

## 2010 – 2011 Season

Extremes, by Anne Marie Cummings

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# New Theatre Company Launches with Original Play

The Readers' Theatre is a new theatre company forming in Ithaca, New York. Its Founder and Artistic Director, Anne Marie Cummings, is excited to join forces with Associate Artistic Director Gary Weissbrot, actor and owner of Buffalo Street Books.

The Readers' Theatre will serve the community by presenting original plays and plays of well-loved playwrights as staged public readings. In their first year they will present five staged public readings at their current location in downtown Ithaca, Buffalo Street Books, including: *True West* by Sam Shepard (January 28-30), *Fat Pig* by Neil LaBute (March 18-20), *Love Letters* by A.R. Gurney (April 15-17), and *Burn This* by Lanford Wilson (May 6-8).

Set to launch the theatre company on October 15<sup>th</sup>, for one weekend only, is *Extremes*, a new play written by Cummings that tells a compelling story about how investors are attracted to too-good-to-be-true situations. Its themes address the incompetence of the SEC, and the driving force of greed that motivates the financial industry. "If the Bernie Madoff story were fiction, it would be dismissed as 'totally unrealistic,'" said Cummings. "We've seen plenty examples of this, but what we haven't seen is the 'normal' side of the characters behind these operations, and what really motivates them, other than greed."

The concept of The Readers' Theatre is a sign of the times stated Cummings. "Running a theatre and producing plays costs a lot of money, and takes a lot of time," she said. "I like the notion of having an entrepreneurial spirit towards the theatre. Who says you have to produce a play with full sets and lights and the whole shebang in order for an audience to be completely and utterly engrossed? I think hearing plays done very well with the acting and the music and some lights to set the tone allows audience members to use their imaginations more than ever."

Cummings is not new to the theatre scene, or to writing. Prior to moving to Ithaca three years ago, she graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a BFA in drama, worked professionally as an actress for 10 years at regional theatres across the U.S., working with Tony-Award winning directors, including Broadway's beloved Doug Hughes, and ventured into playwriting having had one of her plays, *India Awaiting*, produced Off-Broadway by Indian movie star and chef, Madhur Jaffery, and Sudhir Vaishnav, a producer of Broadway's *Bombay Dreams*.

Joining the cast of *Extremes* are Gary Weissbrot, Tony Simione, Kate Soriano, and Hannah MacLeod. Said Weissbrot, "Having been merely the host of Anne Marie's previous play, *Purgatory Row*, back in 2007, it is a thrill and honor to be more significantly involved in this new, original, and very timely piece." Simione added, "Anne Marie has gathered a group of artists together to create and share their creativity with the community. It is this kind of thoughtful collaboration that all of us look forward to."

Also teaming with The Readers' Theatre is Ithaca Community Radio. They will record *Extremes* and air it on their radio station, at a date not yet disclosed. Said John Walsh, with Ithaca Community Radio, "Ithaca Community Radio is thrilled to be able to make this play available to our listeners. *Extremes* will be our first presentation of an original production, and we look forward to continued and broad collaboration with local writers and performers."

Cummings recalls that one of her favorite theatre experiences was seeing *Love Letters*, A. R. Gurney's play, Off-Broadway. "The two actors read the play from podiums. That was the intention, and the experience was so profound. People really listened to the dialogue, and they were entirely absorbed by the play, as if it were radio theatre. I can imagine that the producers loved the low-budget cost of that play."

Tickets for *Extremes* are \$8. Performance dates are October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 p.m., and October 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Buffalo Street Books, (on Buffalo Street between Cayuga and Tioga Streets in the DeWitt Mall). Reservations are recommended and can be made by calling 607.273.8246. Moosewood cookies will be for sale at intermission. Interested in volunteering, then call 917.415.3685. Visit [www.thereaderstheatre.blogspot.com](http://www.thereaderstheatre.blogspot.com).

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