Eastern grad’s play makes its premiere off-Broadway

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WILLIMANTIC — A recent Eastern Connecticut State University graduate has already experienced what it's like to have his first premiere — not too long after he graduated in the spring.

Anthony Piccione, 23, has always been involved with theater and his one-act play, “The End of the Line at the End” was just staged in New York last month through the Manhattan Repertory Theatre.

“Seeing one of my one-act plays staged in my favorite city in the world is a dream come true, and proof to me that sometimes when you don’t give up on your dreams, it actually pays off at some point or another,” he said on his Facebook page.

His play was accepted by the Manhattan Repertory Theatre shortly after moving to New York City.

Piccione said he hasn’t always had it easy, dealing with episodes of depression, social anxiety and living with a high-functioning form of autism — Asperger’s syndrome.

But he’s worked his hardest and tried his best to overcome his struggles and make sure that he’s able to do the things he loves, including theater, film and creating writing.

His premiere featured a one-act play Piccione wrote during his college career about two friends who debate whether God exists.

While one of the friends is a firm believer in God, the other doesn’t believe God exists until he is shot during a drive-by shooting and he has a near-death experience where he was awaiting his final judgment — and still even then he’s not sure.

“This particular script originated back in January of this year, when I was taking Edmond Chibeau’s scriptwriting and presentation class during my last semester at Eastern,” said Piccione.

Piccione has been involved in theater since his early teenage years as a playwright and actor, and graduated from Eastern in May with a bachelor’s degree in theater and a minor in writing and film studies.

Locally, Piccione is known for his full-length drama “We the People,” which was performed at Eastern, as well as two one-act comedies: “How Having a Vampire Boyfriend Would Really Go” and “Ebol-A-Rama.”

He also wrote several one-act plays that were presented at venues within Connecticut such as Playhouse on Park, Hole in the Wall Theater, the Windsor Art Center and Windham Theatre Guild.

“The project I’m most excited about is a new full-length, semi-autobiographical drama that I’m currently polishing up,” said Piccione. “I hope to do a staged reading of the play by the end of 2017, and hopefully will eventually follow that up with a full off-Broadway production in New York.”

In addition to work as a playwright, Piccione also submits weekly columns to OnStage Blog — a popular online theater magazine.

He’s also worked previously as a teaching assistant at Hartford Children’s Theatre and New Britain Youth Theater and he’s self-published two collections of poetry through Amazon: “Words, Art and Autism” and “Portrait of a Twisted, Young Adult Artist.”

To stay up to date on Piccione’s productions and recent works, please visit www.anthonyjpiccione.tumblr.com.