

The Readers' Theatre Presents Gripping Play K2 by Patrick Meyers

In April, The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca will present the thrilling and original drama K2, by Patrick Meyers. The production will premiere in The Readers' Theatre's new home, **the BLACK BOX THEATRE at Lehman Alternative Community School, located at 111 Chestnut Street**. Performances will be one weekend only: **Friday, April 26th (8pm), Saturday, April 27th (8pm) and Sunday, April 28th (6:30pm)**. This is the last performance reading of The Readers' Theatre's 2012-2013 season.

K2 is about two American mountain climbers, Taylor and Harold, who suffer a treacherous fall that leaves them stranded on an icy ledge at 27,000 ft on K2, the world's 2nd highest mountain peak. Harold suffers a broken leg, and Taylor desperately devises to recover a lost rope; their only hope to pull themselves to safety. As chances for survival grow dimmer, the men are forced to confront their greatest fear; their own mortality. When Taylor's attempts to rescue the second rope fail, and the desperation of their situation can no longer be denied, the bond between the two men is put to the test.

The play is loosely based on the story of Jim Wickwire (a former neighbor and alpine climbing guide to K2's director, **Anne Marie Cummings**, while she lived in Seattle) and Louis Reichardt respectively; the first two Americans to summit K2 in 1978. **A treat for all attendees, a one-page, never-before-written-letter, from Wickwire himself, to be printed in the K2 program.**

Starring in this 90-minute, two-person drama will be **Tim Mollen**, Binghamton actor, writer, and director; and **Eric Sterbenk**, local actor, screenwriter, and director. Reading the stage directions is **Sonali Samarasinghe**, former Neiman Fellow at Harvard University, an award-winning journalist, a human right activist, and the current writer-in-residence of Ithaca City of Asylum.

Local musician **Matthew Ocone**, classical guitarist and graduate of the Eastman School of Music, will accompany the performance on classical guitar, and **Peter Rothbart**, composer and director of Electroacoustic Studies at Ithaca College, will bring his original composition to the play throughout. Both musicians will be **LIVE** for all three performances, which will be presented in true Readers' Theatre fashion as a traditional staged-reading instead of the style of The Readers' Theatre's fully blocked performance readings.

"In order to fully stage a stylistically adventurous play like this, one of the actors has to be scaling the wall of a mountain," said Cummings, who played the role of Taylor, as a woman, in a production of K2 in Seattle; when she first met Wickwire who was seated in the audience. "We don't have a sculptural set like the ones most theatre's invest in, so in The Readers' Theatre's production the actors will still embody their characters, but be standing behind music stands. I feel certain that the actors will take our audiences right to the dangerous ledge their characters are on."

Critics agree that K2 becomes a visceral, intimate play that both enthralls and provokes audiences to reflect within their own lives. *"What we feel is indeed that tingling sensation of traveling beyond the rim of experience—of holding on to life at its highest peak."* —NY Times. The NY Post described the play as one that *"takes place in the hearts, mind and pasts of two climbers...it is quite extraordinary—probably like nothing you have seen or heard before."*

Said Mollen: "The extremity of the situation these two characters are in brings out honesty that's brutal and poignant," said Mollen. "In a sense, the psychological terrain is as dangerous as the physical. And, I couldn't resist being in this production. For me, it has the perfect combination of a powerful script, a complex character, and a terrific director."

"K2 is about friendship," said Sterbenk. "It's a bromance before they ever coined the term. We spend two hours with these men, and we see the depth of their friendship through the prism of the extreme situation."

There will be free talk-backs immediately following **all three performances** of K2. For opening night, Friday, April 26th, Special Guest Speaker **Todd Miner**, avid alpine climber and Executive Director of Cornell Outdoor Education, will give a 15-minute talk entitled, **"Being at High Altitude."** On Saturday, April 27th, **Gail Holst-Warhaft**, Tompkins County poet laureate for 2011 and adjunct professor in the Departments of Classics, Comparative Literature and Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University, will give a talk entitled, **"Silence & Nature."** On Sunday, April 28th, **Rothbart** and **Ocone** will give a talk-back entitled, **"Constructing Music for K2."**

Supporting Sponsors are: Cornell Outdoor Education, Eastern Mountain Sports, Red Feet Wine Market & Spirit Provisions, and Sustainable Tompkins. Tickets for students are \$10 with a reservation (student ID required at the door) and \$12 at the door. Tickets for adults and seniors are \$12 with a reservation and \$15 at the door. Reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 607.217.6272. www.thereaderstheatre.com.