

BREAKING NEWS

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The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca Forges New Frontier: Brings NYC General Manager on Board to Help Usher in New Genre of Theatre

Besides finding a home and a mutually-beneficial relationship at Cinemapolis, The Readers' Theatre of Ithaca (RTI) made another decision on its new production frontier: the company hired Roberto Ragone, based in New York City, as General Manager to handle fundraising and development.

As Ragone explained in a recent statement, he will develop the themes that best "tell the RTI story," and use them to cultivate relationships and apply for grants. Ragone will also seek out partnerships with companies who engage in "cause-related marketing:" they donate a portion of purchases of their product or service to a 'cause,' like RTI's nonprofit and charitable activities.

Passionate and energized by the opportunity, Ragone said, *"What drew me to The Readers' Theater and its Writer's Cafe is Anne Marie Cummings' personal and professional journey to underscore the value of simple productions. This 'simplicity' allows the audience to better explore the playwright's dialogue, and the actors' delivery."*

Ragone said *"the accessibility of the performance is paramount, and that's what RTI offers."* He defined this as an affordable experience focused on the character and plot, rather than props and staging, conveyed live and recorded to reach many audiences.

"Anne Marie Cummings, RTI's Founder and Artistic Director, has built up a truly innovative company, exploring a unique genre of theatre. RTI presents live and filmed theatre at Cinemapolis. On their website, RTI shows video clips of performances along with its cutting edge podcast through an unprecedented initiative called The Writer's Cafe – a podcast on www.thereaderstheatre.com of new and unproduced plays by NYS playwrights recorded by professional actors across the United States," said Ragone.

Said Cummings: *"I think it's wonderful that, for our fifth year anniversary, I was able to bring Roberto Ragone on board. I always knew that RTI needed a General Manager, but I needed time to determine the best approach for this position. Working with someone based in NYC, my old stomping ground, makes sense given what Ragone will be doing for RTI and The Writer's Cafe."*

RTI is pushing the boundaries between plays on stage and plays on screen. Cummings announced that Tony-award-winning playwright Enda Walsh gave RTI permission to film his play 'Chatroom' as part of RTI's 2014-2015 season.

Ragone concludes, *"These are fascinating and ground-breaking developments, and their implications need to be made fully clear to donors and stakeholders."*

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