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STIRRING THE POT

**RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE ANNOUNCES ITS
18TH SEASON, "STIRRING THE POT," FEATURING THREE NEW WORKS:
A NEW PRODUCTION FROM FRESH PRODUCE, A WORLD PREMIERE
BY A CHICAGO PLAYWRIGHT AND A MIDWEST PREMIERE OF A
HUMANA FESTIVAL HIT**

Chicago, IL – Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's (RTE) Artistic Director **Tara Mallen** is proud to announce Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's 18th season. Chicago's only producing company dedicated to women's voices features three original American plays during their 2013-14 season named "Stirring the Pot." Rivendell chose three provocative, contemporary stories that "stir the pot" and unflinchingly expose challenging issues and instigate vital dialogues on some of the relevant issues facing women today: women in the military, racial tensions at work and negative body image in women. The season begins with ***Women at War***, Thursday, Nov. 21. This Public Workshop Performance at UIC School of Theatre & Music, 1040 W. Harrison Ave., has been developed as part of Rivendell's annual Fresh Produce new play development series and is directed by RTE ensemble member **Megan Carney** with producing partner "VetCAT". The season continues with ***Rasheeda Speaking*** by Chicago's critically acclaimed **Joel Drake Johnson**, directed by **Sandy Shinner**, January 18 – February 16, 2014, and concludes with the Midwest premiere of ***Eat Your Heart Out*** by **Courtney Baron**, directed by **Hallie Gordon**, artistic director of Steppenwolf Young Adults Program, May 31 – June 28, 2014. Both ***Rasheeda Speaking*** and ***Eat Your Heart Out*** will take place at Rivendell Theatre, 5779 North Ridge Ave. Subscriptions, tickets and information are available at www.RivendellTheatre.org

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's 18 Season "Stirring the Pot" includes:

Fresh Produce 2013: *Women At War*

A World Premiere devised work

Directed by Megan Carney in collaboration with Tara Mallen, Regina Garcia, Susan Gaspar, Ebony Joy, Krenee Tolson and Abby Schwartz

With production partner VetCat: A Veterans Creative Arts Therapy Program

Thursday, Nov. 21 at 7 p.m.

Public Workshop Performance at UIC School of Theatre & Music
1040 W. Harrison Ave., ETMSW Building, Room L060

- more -

Fresh Produce is RTE's annual new play development series. Each season new women-focused projects are selected and RTE creates an environment to explore the themes and provide artists with intensive, developmental workshops and skilled partners to create new works.

As debate rages over whether women should serve in combat forces, more women are being sent into active combat zones than ever before. RTE, with a grant from the Chicago Community Trust, explores the lives and challenges of female soldiers today; from military training, to deployment and combat, to eventual re-entry into civilian life. Based on extensive research and first-person interviews, this new theatrical work, a unique collaboration between RTE and the Veterans' Creative Arts Therapy Program, *Women at War* is woven from diverse stories of women's military service and return to civilian life. After each performance, artists and community partners invite audience members to join in a vital conversation about how civilians can better understand and honor these women warriors.

Rasheeda Speaking

by Joel Drake Johnson

World Premiere

Directed by Sandy Shinner

Featuring RTE Artistic Director **Tara Mallen** and Steppenwolf ensemble member **Ora Jones** with RTE ensemble member **Eric Slater** and **Lorraine Freund**

January 8 – February 16, 2014

Previews: Wednesday, Jan. 8 and 15, Thursday, Jan. 9 and 16, Friday, Jan. 10 and 17 and Saturday, Jan. 11 at 8 p.m.

Opening Nights: Saturday, Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 19 at 6 p.m.

Performance schedule: Wednesdays - Fridays at 8 p.m. and Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Ticket price: \$20, previews \$30, regular run

Rivendell Theatre, 5779 North Ridge Ave.

A white physician attempts to oust his black receptionist by enlisting a white female coworker as a spy. Tensions rise as relations between the two women quickly deteriorate, turning their once-cordial workplace into a battlefield of innuendo, paranoia and passive aggression. With trademark wit and close observation, acclaimed Chicago playwright Joel Drake Johnson (*Beautiful Dreamer*, *The End of the Tour*, *The Fall to Earth*) mines the subtleties of "post-racial" America to explore what we are really saying when we refuse to talk about race.

Eat Your Heart Out

by Courtney Baron

Midwest Premiere

Directed by Hallie Gordon, artistic director of Steppenwolf for Young Adults

May 22 – June 28, 2014

Previews: Friday, May 23 and Saturday, May 24 at 8 p.m., Sunday, May 25 at 4 p.m., Wednesday, May 28 - Friday, May 30 at 8 p.m.

Opening Nights: Saturday, May 31 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, June 1 at 6 p.m.

Performance schedule: Wednesdays - Fridays at 8 p.m. and Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Ticket price: \$20, previews \$30, regular run

Rivendell Theatre, 5779 North Ridge Ave.

Alice and Gabe are desperate to adopt a child and create a family. Single mom Nance is desperate to connect with her obese teenage daughter Evie. And Evie is desperate for her best friend to fall for her despite the incredible odds. Alternately heartbreaking and hilarious,

Courtney Baron's whip-smart comedy weaves these stories together to delve into the complexities of family, body image and hearts and minds consumed by longing. This Midwest premiere was one of the most talked about productions of the 2012 Humana Festival of New Plays in Louisville, Kentucky.

ABOUT RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE

Since 1994 Rivendell has given voice to theatre's forgotten majority – women. In 1908, women wrote only 12.8% of the plays produced on New York stages. More than one hundred years later, this number has actually shrunk. In spite of this dismal fact, 60% of theatre audiences nationwide are women. Since its inception, Rivendell has sought to address these inequities by bringing women's stories to the stage and by employing and showcasing the work of women artists.

The Ensemble continues to make a name for itself as one of Chicago's premier theatres offering a unique female perspective in their own intimate setting located at 5779 North Ridge Ave. RTE's most recent seasons have been banner years for Rivendell launching the company from a "**major force on the fringe**" (*Chicago Tribune*) to "**top notch**" (*Chicago Reader*) status with "**first rate**" productions that are both "**impossible to over praise**" (*TimeOut Chicago*) and are "**among the smartest and most original works to emerge from this country's long and frustrating recession.**" (*Chicago Sun-Times*).

RTE remains dedicated to bringing new work to the stage having produced five Midwest premieres in the last three seasons. Recent seasons boasted critically acclaimed Jeff award-winning productions such as *These Shining Lives*, *Mary's Wedding*, and RTE's world premiere production of *The Walls* produced in partnership with Steppenwolf Theatre. Over the course of the past 17 seasons, Rivendell has been honored with more than 20 Joseph Jefferson nominations for artistic excellence and emerged as a national force in new play development.

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's 18th season opens with *Women at War*, Thursday, Nov. 21, Public Workshop Performance at UIC School of Theatre & Music, 1040 W. Harrison, ETMSW Building, Room L060, the season continues with *Rasheeda Speaking* by Chicago's critically, January 18 – February 16, 2014, and concludes with the Midwest premiere of *Eat Your Heart Out* by Courtney Baron, May 31 – June 28, 2014. *Rasheeda Speaking* and *Eat Your Heart Out* take place at the Rivendell Theatre located at 5779 North Ridge Ave.. Subscriptions, tickets and information are available at www.RivendellTheatre.org.

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