

Soul Mates, by Anne Marie Cummings

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READERS' THEATRE LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE & SUMMER PLAY ONLINE

It's The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca's off-season, but the theatre company doesn't want to leave the community hanging during the summer months without one of their productions, hence the launch of SUMMER PLAY.

SUMMER PLAY allows New York State playwrights and screenwriters to submit new scripts to The Readers' Theatre so they can put their work out there for the world to see *online (a la Readers' Theatre style)* using The Readers' Theatre's professional ensemble of actors, directors, and filmmakers. For New Yorkers interested in submitting their scripts, the electronic script submission fee at www.thereaderstheatre.com is \$35. Script submission guidelines are outlined on The Readers' Theatre's new website as well.

Launching SUMMER PLAY is SOUL MATES, a new romantic comedy by Anne Marie Cummings, The Readers' Theatre's Founder and Artistic Director. There is no fee to watch SOUL MATES on The Readers' Theatre's new website, however, the charitable 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization, now entering its fourth season, does ask for a \$10 tax-deductible donation that viewers can make directly on their new website via PayPal. The Readers' Theatre's new website developer is Ryan McGuire of Bells Design.

SOUL MATES stars two of Ithaca's finest professional actors, Darcy Jo Martin and Evan Stewart Eisenberg, with a special appearance by Rosalee Gelpi. Also part of the team are award-winning filmmakers John Scott (Gaffer), Karen Rodriguez (Director of Photography and a member of The Readers' Theatre's Artistic Board), and Tim Perry (Sound Designer and The Readers' Theatre's Associate Artistic Director).

The Readers' Theatre is also excited to introduce two songs in SOUL MATES from the NYC band Oriole Sol, "Love Du Jour" and "Drink You Up." "Their fusion of Latin jazz, Spanish classical, electronica, and bossa nova was the precise music I was looking for with this piece," said Cummings. "And, we were able to obtain the rights from the band for a minimal fee."

Said filmmakers Scott and Rodriguez, "We intended the lighting to be soft and naturalistic with a bit of a rim to separate the actors from the background. For the opening montage we used available light in the diner and for the play itself we wanted the lighting to be flattering for the actors and appropriate for the location and story. It's been a fun experiment to marry theatre and film for an online presentation."

Eisenberg, who plays Paul in SOUL MATES, said, "Working on such an intimate play, just two people talking at a diner, was exhilarating and fun. The dialogue was a lot like reality, and I could inhabit my character easily because the physical surroundings and the set up were natural and familiar. Shooting a play on video without cuts was a lot like early cinema, where the action was done in long takes, on a stage of sorts, with the camera static and the actors pretty much staying in one place."

What makes SUMMER PLAY different from The Readers' Theatre's ongoing season (September – May), is that SUMMER PLAY productions can only be viewed on The Readers' Theatre's new website; and plays (or screenplays) are recorded using video. What SUMMER PLAY and The Readers' Theatre's live productions have in common is that the actors still hold their scripts with them, yet embody their characters and story fully.

SOUL MATES is about Paul, a charming TV actor, and Evette, a smart book editor, who meet online to work on Paul's cook book. They find that they can't stop writing to one another. One year later, with the question of love in the air, they decide it's time to meet at a diner somewhere in middle-America. Can two people, who've only met through advanced technology, really be in love?

SOUL MATES is not Cummings' first play. Her play, INDIA AWAITING, was produced in 2005 at the Samuel Beckett Theatre in NYC. Since then she's written EXTREMES, TOUCHE, PURGATORY ROW, and recently, SINK HOLE. She has had readings of her plays in NYC at the Cherry Lane Theatre, Classic Stage Company, Primary Stages, and Salaam Theatre.

SOUL MATES was filmed at the Lincoln Street Diner, located in Fall Creek, Ithaca. Chris O'Brien, owner, was very generous in donating his diner to The Readers' Theatre. www.thereaderstheatre.com

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