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THE READERS' THEATRE LAUNCHES THE WRITER'S CAFE

The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca (RTI) will be entering its fifth season in September, 2014 and is excited to launch a new initiative called **THE WRITER'S CAFE**, a podcast of new and unproduced works by New York State playwrights. The podcasts (coming soon to www.thereaderstheatre.com) will be recorded at **CINEMAPOLIS** in Ithaca, and cities around the United States with actors in those cities. **CINEMAPOLIS** is Ithaca's only member-supported independent movie theatre, and RTI's new location for their season of performance readings.

Anne Marie Cummings, RTI's Founder and Artistic Director created the initiative and **Tim Mollen (a professional actor, writer, and director in Binghamton)** will be the **Director of THE WRITER'S CAFE** which will, for its first year, roll out four-to-five new and unproduced works for the 2014-2015 season which will be posted at www.thereaderstheatre.com.

"Wherever you go, there are more playwrights than there are stages. THE WRITER'S CAFE will provide a well-deserved chance for New York playwrights to hear their work showcased online in RTI's inimitable style; without frills, to the point, and with an array of experienced actors," said Mollen.

Cummings explained that since she began RTI in 2010 there have been a number of playwrights from across NYS that have been sending her new and unproduced plays for her to include as part of RTI's season. However, the plays selected for RTI's season of performance readings are new, avant-garde works that have already been fully developed and produced in the US or abroad.

"THE WRITER'S CAFE was created in response to our consultations with playwrights across NYS," said Cummings. *"It's an important opportunity for new and unproduced plays to be heard by emerging and mid-career playwrights so that they can continue to develop their work. Some new plays need a few years of revisions before they're ready for a production or even a performance reading that RTI, or any other theatre for that matter, produces as part of their season. THE WRITER'S CAFE could even be considered to be part of the playwrights' process."*

Currently, new and unproduced works under consideration are by playwrights **Leigh Fondakowski, Barbara Kahn, Marsha Sheiness, Kim Yaged, Brenda Shoshanna** from New York City; **Donna Hoke** from Buffalo; **Cheryl Ann Costa** from Syracuse; **George Holets, Nina Kethevan, David Guaspari,** and **Judith Pratt** from Ithaca, to name a few.

Said **Brett Bossard, Executive Director of Cinemapolis:** *"The lounge area in our lobby encourages thoughtful discussions surrounding the great films screened at Cinemapolis. It seems like a natural transition to host The Writer's Cafe and provide a home for talented voices to bring great art to life."*

Cummings has reached out to her colleagues from Carnegie Mellon University to record some of the podcasts. *"The actors I know from Carnegie Mellon University are amazingly talented; I can trust them with my eyes closed. They live and work in major cities across the U.S. It seems like a great opportunity for them to support this important work and bring us all together as well,"* she said.

THE WRITER'S CAFE has been created for playwrights and will be driven by the following ethos: It will help playwrights develop their art rather than their careers; it provides a platform for playwrights to share their work and receive constructive criticism from others, anywhere in the world; and it gives playwrights a chance to hear their work read by an ensemble of professional actors.

New and unproduced works for THE WRITER'S CAFE will be reviewed and selected by RTI's script reading committee which reads and discusses more than 60 plays a year before selecting the five plays for RTI's season of performance readings at Cinemapolis.

RTI is now accepting new and unproduced works from NYS playwrights in the form of shorts, one acts, and full length plays. The deadline for new and unproduced work for the 2014-2015 season is June 12, 2014. Please note that RTI prefers plays with a cast of no more than four people and scripts that say something about being alive today. Send one script at a time only (with page numbers), as a PDF or MS Word attachment to thereaderstheatre@gmail.com. Please include a phone number.

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