



Contact: Cathy Taylor
Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.
Cathy@cathytaylorpr.com
773-564-9564

For Immediate Release

Photos available [here](#).

**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble presents
the Midwest Premiere of
Cal in Camo
by RTE member William Francis Hoffman
Directed by RTE member Hallie Gordon
Featuring RTE Members Ashley Neal, Keith Kupferer and Eric Slater**

January 5 – February 17, 2018

Chicago, IL—**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE)**, Chicago's only Equity theatre dedicated to producing new work with women at the core, announces the Midwest premiere of ***Cal in Camo*** by RTE member **William Francis Hoffman** and directed by RTE member **Hallie Gordon**. ***Cal in Camo*** runs **January 5 – February 17, 2018**, at **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago**. The press opening is Saturday, January 13, 2018 at 7:00pm.

Marooned in a sinking starter home in rural Illinois, Cal struggles to bond with her newborn daughter as her beer salesman husband struggles in vain to land accounts in unpromising new territory. Playwright William Francis Hoffman's new play explores the intricacies of family ties with equal doses of penetrating humor and scorching revelation.

Artistic Director **Tara Mallen** comments, "I am especially delighted to kick off our 2018 season with ***Cal in Camo***, written by former ensemble member Billy Hoffman. So many of us are conditioned to believe that the moment we hold our new babies, a switch suddenly flips and, suddenly, we intuit all there is to know about parenting and creating family. Like so many new parents, Cal is adrift in what can be an incredibly isolating moment in time. My own personal failings as a new mom comes into sharp focus as I watch Cal struggle over and over to do the right thing. She came into motherhood as we **all** do—expecting the child to be born and for everything to just fall perfectly into place--but for so, so many of us, it just doesn't play out that way."

The cast of ***Cal in Camo*** includes RTE members **Ashley Neal** (Cal), **Keith Kupferer** (Flynt) and **Eric Slater** (Tim). At select performances, a Chicago luminary guest star will play a cameo role of Bar Owner.

The creative team includes RTE members **Joanna Iwanicka** (Scenic Design), **Janice Pytel** (Costume Design) and **Victoria Deiorio** (Original Composition and Sound Designer), as well as **Charles Cooper** (Lighting Design), and **Blake Burke** (Properties Design). The stage manager is **Jennifer Thusing**.

ARTIST BIOS

William Francis Hoffman (Playwright) was born and raised in Oakville, Missouri, a mile from the Mississippi River. He is a member of The Actor's Gym in Los Angeles, California and was an ensemble member at Rivendell Theatre from 2001 until he moved to Los Angeles in 2007. His play ***Cal in Camo***, a

co-production between The Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and Colt Coeur, received its world premiere in New York City. His play *Drift* is currently being workshopped in Los Angeles.

Hallie Gordon (Director) previously directed *Dryland* and *Eat Your Heart Out* for Rivendell. Hallie has directed for Steppenwolf Theatre; last productions included: *HIR*, *The Rembrandt*, and *Monster*. She is currently the Artistic Director for Steppenwolf for Young Audiences and an Artistic Producer for Steppenwolf Theatre Company. She is the recipient of The Helen Coburn Meier & Tim Meier Achievement Award.

Keith Kupferer (Flynt) is a founding member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble where he was most recently seen in the critically-acclaimed production of *How the World Began*. Other Chicago credits include *The Qualms*, *Good People*, *Middletown*, *South of Settling*, *Of Mice & Men*, *Carter's Way*, *Men of Tortuga*, *Things Being What They Are*, *Jesus Hopped The A Train* and *Tavern Story* at Steppenwolf Theatre; *The Humans* at American Theatre Company; *Men's Support Group*, *God of Carnage*, *High Holidays*, *Passion Play* and *The Old Neighborhood* at the Goodman Theatre; *The Mystery of Love and Sex* (where he received a Jeff nomination for "Supporting Actor"), and *Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Wolf* at Writer's Theatre; *Hillary and Clinton*, *Never the Sinner* and *Appropriate* at Victory Garden's Theatre; *Gypsy* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; *End Days* at Windy City Playhouse; *Execution of Justice* with About Face Theatre; *Cat Feet* and *The Old Neighborhood* at Northlight; *Desire Under The Elms*, a co-production between Philadelphia's Freedom Theatre and Chicago's Court Theatre; *The Unseen*, *The Meek*, *Canus Lunis Balloonis* (nominated for a 1998 Joseph Jefferson award for Best Ensemble) and *The Physicists* for A Red Orchid Theatre; and *Big Lake*, *Big City*, *Trust* and *Hillbilly Antigone* for Lookingglass Theatre. Film credits include the soon-to be released *Widows*; *The Dilemma*; *Dark Knight*; *Public Enemies*; *The Express*; *Stranger Than Fiction*; *Road to Perdition*; *Finding Santa*; *Fred Klaus*; *The Last Rights of Joe May*; *The Merry Gentleman* directed by Michael Keaton, *Resurrecting McGinn*; and *Open Tables*. TV credits include *Better Call Saul*; *Empire*; *Chicago P.D.*; *Betrayal*; *Crisis*; *Chicago Fire*; *Detroit 187*; *The Beast*; *Prison Break*; *The Jamie Kennedy Experiment* and *Early Edition*.

