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WORLD

Sheehan play debuts in England

Sunday, December 11, 2005 Posted: 1709 GMT (0109 HKT)

LONDON, England (Reuters) -- U.S. peace activist Cindy Sheehan, who won wide attention with a vigil outside President Bush's ranch in the name of her soldier son killed in Iraq, is the subject of a new play by Nobel laureate Dario Fo.

"Peace Mom" received its world premiere in London on Saturday night, starring British actress Frances de la Tour, with both Sheehan and Italian dramatist Fo in the audience.

The one-woman show is based on extracts from Sheehan's letters to Bush and other writings. De la Tour delivered the monologues beneath large pictures of Sheehan's son, Casey, and a tank in the Iraqi desert in front of a plume of fire.

"Frances did such an amazing job of conveying my feelings of anger and betrayal," a tearful Sheehan said.

She said she hoped the play would help "put a human face" on the war.

Sheehan, from Vacaville, California, has become one of the best-known figures calling for U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Iraq since she protested for several weeks outside Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, in August.

Bush has said he sympathizes with Sheehan over the death of her son in 2004 but will not pull out U.S. forces prematurely.

The play was rushed into production to conclude a day-long conference of activists opposed to the U.S.-led war in Iraq, with de la Tour reading some passages from a script.

Fo, the leftist playwright who won the 1997 Nobel Prize for Literature, said his wife and artistic partner, Franca Rame, would star in a longer final version of the play in Italy.

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Cindy Sheehan arrives at Scotland's Parliament in Edinburgh on Thursday.

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