2003—has since spilled into the arts world via *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, a theatrical production that documents her perilous life in the Middle East.

Theatre YES brings to life the headstrong perspective, humour and humanity of the young International Solidarity Movement member in *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, running at Catalyst Theatre (8529 Gateway Boulevard) March 28-April 12. With text from her journal and email correspondence, the production chronicles Corrie's life and journey from the idyllic surroundings of Olympia, Wash. to the wartorn Gaza Strip, as well as her condemnation of human rights violations of Palestinians living in the area.

The show, adapted by Alan Rickman and Katherine Viner, debuted in 2005 at the Royal Court Theatre in London, where it won Theatrogoers Choice Awards for best director, best new play and best solo performance. Despite glowing accolades from *USA Today* ("Deeply, authentically human.") and the *New York Times* ("An invigoratingly detailed portrait of a passionate idealist."), protests prevented the mounting of the play at the New York Theatre Workshop and at Florida's Mosaic Theatre the following year. In Canada, Toronto's Canadian Stage Company also decided against staging the show.

The Edmonton production will run roughly the same time *My Name is Rachel Corrie* premieres in Israel, with Corrie's parents (who have since set up the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice) slated to attend. A panel discussion focusing on the play's controversy and facilitated by the Edmonton Small Press Association, will take place April 6 at 4 p.m. at Catalyst Theatre upon the conclusion of the Sunday matinee performance.

My Name is Rachel Corrie, taken from the writings of Rachel Corrie and edited by Alan Rickman and Katherine Viner, features Lora Brovold as Rachel Corrie and is directed by Heather Inglis. Set & Costumer Designer is Brian Bast, Lighting Designer is Kerem Centinel, Multimedia Designer is Ian Jackson, Sound Designer is Paul Morgan Donald and Stage Manager is Carrie Howard.

My Name is Rachel Corrie runs at Catalyst Theatre March 28-April 12 at 8 p.m., with 2 p.m. Sunday matinees March 30 and April 6. No performances on Mondays. Tickets are \$21 for Adults and \$16 for Low-income patrons at the door or Tix On the Square (420-1757, www.tixonthesquare.ca). Tuesday nights April 1 and April 8 are Pay-What-You-Can at the door.

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