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Photos available upon request

**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble Launches 16th Anniversary Season with
Midwest Premiere of Gary Kirkham's Darkly Funny *Falling: A Wake*
Press Preview March 10 at 8:00 p.m.
Gala Opening March 11 at 6:00 p.m.**

Chicago, IL, February 2, 2012 – Rivendell Theatre Ensemble and Artistic Director Tara Mallen begin their 16th anniversary season with the Midwest premiere of *Falling: A Wake* by Gary Kirkham, directed by Rivendell founding ensemble member Victoria DeIorio. Harold and Elsie live quietly on an isolated farm outside an unnamed town. When a commercial jetliner explodes high above their land scattering wreckage and debris across the region, their lives are forever changed. A haunting and at times surprisingly funny play about loss and letting go, *Falling: A Wake* runs March 8 through April 14, 2012, Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Press Opening March 10 at 8:00 p.m., Gala Opening Night is March 11 at 6:00 p.m.). Tickets are on sale now; call (773) 334-7728 or visit www.RivendellTheatre.org.

Artistic Director Mallen is enthusiastic about premiering this work to Chicago audiences. "I've been living with this beautiful play for four years, hoping for the opportunity to present it," says Mallen. "I'm thrilled to finally have the chance to showcase this funny and heartbreaking story, which is perfectly suited to the intimacy of our new performance venue." *Falling: A Wake* is the inaugural production in Rivendell Theatre's brand new performance venue: a 50-seat flexible black box at 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood.

Set in Canada, the play is inspired by the terrorist bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie Scotland in 1988. Canadian playwright Kirkham lost his best friend in that tragedy. 17 years later, he decided to write this play for his friend's parents, and for himself. *Falling: A Wake* premiered in 2007 in Ontario, Canada. Kirkham is also the author of the plays *Pearl Gridley* and *Queen Milli of Galt* (Winner of the Samuel French Canadian Playwriting Competition).

"Although inspired by a violent act, it's not about violence. It's about people learning how to move forward from grief, which I find very uplifting," says director DeIorio. "Gary's use of humor creates a heartfelt empathy for these people -- it's not a dirge, it's a dance."

The complete cast and production team for *Falling: A Wake* includes:

(continued)

CAST: Rivendell ensemble members **Jane Baxter Miller** (Elsie), **Mark Ulrich** (Harold), and guest artist **Will Crouse** (Boy).

CREW: Rivendell ensemble members **Victoria DeIorio** (Director and Sound Designer), **Patrick Fries** (Production Manager), **Stephanie Hurovitz** (Stage Manager), and **Janice Pytel** (Costume Designer); with guest artists **Linda Buchanen** (Scenic Designer), **Jason Fassel** (Lighting Designer), **Joanna Iwanicka** (Props Design), and **Ann Shanahan** (Dramaturg).

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble presents *Falling: A Wake*, running March 8 – April 14, 2012 at Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue, Chicago, IL 60660. For parking and restaurant information, visit www.RivendellTheatre.org. Street parking is also available and Rivendell Theatre is handicapped and CTA accessible (Red Line Bryn Mawr stop/busses).

Press opening is Saturday, March 10 at 8:00 p.m. Gala Opening is Sunday, March 11 at 6:00 p.m. (Previews are March 8 and 9 at 8:00 p.m.) Regular performance times (March 15 – April 14) are Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

There will be a special industry performance on Monday, March 19 at 8:00 p.m. at a special price of \$20 for members of the industry (union card or picture/resume required). Price includes a keg party with the cast after the show.

Ticket prices are \$28.50 for regular single tickets, \$20 for seniors and students (with I.D.), and \$15 for previews. Group rate for 12 or more is available upon request. Tickets may be purchased by visiting RivendellTheatre.org or calling 773-334-7728.

About Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE) is a professional theatre company committed to recognizing and cultivating the talents of women in theatre – from playwrights and actors to set designers and costume artists. Rivendell productions explore the unique female perspectives in everyday stories in an intimate environment.

For the past 16 years, Rivendell has been Chicago's only professional theatre company committed to producing works that integrate and promote the essential female experience. Rivendell has produced nearly 30 plays at venues throughout Chicago, including Steppenwolf, Victory Gardens, Chicago Dramatists, Gallery 37 Storefront Theater and Theatre on the Lake, and has garnered both critical and popular acclaim for its ground-breaking productions.

For more information about Rivendell's 16th season, visit www.RivendellTheatre.org.

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