Ashley Neal (Cal) is thrilled to be back at Rivendell Ensemble Theatre, where she is an ensemble member and most recently appeared in *Alias Grace*. Other Rivendell productions include *Wrens*, *These Shining Lives*, *26 Miles*, *The Walls*, and *Be Aggressive*. Ashley most recently appeared in A Red Orchid Theatre's *The Nether* where she also appeared in *A Red Handed Otter*. Other shows you may have seen her in include: *London Wall*, *Men Should Weep* and *Stage Door* with Griffin Theatre; *The Life and Sort of Death of Eric Argyle* with Steep Theatre; as well as work with Chicago Dramatists, Pine Box, Irish Theatre Company, Step Up, Jackalope Theatre, Victory Gardens, Strawdog, The Greenhouse Theatre, and others. Ashley is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago and The School at Steppenwolf.

Eric Slater (Tim) has been a company member of RTE since 2006 and has appeared in *Winter*, *Rasheeda Speaking*, *Self-Defense*, *Expecting Isabel*, *Silence* and most recently *Alias Grace*. Chicago: *Hand To God* (Victory Gardens); *Kill Floor* (American Theatre Co.); *Diary of Anne Frank* (Writers Theatre); *Feathers & Teeth* and *Smokefall* (Goodman); and many others. Off & Off-Off Broadway: *Juvenal Players* (The Kitchen); *The Dudley's: A Family Game!* (Theatre for a New City); *Our Greatest Year* (Kraime & The Brick); Original Cast *Gloryana* (The Public Theater & The York Theatre Co.); and *Cyanocitta* (The Becket on Theatre Row). Regional: *Fornicated From The Beatles* (American Repertory Theatre); *Experiment America* (ICA Boston); *Hunchback* (DIA Detroit); *Permanent Collection* (Madison Rep.); *Our Greatest Year* (Dobama Theatre). Film/ TV: *Widows*, *Coming to You*, and *Chicago Fire*. Eric is a founding member of the immersive theatre company The New Ensemble based in NYC and has written extensively for The Neugents Project as a member of the North Carolina Writer's Group. He has also written and produced two short films and a number of theatrical experiments.

Rivendell provides several opportunities throughout the run for audiences to take part in additional access, entertainment, or insight. For *Cal in Camo* these events include:

**Thank God It's Friday 'Cause it's FBF&T *at Rivendell
(*Free Beer Friday & Trivia)**

Fridays, January 19 & 26 and February 2, 9 & 16 at 8:00pm
at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Ave. in Chicago

Join us every Friday during the run of *Cal in Camo* for a surprise performance featuring guest star cameo appearances by various Chicago theatrical luminaries then repair to the RTE Rehearsal studio post-show

along with the staff and artists for a Trivia night sponsored each week by one of Chicago's own Micro-breweries and hosted by said Luminary.

Poster Party

Friday, January 19th at 6:30pm

Join us in advance of the performance to make your poster for the Women's March on January 20th. Posters and markers will be supplied in the rehearsal studio at 5775 N. Ridge in advance of the performance.

Planned Parenthood Benefit Night

Friday, January 26, 2018

at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Ave. in Chicago

See a show and support Planned Parenthood at the same time! \$10 of every ticket sold will be donated to Planned Parenthood of Illinois.

