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**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble presents
the World Premiere of
Winter
by Julie Jensen**

**Co-Directed by RTE Members Megan Carney and Mark Ulrich
Featuring Barbara E. Robertson, Sean Cooper, Steve Haggard,
Martasia Jones and Dan Flannery**

Part of the National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere

January 7 – February 11, 2017

**Winter was inspired by ROBECK, IN ENDING LIFE: Ethics and the Way We Die
By Margaret Pabst Battin © 2005 Oxford University Press**

Chicago, IL—**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble** (RTE), Chicago's only Equity theatre dedicated to producing new work with women at the core, announces the world premiere of *Winter* by **Julie Jensen**. The production, co-directed by RTE members **Megan Carney** and **Mark Ulrich**, runs **January 7 – February 11, 2017**, at **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago**. The press opening is Monday, January 16, 2017 at 7:00pm.

Winter features **Barbara E. Robertson** (*Annis*), **Sean Cooper** (*Roddy*), **Steve Haggard** (*Evan*), **Martasia Jones** (*LD*) and **Dan Flannery** (*Robeck*).

Winter by nationally acclaimed Utah playwright Julie Jensen is an alluring world premiere about one of the most controversial topics in America. Co-directed by RTE members Megan Carney and Mark Ulrich, *Winter* tells the story of Annis, a retired professor and poet, who is on a road she knows too well. She is slowly losing herself to dementia seeks to end her life on her own terms at a time when she can still recognize herself. Her husband and she have always had a pact to go off together, when the time is right. But he has his work to finish and is not ready. When her sons come home for Thanksgiving, one of them decides something must be done. Inspired by distinguished author and University of Utah professor Margaret Pabst Battin's story, *Robeck*, Julie Jensen's *Winter* is a searing, compassionate, and often very funny examination of the end of life—and the unconventional path one woman takes to get there.

"This past season we were so proud to be invited to become associate members of the National New Play Network (NNPN), revitalizing our commitment to developing and premiering new works with women at the core. Through the NNPN, we were offered this tremendous opportunity to participate in a rolling world premiere of Julie Jensen's newest play, *Winter*. The support from the NNPN and the other producing partners has been invaluable and we are deeply honored to kick off our 2017 Season with this universally relevant play," says **Artistic Director Tara Mallen**. "The themes it explores, the absolutely

phenomenal role for an older actress, and the uncompromising, unflinching look at the choices we get—or far more often don't get—at the end of our lives is absolutely resonant for each and every one of us. I am certain our audiences will not only connect with it on a deep and profound level, but it will provide a springboard for imperative conversations above and beyond the production.”

Winter is being produced at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble as part of a National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere. Other partnering theaters are Salt Lake Acting Company (Salt Lake City, Utah) and Central Works Theater Company (Berkeley, CA). Through this program, the NNPN provides production support to the playwright and the partnering theaters, including assistance with the creation and the contracting of the premiere agreement, collaborative interactions between the theaters, and funds for the playwright's residency in each city to further develop the play.

The design team includes RTE Member **Elvia Moreno** (scenic design), as well as **Michael Mahlum** (lighting design), **Stephanie Cluggish** (costume design), **Blake Burke** (properties design), **Robert Hornbostel** (co-sound design), and **LJ Luthringer** (co-sound designer). The Stage Manager is **Jennifer Thusing**.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Megan Carney (Co-Director) has worked with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble since 2005. Most recently she directed *Grizzly Mama* by George Brant and *Body/Courage* by Danielle Pinnock and wrote *Women at War* which premiered last season and continues to tour. Carney also directed Rivendell productions of *American Wee Pie* and *The Walls*, two premieres by Lisa Dillman. Carney's playwriting and directing credits include eight years with About Face Theatre creating original plays based on true stories of queer youth and their allies that were produced in Chicago and toured around the country, *Open Systems*, a commission from The Goodman Theatre Education Program examining impacts of Hurricane Katrina in Baton Rouge and Chicago, *Let Them Eat Cake*, debating same sex marriage with Holly Hughes and Moe Angelos (Dixon Place, NYC), and *Pittsburgh Project Remix* on the legacy of the steel industry in her hometown (Pump House, Homestead Steel Mill). Carney directs the UIC Gender and Sexuality Center and is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the UIC School of Theatre & Music. She has a MFA in Theatre Arts from Virginia Tech with a focus on Directing and Public Dialogue and her work has been recognized with multiple awards and grants.

