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Plainfield High School Student Writes, Directs Original Play, "A Hollow Place"

By PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Free Performances by the PHS Players - April 12 and April 13 at PHS Auditorium

PLAINFIELD, NJ – Plainfield High School students, the PHS Players, will perform “A Hollow Place,” a play written and directed by Ay-yaan Muhammad, their classmate, who will be making his writing and directorial debut at their performance on Friday, April 12 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, April 13 at 3 p.m. in the auditorium at Plainfield High School.

Ay-yaan Muhammad never expected to write his own play. His teacher Tash Hawthorne, who has had him in class since his was a freshman, remembers, "He was quite a challenge. He did not speak, he was extremely shy, and he would not look at you in your eyes when you were speaking to him. I am so proud of him," she said, "and I can only imagine how his career is going to be after Plainfield High School."

Muhammad said he wrote this play because it is his last chance to write as a Plainfield High School student since he is graduating in June. "This will be the last time I will get the opportunity to write for the school. Well my first and last time."

He said he based his play on women because of the many women in his life.

"This play has a lot of themes, a lot of symbolism and other things involving black women. I wrote this play for women and for the leads, Kenya and Jhaneyja, to be able to relate and understand a lot of what is going on and what is being talked about. I wanted to show the black women in my life, that raised me, something they can relate to and something that would maybe help them. That's why this play means so much to me."

Muhammad is the second student in Hawthorne's dramatic arts class, who has written and produced his own play this school year. Last year, Jonathan Price, also made his debut as writer and director with his play, "Pulse."

"A Hollow Place" tells the story of a young woman haunted by the ghost of her great-great-grandmother's former slave. It's a psychological play analyzing the past's effect on the present and future. Cast members are Ameelah Carvin, Jhaneyja Fowler, Noah Torres, Jonathan Price, Adriana Inoa, Kenia Castellanos and Ay-yaan Muhammad. Performances will be Friday, April 12 at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 3 p.m. The public is invited to attend. Admission is free.

For more information, please call 908-731-4333 or email gmontealegre@plainfield.k12.nj.us.