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## **Readers' Theatre Opens Fifth Season with Smartly Crafted Scientific History Play**

(Ithaca, NY) The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca is pleased to launch their fifth season with **Anna Ziegler's 2008 award-winning play PHOTOGRAPH 51**. Named one of the top 10 plays in 2011 by *The Washington Post*, all performances of this powerful new play – running **Friday, September 26 – Sunday, September 28** - will continue at The Readers' Theatre's new home, the 96-seat movie theatre #1 at **CINEMAPOLIS, 120 East Green Street**, located in the heart of downtown Ithaca.

Set in 1950's London, PHOTOGRAPH 51 is a funny and moving portrait of the unrequited life of Rosalind Franklin, one of the great female scientists of the twentieth century, and her fervid drive to map the contours of the DNA molecule. A chorus of physicists relives the chase, revealing the unsung achievements of this trail-blazing, fiercely independent woman.

According to *Backstage*, playwright Anna Ziegler has achieved a remarkable balance of scientific subject matter and theatrical storytelling. "*Franklin's role in the discovery of DNA's double helix—the only woman among a raft of male scientists—is here made clear in a play that glows with intelligence and humanity. Ziegler gives full weight to Franklin's achievement without allowing the play to become a feminist tract or turning Franklin's thieving male cohorts and competitors into dyed-in-the-wool villains. This tale of a lone, wondrous woman amidst a casual conspiracy of men makes for compelling theater,*" wrote *Backstage*.

**Anne Marie Cummings**, The Readers' Theatre's Founder and Artistic Director, will direct PHOTOGRAPH 51 with a cast of many fresh faces for the theatre company featuring local actors **Marissa Biondolillo, Dave Dietrich, Janet Jayne** (new to the area from New Jersey), **Cole Long, David Romm**, and **Jacob White** (new to the area from NYC).

Commissioned and produced by Active Cultures Theatre in Maryland, PHOTOGRAPH 51 has been produced world-wide, including the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles, Theatre J in Washington, DC, and the English Theatre of Berlin. Most recently, the play was performed at Seattle Rep's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season in February-March 2013.

*The Seattle Times* wrote of the play, which explores the risk of giving up everything for career and the complicated process of opening the heart: "*It honors Franklin by painting her as a complete person, with flaws and sterling attributes, and by evoking the thrills and risks of scientific pursuit itself.*"

Seattle Repertory audience members commented on the theatre company's website about PHOTOGRAPH 51 stating: "*I had always believed Watson and Crick discovered the structure of DNA, yet all my women friends in Science already knew that Dr. Franklin did the work while the men grabbed the glory,*" and "*I liked the fact that the play was as much about how scientific teams work together as about gender bias,*" and "*The play graphically showed the intense need to be first to publish, to get credit for advances in sciences, to get tenure, and financial recognition.*"

PHOTOGRAPH 51 will take place at Cinemapolis, 120 East Green Street. **Performances run September 26 and 27 at 8pm and September 28 at 6:30pm.** Corporate Sponsors are **FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES, #1253, CAYUGA MEDICAL CENTER, JOSH & KRISTI LOWER, PORTS OF NEW YORK WINERY**, and **TOMPKINS TRUST COMPANY**. Wine by the glass will be on sale (along with free tastings) by **PORTS OF NEW YORK** all weekend long.

Advanced tickets can now be purchased online at [www.thereaderstheatre.com](http://www.thereaderstheatre.com) or in-person at Cinemapolis. Advanced tickets are \$10 with a reservation (students) and \$12 at the door (adults and seniors). Tickets at the door are \$12 with a reservation (students, ID required) and \$15 (adults and seniors). Find more information at [www.thereaderstheatre.com](http://www.thereaderstheatre.com).

**NEW: There will be a free 15-minute Skype interview (on screen) with Ziegler following all three performances. FREE Samples of Wine and Champagne will be served in the lobby of Cinemapolis from Ports of New York Winery before and after all performances.**

*NOTE I: The Readers' Theatre will be holding a FREE screening of their first film EASY PREY on Wednesday, October 1 at 7pm. Please see additional press release for detailed information. NOTE II: This month's The Readers' Theatre has also launched the first podcast for The Writer's Cafe. The Writer's Cafe is The Readers' Theatre's podcast of new and unproduced plays by NYS playwrights. FLOWERS IN THE DESERT, by Donna Hoke (of Buffalo, NY) is airing now on The Readers' Theatre's website. The podcast is free. The play was directed by Melanie Shulman Veazey and stars Michael Hartson and Trudie Petersen (a director and actors based in Orlando, FL). To listen to FLOWERS IN THE DESERT go to The Writer's Cafe at [www.thereaderstheatre.com](http://www.thereaderstheatre.com).*