

The Readers' Theatre Brings Live Music to *True West*

For their second performance reading this season, The Readers' Theatre will present *True West*, a comedy by Sam Shepard, on Friday, January 28th, Saturday, January 29th, and Sunday, January 30th at Buffalo Street Books. This classic American story explores the functionally dysfunctional relationship of two brothers as they butt heads over a screenplay. Accompanying the performance reading is Catherine Joy and her band. Her entire band will be playing music LIVE throughout the performance reading!

Austin (Gary Weissbrot), is the over-achieving brother, house-sitting for his mother and working on a script he has sold to producer Saul Kimmer (Brett Bossard). When Lee (Ruby Max Fury), the older brother and a demented petty thief, drops in, all hell breaks loose. Lee "pitches" his own idea for a movie to Kimmer, who then wants Austin to junk his bleak, modern love story and write Lee's trashy Western tale. Eventually, Mom (Leigh Keeley), comes home to interrupt her sons' terrifyingly surreal encounter. Local writer Bob Proehl will read stage directions.

Weissbrot is excited to recreate the extraordinary dynamic between Lee and Austin while working with Fury who played Lee 20 years ago. "I thought it would be interesting to revisit the role with the added baggage and experience of those twenty years. In fact I like to think of Lee as a role model," said Fury. Weissbrot said that when he saw *True West* for the first time he was "fascinated by the paradoxical combination of similar yet polar opposite personalities of two brothers, exemplified by Randy and Dennis Quaid, in *The Cherry Lane* production in New York City."

Keeley is also thrilled to be part of *True West*. "This is Sam Shepherd at his best: brisk dialogue, intense confrontations, family dysfunction...what more do we need for a fun evening of theatre," she said. Bossard agrees and added, "I'm always excited to see new groups forming to celebrate theatre and performing arts in our community. I'm doubly excited to actually be part of The Readers' Theatre's inaugural season. It's a great opportunity for audiences and actors alike to appreciate the text of some great works of literature that also just happen to be plays."

Cummings, Artistic Director of The Readers' Theatre, is excited to direct the cast. She recalls seeing Philip Seymour Hoffman and John C. Reilly play the maniacal characters in 2000 at New York City's Circle in the Square. "Not only is Sam Shepard a favorite of mine, both as an actor and a writer, but this play in particular is one of my favorites," she said. "The underlying tension between all of the characters in this play is deeply disturbing, but on the surface it's downright hilarious."

The Readers' Theatre will present three more staged public readings this season: *Fat Pig* by Neil LaBute (March 18-20), *Love Letters* by A.R. Gurney (April 15-17), and *Burn This* by Lanford Wilson (May 6-8). All tickets for *True West* are \$8. Performance dates are January 28th and 29th at 8:30 p.m., and January 30th at 6:30 p.m. at Buffalo Street Books. Catherine Joy music CDs will be for sale before and after the performance reading. Reservations are highly recommended since seating is limited, and can be made by calling 607.273.8246. Interested in volunteering, call 917.415.3685. www.thereaderstheatre.blogspot.com.