Open Captioned Performance

Thursday, February 1, 2018 (Open Captioning performance at 8:00pm)

at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Ave. in Chicago

\$15 Tickets available with the code "ACCESS"

Join Rivendell for an 8:00pm performance with open captioning.

Town Hall Discussion featuring Licensed Clinical Social Worker Kelli Weber

Saturday, February 3 following the 4:00pm matinee

Saturday, February 10 following the 4:00pm matinee

at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Ave. in Chicago

Our town halls happen after select Saturday matinees, and are an essential touchstone for our organization to extend the conversation from the stage to the community. Ensemble members moderate a panel discussion on a topic from the production. Panelists help field questions, present observations, and participate in supporting a thoughtful, in-depth dialogue for all involved. This town hall will feature Licensed Clinical Social Worker Kelli Weber, a post-partum counselor who works in the NICU at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. Audience participants need not be present for the Saturday matinee and are welcome to join the conversation following the performance.

Fact Sheet / Cal in Camo

Title: *Cal in Camo*

Written by: RTE member **William Francis Hoffman**

Directed by: RTE member **Hallie Gordon**

Featuring: RTE members **Ashley Neal** (Cal), **Keith Kupferer** (Flynt), and **Eric Slater** (Tim)

Creative Team: RTE members **Joanna Iwanicka** (Scenic Design), **Janice Pytel** (Costume Design) and **Victoria Deiorio** (Original Composition and Sound Designer), as well as **Charles Cooper** (Lighting Design), **Blake Burke** (Properties Design), and **Jenniffer Thusing** (Stage Manager)

Previews: **January 5 – 13, 2018**

Friday, January 5 at 8:00pm

Saturday, January 6 at 8:00pm

Sunday, January 7 at 4:00 pm

Thursday, January 11 at 8:00pm

Friday, January 12 at 8:00pm

Saturday, January 13 at 8:00pm

VIP opening: **Sunday, January 14, 2018 at 6:00pm**

Press Opening **Saturday, January 13, at 7:00pm**

Regular run: **January 18 – February 17, 2018**

Schedule: **Thursdays-Saturdays at 8:00pm**

Saturdays at 4:00pm (except January 13)
Additional matinee performance on **Sunday, February 11 at 3:00pm**
Town Hall Discussions will follow select matinees

Location: **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble**, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago

Tickets: **General Admission**
Previews: \$28
Regular Run: \$38
Student, Senior, Active Military, Veteran
Preview: \$18
Regular Run: \$28
Pay What You Can: Five seats (10% of the house) are available for each performance. Reservations are made on a first come, first served basis.
Subscriptions: \$59-\$80 for 3-plays

Box Office: (773) 334-7728 or www.RivendellTheatre.org

Parking and Transportation: Free parking is available in the Senn High School parking lot (located a block and a half from the theatre behind the school off Thorndale Avenue). There is limited paid and free street parking in the area. The theatre is easily accessible via the Clark (#22) or Broadway (#36) bus, and is a short walk from the Bryn Mawr Red Line El station.

About Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Founded in 1994, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble advances women's lives through the power of theatre. Rivendell cultivates the talents of women artists—writers, actors, directors, designers and technicians—by seeking out innovative plays that explore unique female experiences and producing them in intimate, salon environments.

Rivendell fills an important role in the Chicago region as the *only* Equity theatre dedicated to producing artistically challenging and original plays created by and about women. After years of being an itinerant company, RTE moved into its own theater space in 2010 in Edgewater. As new members of the neighborhood, the company is focused on becoming an integral community partner and serving as a catalyst to engage audiences in a discussion of local social issues.

For more information about Rivendell Theater Ensemble, visit <http://rivendelltheatre.org>. Follow RTE on Facebook at [Facebook.com/rivendelltheatre](https://www.facebook.com/rivendelltheatre) and on Twitter [@RivendellThtr](https://twitter.com/RivendellThtr).

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is supported by generous grants from: The Lester and Hope Abelson Fund; The Alphawood Foundation; Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; The Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development; The Chicago Community Trust; The Chicago Foundation for Women; The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; The MacArthur Funds for Arts and Culture at The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; The Reva and David Logan Foundation; The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust; SIF Fund at The Chicago Community Trust; Cultural Outreach Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events; and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

###