

A Steady Rain, by Keith Huff

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

## Readers' Theatre Brings Audiences Suspenseful Duologue with A Steady Rain

The Readers' Theatre is very pleased to bring to Ithaca audiences **A STEADY RAIN**, by playwright **Keith Huff**, the gripping noir tale of two Chicago police officers and the complexities of a lifelong bond tainted by the rough streets of Chicago. The intricate play packed the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre on Broadway with full houses in 2009 with Daniel Craig (James Bond) and Hugh Jackman (Wolverine) playing the lead roles.

The Readers' Theatre's performance readings match two local actors, **Junito Cubero** (*as Denny*), and **Tim Perry** (*as Joey, also Associate Artistic Director of The Readers' Theatre*), as these two Chicago cops, who, at the start of the play, find themselves on different sides of the law, in love with the same woman, and their friendship direly tested.

The 90-minute duologue is directed by **Anne Marie Cummings**, Artistic Director of The Readers' Theatre, and will run **Friday, December 2nd and Saturday, December 3rd at 8pm, and on Sunday, December 4th at 6:30pm**. Performance readings will take place in the intimate setting of **THE SPACE, 700 West Buffalo Street** (at the corner of Court and Fulton near the M/V Columbia Dock) - the same location where The Readers' Theatre performed **FROZEN**, the first play of their second season. **A STEADY RAIN** is being sponsored by three local organizations, pleased to support The Readers' Theatre: **Alternatives Federal Credit Union, The Nines, and Barnes & Noble**.

**Pete Panek**, local blues musician and a native of Chicago, who grew up in the neighborhood the two characters recount in the play, will enhance the performance readings LIVE by playing electric guitar underneath the dialogue and in between scenes. Besides playing extensively in and around the area, Pete hosts the long-running Blue Monday Jam at The Nines, as well as the "Blues Progressions" radio show on WICB 91.7 FM every Wednesday, 10am to noon. Panek has shared the stage with blues greats such as Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Koko Taylor, Bo Diddley, and dozens more.

Following all three performance readings of **A STEADY RAIN**, Cornell history professor, **Richard Polenberg**, now the Marie Underhill Noll Professor of History and a specialist in twentieth century America and constitutional history, will give a 20-minute lecture entitled, "**Keith Huff: The Playwright as Historian**." He will discuss the issue of affirmative action, a theme throughout the play, along with the story of the Chicago police department's attempt to conform to affirmative action requirements which began following the 1978 Bakke case. Polenberg will also speak about some of the real-life events Huff dramatizes in the play. Polenberg has served as Chair of the History Department and has received two teaching awards from Cornell University.

At the center of **A STEADY RAIN** is the changing relationship between two men: Denny is a blustering family guy with skewed notions of domestic and professional honor, and Joey is a more inhibited, slightly priggish bachelor. Under interrogation lamps, the two deliver alternating accounts of the high voltage chain of events that jeopardized their friendship and careers. The result is a difficult journey into a moral gray area where trust and loyalty struggle for survival.

Barbara Vitello of the *Daily Herald* said of the Broadway production of **A STEADY RAIN**, "*It's a thoroughly engrossing examination of the toll the job takes on those sworn to serve and protect, and how amorphous the line between criminal and cop can be.*" Baz Bamigboye of *Daily Mail* said, "*Huff elevates to tragic dimensions the life of policemen the way Arthur Miller molded Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*,*" and David Sheward of *Back Stage* said, "*A Steady Rain offers one of the most powerful theatrical experiences in many seasons...Huff's script is full of pungent dialogue and razor-sharp suspense.*"

**All tickets are \$12 with a reservation and \$15 without a reservation. Reservations are highly recommended since seating is limited. They can be made by calling 607.217.6272.** The Readers' Theatre's 2011-2012 season also includes **ART** by Yasmina Reza, February 10-12 (live music: John Bunge on banjo); and **UNCLE VANYA**, April 27-April 29 (live music: Hank Roberts on cello). For more details visit [www.thereaderstheatre.com](http://www.thereaderstheatre.com).

The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca is an ensemble-based group which focuses on performance readings of current, contemporary, and classic plays. Part of their mission is to bring theatre to audiences at a low cost so that those who may not be able to manage the high price of the average theatre ticket, can experience quality theatre affordably. The actors focus on the written word and perform their characters to the fullest while reading from their scripts. They utilize music stand and stools, yet omit sets and props. They interact with one another in a black box setting illuminated with theatrical lights.

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