



Contact: Cathy Taylor/Kelsey Moorhouse
Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.
(773) 564-9564
cathy@cathytaylorpr.com
kelsey@cathytaylorpr.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 24, 2015

**RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE ANNOUNCES 2015-2016 SEASON
“THE BODY POLITIC”**

**to include the World Premiere of Danielle Pinnock’s *Body/Courage*,
Dry Land by Ruby Rae Spiegel and *Grizzly Mama* by George Brandt**

**RTE announces the addition of new ensemble member Hallie Gordon,
slated to direct *Dry Land***

Chicago, IL— Rivendell Theatre Ensemble proudly announces its 2016 Season, “The Body Politic.” As the election circus swirls around us, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE) presents a season in which the political is deeply personal. In the widening chasm between our diverse American dreams and the ways elected officials actually conduct our nation's affairs, we offer three bold productions, all directed by women RTE ensemble members, about women choosing to take matters into their own hands. The season will be performed at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago.

The season opens with the world premiere of ***Body/Courage*** written and performed by **Danielle Pinnock**, directed by **ensemble member Megan Carney** and produced in association with **Waltzing Mechanics**; it continues with the Midwest premiere of ***Dry Land*** written by **Ruby Rae Spiegel**, directed by **RTE’s newest member Hallie Gordon**; and concludes with the Midwest premiere of ***Grizzly Mama*** written by **George Brandt**, directed by **ensemble member Rachel Walshe** and featuring **Artistic Director Tara Mallen**.

Each of the productions will be helmed by female directors who play key roles as part of Rivendell’s ensemble. Two have been integral members for many years and truly have been instrumental in shaping the RTE mission and programming: **Megan Carney** (*The Walls*; *American Wee-Pie*; *Women At War*), and **Rachel Walshe** (*These Shining Lives*

and past Director of New Plays at Rivendell). New ensemble member **Hallie Gordon** (*Eat Your Heart Out*) brings with her 14 years of experience as *Artistic and Educational Director of Steppenwolf for Young Adults at Steppenwolf Theatre Company*.

"The 2016 Rivendell season includes three courageous plays about women who take action to get what they need. We made the selections in direct response to the upcoming 2016 Presidential elections and its field of candidates, who seem to be talking about a highly generalized list of 'important' issues, without actually saying anything meaningful at all." comments RTE **Artistic Director Tara Mallen**. "The plays differ wildly in their political agendas—and I am certain will instigate critical conversations about body image as reflected through American media, about equality, inclusion and self-determination. Things we all need to be discussing openly as we approach this important election."

The Rivendell 2016 season is:

**The World Premiere of
*Body/Courage***

Written and Performed by Danielle Pinnock

Directed by RTE member Megan Carney

Produced in association with Waltzing Mechanics

January 28 – February 28, 2016

Opening February 3 – 4, 2016

Production Sponsors: The Reva and David Logan Foundation and The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation

Created from over 300 interviews conducted worldwide, *Body/Courage* is a rich exploration on body acceptance, as we share in one woman's transformative journey to discover her own beauty through the voices of others.

Body / Courage is being presented in association with Waltzing Mechanics. Waltzing Mechanics creates original documentary theatre inspired by real people telling stories about their lives. Using methods of performance ethnography, Waltzing Mechanics facilitates dialogues among audiences and within the community.

In celebration of *Body / Courage* The Reva & David Logan Foundation is offering a special match grant where any amount donated to Rivendell (up to \$5,000) will be matched. Donations may be made online at www.rivendelltheatre.org/donate.

**The Midwest Premiere of
*Dry Land***

Written by Ruby Rae Spiegel

Directed by RTE's newest member Hallie Gordon

April 22 – May 28, 2016

Opening April 30 – May 1, 2016

Ester is a swimmer trying to stay afloat, Amy is curled up on the locker room floor—and for both of them, the clock is ticking. Called a “remarkable new play” by the NY Times, *Dry Land* is a harrowing and often hilarious look at an unlikely alliance between two high school girls as they navigate their way through abortion, swimming, the complexities of friendship, and the pressures that build up at the brink of adulthood

Hallie Gordon (Director/RTE member) is currently the Artistic and Educational Director of Steppenwolf for Young Adults at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. As a theatre artist for SYA Hallie has directed *Animal Farm*, *Leveling Up*, the world premiere of *The Book Thief*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, the world premiere of a new adaptation by Tanya Saracho of *The House on Mango Street*, world premiere of *Harriet Jacobs* adapted for the stage by Lydia R. Diamond and a new premiere of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* also adapted by Lydia R. Diamond which won a Black Excellence Award from the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago. This production also transferred Off-Broadway to The New Victory Theatre. She has also directed for Northlight, and Rivendell Theatre and has done staged readings for The Goodman Theatre, Timeline Theatre, Chicago Dramatists and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Hallie is the recipient of The Helen Coburn Meier & Tim Meier Achievement Award.

**The Midwest Premiere of
*Grizzly Mama***

Written by George Brandt

Directed by Rachel Walshe; Featuring RTE Artistic Director Tara Mallen

September 2 – October 8, 2016

Opening September 10 – 11, 2016

Following the death of her activist mother, divorced single mom Deb is on a mission. But to carry it out, she must first reinvent herself as a liberal avenger. Deb’s teenage daughter, Hannah, couldn’t care less—that is, until she discovers the real reason behind their recent move to Alaska, right next door to a certain conservative presidential candidate. A dark comedy about motherhood, murder, and moose.

Tickets

General Admission

Previews: \$25

Pre-sale: \$32

Walk-up: \$35

Student, Senior, Active Military, Veteran

Preview: \$15

Pre-sale: \$22

Walk-up: \$25

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

Flex Pass

Flex Passes are now on sale for the 2016 Season. The Flex Pass (**\$110; \$80 for Students, Seniors, Active Military and Veterans**) gives patrons access to four (4) tickets to use in any combination throughout the 2016 Season.

Other benefits include:

- No fee ticket exchange up to 48 hours prior to the performance
- Reserved seats

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, we moved into our own theater space in 2010 in Edgewater. As new members of the community, we are focused on becoming an integral community partner and serving as a catalyst to engage our audiences in a discussion of local social issues.

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

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is supported by generous grants from The Alphawood 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... Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; The Reva and David Logan Foundation; The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust; The University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement; A Cultural Outreach Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Rivendell is also grateful for the support of 100 Women Who Care.

Strong Girls Make Stuff at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Beginning late January 2016, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (in partnership with Stomp and Shout Chicago) launches a new outreach program for girls ages 8 - 12 years old. The Strong Girls will work for 5 weeks building an original mini-piece of theatre in conversation with Danielle Pinnock's *Body/Courage*. This workshop will be an

affordable, high-quality arts enrichment program lead by professionals in the industry and culminates in a showing for parents and friends.

Registration opens December 1, 2015

DATES: January 26 - Feb 23

DAY: Tuesdays from 4pm - 5:15pm

COST: \$50 (paid in full or in two installments)

To register for Strong Girls Make Stuff please call 773-334-7728

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