

Hereafter

Musical

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TRAGEDY SPARKS CREATIVITY



“TRAGEDY SPARKS CREATIVITY”

By Ed Condran - Asbury Park Press

LINCROFT - The Vietnam War inspired a plethora of protest songs. Bruce Springsteen’s “The Rising” followed the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

And days after Middletown teenager D.J. Wheeler died in a car accident in December 2003, Middletown resident Vinnie Favale also was moved to make art.

Favale couldn't get Wheeler, 18, who died after being thrown from the vehicle on Middletown-Lincroft Road, off his mind.

"I read about this young boy in the paper and it just hit me hard," Favale said. "I thought about the poor kid and the surviving members of his family."

Favale, a vice president of late-night programming at CBS, said he first was inspired to write a song, which then morphed into a musical dubbed "Hereafter," about four people and the spirits they are trying to make contact with one last time.

Those spirits belong to a teenager who passes away after a car crash; a 23-year-old girl who commits suicide; a 60-year-old woman who succumbs to cancer; and a 1930s movie star who dies in a plane crash.

"Some of what I wrote comes directly from my experience," Favale said. "My mother-in-law died of cancer and I saw what it did to my wife. Two of my brothers died within three years of each other during the mid-'70s. Death is something everyone relates to and it's hard. You just wish that the kid who died in the car accident or a girl who commits suicide could tell their loved ones, 'Hey, I'm all right.' If you could only make that one connection one more time."

That's what the characters try to do via a medium in "Hereafter," which will be making its debut Sunday, Dec. 20 at the Ranney School in Rumson.

"We're going to do a concert, all of the songs from the show from beginning to end and that's pretty exciting," Favale said.

Favale wrote each of the show's songs but will not be appearing in the production, although his co-arranger and co-producer, Frankie Keane of Weehawkon, will be among the performers.

"She (Keane) has fun playing the actress who dies in the plane crash," Favale said. "That's the best career move the character, who is a B-movie actress, makes."

Favale said he hopes that "Hereafter" makes it to Broadway someday. If the show ever does hit the Great White Way, Favale expects it will be a one-and-done endeavor, however.

"I'm not quitting my day job," Favale said. "I love it too much. I was made to work in television programming. But I would love to see how far this show goes. I think it's so interesting. Who isn't curious about death? I'm really into the afterlife stuff. I guess that'll be obvious for anyone that sees 'Hereafter.'"

"Hereafter" will be performed at 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, at the Ranney School's Panther Hall Auditorium, 235 Hope Road, Rumson. Tickets are \$50 for adults; \$25 age 21 and younger; free for children age 12 and younger. E-mail hearaftermusical@gmail.com.