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contact: [thereaderstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:thereaderstheatre@gmail.com)

## **THE READERS' THEATRE TO PRODUCE FIRST ANTI-BULLY VIDEO**

This July, The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca (RTI), with local organizations **Acting Out New York**, Ithaca's **Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service**, and national partner, **PACERS National Bullying Prevention Center** (located in Minnesota) will launch their first anti-bully video. The video will have a special one-night only screening at Cinemapolis (date TBD), The Readers' Theatre's new location, and will air on PACER's and RTI's websites for an entire year at no cost for viewers.

The video will be shot locally casting six local actors performing six short pieces about bullying written by six local writers. **Marilyn Rivchin**, RTI's editor and former Cornell University film professor, will edit the video. RTI's Founder and Artistic Director, **Anne Marie Cummings** will be the lead writer working with artists/writers **Evan Stewart Eisenberg**, **Effie Johnson**, **Alissa Heyman**, **Kenny Berkowitz**, and **Breanna Myers**. Each piece will present the issue of bullying through the perspectives of the bully, someone who is being bullied, a family member of a child who was bullied, a bystander, and a teacher who survived a school shooting by a bully.

Internationally well-known musicians **Sage Francis** (hip-hop artist and the founder and owner of Strange Famous Records, in Rhode Island) and **Yann Tiersen** (French composer), in addition to **Wixen Music Publishing, Inc.** (CA) and **Epitaph Records** (CA), have given RTI free-clearance to use the song "**The Best of Times**" for the video. Francis is known for his song "**Waterline**," the theme song in the film "**Pride and Glory**" starring Edward Norton, Colin Farrell, and John Voight. Tiersen is best known for creating the whimsical music for the film "**Amelie**."

Said Cummings: "I've been a big fan of Sage's work and of course I've hummed along to many of Yann's pieces in the French film starring Audrey Tautou. When I first approached Sage, I was interested in the song 'Waterline,' but he told me that getting the rights to that would be tough. That's when he suggested his song 'The Best of Times' and as soon as I heard it, I thought it would be a great fit. He was extremely generous by offering its use at no cost to RTI and fortunately the other players followed his lead."

Eisenberg, one of the writers for the project stated, "I am honored to be working on the anti-bullying campaign with RTI; it all kind of comes full circle when we learn how to communicate without the bullying, without intimidation, and with peace. I am learning how to use my 'inside' voice when in challenging conflicts with people. Not perfect, but I am getting there."

Also part of the anti-bully video will be **Lee-Ellen Marvin** (Director of the Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service) **Christina Barksdale** (Ithaca Police Department Juvenile Investigator), **Erik Lehman** (Dream Catalyst), and **Rachel Davis** (member of the Ithaca community). They will provide important facts of information about bullying in between the short scenes in the video.

Mid-March, 2014, Cummings and **Darcy Martin Rose** (Director of Acting Out New York) will audition local actors for the anti-bully video. Those interested in auditioning are asked to email Cummings at [thereaderstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:thereaderstheatre@gmail.com). Martin Rose will be scheduling auditions for actors as early as mid-February.

Said Martin Rose: "Bullying is a very serious issue that plagues far too many children, teenagers, and adults all over the world. Theater and film are affective ways of spreading awareness about timely social issues like bullying. Given the vast information about bullying that PACER has collected, the three local organizations hope to spread the word about what this community can do about bullying behavior."

Cummings added that not only does this give local writers an opportunity to flex their writing skills, and not only does it merge theatre and video, but "it supports a cause that we all care about. Navigating solutions to bullying are very difficult for those involved, and because it's not a black and white issue, the more we expose its dark sides, then the more the creative and compassionate solutions will appear," she said.

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