

READERS' THEATRE PRESENTS OFF-BOOK PRODUCTION OF 'WRECKS,' NEIL LABUTE'S ONE-MAN PLAY, A LOVE STORY

The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca (RTI) will present Neil LaBute's one-man play: **WRECKS** from **Friday, November 21 to Sunday, November 23 at Cinemapolis**. The production will star **Chris Nickerson** and is being directed by **Anne Marie Cummings, RTI's Founder and Artistic Director**. **The 80-minute play, with the music of Hank Roberts, will be performed OFF-BOOK**, a new move for RTI's season of performance readings.

"This season – our fifth season – we're taking more risks from WRECKS being off-book, with the same limited amount of rehearsals that we have for our on-book performances, to presenting CHATROOM on screen," said Cummings. *"I like to push the boundaries with what we do and to keep our audiences immensely entertained by offering them a variety of ways that theatre can be presented, and always with the least number of frills."*

WRECKS opened at the Everyman Theatre in Cork, Ireland in November, 2005, and had its American premiere at the Public Theatre in New York City, almost a year later, in October, 2006. By the time WRECKS made it to NYC, the text was only slightly modified, but was performed with the same actor, Ed Harris who received nominations for his performance from the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Lucille Lortel Awards. LaBute directed both productions.

Wrote Ben Brantley in his *New York Times* review of the play: *"Whether you gasp or merely sigh wearily will depend on your familiarity with, and fondness for, the prolific Mr. LaBute's bleak moral vision of humankind. (Gasp or sigh, you're still likely to think, 'Well, he's done it again.')*" Linda Winer of *Newsday* wrote: *"WRECKS is bound to and identified by its shock value, but it must also be cherished for the moment-by-moment pleasure of its masterly portraiture. There is not an extraneous syllable in LaBute's enormously moving love story."*

In WRECKS, the middle-aged Edward Carr, loving father, successful businessman, and a newly bereaved widower, reflects on his long and happy marriage in a conversational stream of consciousness, addressing the audience, as he stands by his wife's coffin - his wife who lost her life to cancer. What the audience hears is in fact what's happening inside Carr's head. Can someone honestly love a person whom they have deceived for thirty years? This is the central question behind WRECKS as LaBute limns the boundaries of love, exploring the limits of what society will accept versus what the heart desires.

Despite LaBute's assurance that *"There's none of the kind of cruelty that some of the male characters have perpetrated in other pieces,"* it is reminiscent not only of his earlier plays, but also of Browning's poisoned encomiums as love turns out to be the source of more than consolation and transcendence.

At the heart of WRECKS, as of so many of LaBute's plays and stories, is the question of power. Beyond the fact that power in a relationship is unequal - the deeper the love the more vulnerable the individual – there is a special power which derives from knowledge withheld as there is from knowledge revealed. It's a game the protagonist in WRECKS plays and a game LaBute plays with his audience – taking a special pleasure not merely in discommoding those who watch his plays, but in manipulating expectations – the power of storytelling.

DATES & TIMES:

Friday, November 21 – Sunday, November 23; 11/21 & 11/22, Friday and Saturday at 8pm. 11/23, Sunday at 6:30pm.

LOCATION:

Cinemapolis, 120 East Green Street, downtown Ithaca

TICKET PRICES & HOW TO PURCHASE:

Advanced tickets, \$10 for students/\$12 for all adults. Tickets at the door, \$12 for students/\$15 at the door.

Purchase tickets by going to www.thereaderstheatre.com or buy in-person or day-of at Cinemapolis.

MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT:

There will be a free 15-minute On-Screen Skype interview with Neil LaBute following all three performances.