Mark Ulrich (Co-Director) has been a Rivendell Theater Ensemble member since 2007. His previous RTE directing credit was the Jeff Award and After Dark Award winning production of *Mary's Wedding*. Other directing credits include *Mrs. Mannerly* at Artist's Ensemble; and *Sylvia* at Next Act Theater. As an actor for Rivendell, he has appeared in *Silence*; *The Walls*; *These Shining Lives*; *Falling: A Wake*; and *American Wee Pie*. Recent Chicago area credits include *Assassination Theater* at The Museum of Broadcast Communications; *Yasmina's Necklace* at 16th Street Theater; *Mosque Alert* at Silk Road Rising; *Douglass* at Theater Wit; and *Vanya, and Sonia, and Masha, and Spike* at Artists' Ensemble.

Julie Jensen (*Playwright*) has been writing plays for over 30 years. She has won a dozen awards, among them The Joseph Jefferson Award in Chicago for best new work, the LA Weekly Award for best new play, and The David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award. She has been commissioned by a dozen theatres including Kennedy Center (twice) and Actors Theatre of Louisville (twice) and Salt Lake Acting Company (twice). She has received grants from NEA, TCG, Pew Charitable Trusts, among others. Her work has been produced in NYC, London, and theatres nationwide, from Arizona to Alaska, from Michigan to Massachusetts, California to Connecticut. Her work is published by Dramatists Play Service, Dramatic Publishing, and Smith and Krause. She has taught playwriting at five universities, directed a graduate playwriting program, and has written a book on the craft. She is currently the Resident Playwright at Salt Lake Acting Company, board member of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre, and the Regional Representative of the Dramatists Guild of America.

Her play *Mockingbird*, recently nominated for a Helen Hayes Award, will be produced by six professional theatres this season. And *Winter*, part of the National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere, opened first at Salt Lake Acting Company and later this year at a theatre in Berkeley, CA. SLAC has produced eight world premieres of her work; this is the ninth. Plan-B Theatre and Pygmalion in Salt Lake City have also produced her work.

Chicago audiences might remember her play *The Lost Vegas Series*, produced by Zebra Crossing Theatre, which won a Jefferson for the best new work, and *Stray Dogs*, produced by Profiles Theatre and nominated for five Jefferson Awards.

Barbara E. Robertson (*Annis*) has appeared in Chicago in *Tug of War: Foreign Fire*, *The Tempest*, *Gypsy*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Kabuki Lady Macbeth* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *The Detective's Wife* (Writers Theatre); *Life Sucks*, *Hard Times* (Lookingglass Theatre); *On The Town* (Marriott Theatre); *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*, *Working*, *Grand Hotel* (Broadway Playhouse); *Wicked* (National Tour); *Yeast Nation* (American Theater Company); *Pursued by Happiness* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Camino Real*, *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia*, *House and Garden* (Goodman Theatre) *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Mary Stuart*, *La Bête* (Court Theatre); and *Emma's Child* (Victory Gardens Theater). Robertson has received more than twenty awards and nominations for her work in theater. Film credits include Robert Altman's *The Company*, and David Lynch's *A Straight Story*.

Sean Cooper (*Roddy*) returns to Rivendell having previously appeared in *These Shining Lives*. Other Chicago credits include *Spoon River Anthology* (Provision Theater), *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *The Crowd You're in With* (Goodman Theatre), *The Metal Children* (Next Theatre) *Jackie and Me*, *Honus and Me* and *Dandelion Wine* (Chicago Children's Theatre), *Wedding Play* (About Face Theatre), *Cradle of Man* (Victory Gardens), *Red Herring* (Northlight Theatre), *Mojo* (Mary-Arrchie) *Eurydice*, *Melancholy Play*, *Mad Forest*, *Book of Days* (Piven Theatre), *A Lesson Before Dying* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Lysistrata* (Running With Scissors), *H2O* and *K.* (The Neo-Futurists), as well as many shows with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Film and television work includes *Whirlybird*, *A Pirate's Life*, *The Malcontents*, and guest starring roles on *The Beast* and *Mind Games*.

Steve Haggard (*Evan*) has appeared in Chicago in *Sender*, *Accidentally Like A Martyr*, *The Aliens* and *Kimberly Akimbo* (A Red Orchid); *Tribes* (Steppenwolf); *Funnyman* and *Season's Greetings*, *She Stoops to Conquer* (Northlight); *Doubt*, *Old Glory*, *The Subject Was Roses* and *Our Town* (Writers'); *Wasteland* (Timeline); *King Lear*, *As You Like It* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare); *Power* (Remy Bumppo). Regional Credits include American Players, Milwaukee Repertory and Indiana Repertory. Haggard is an ensemble member at A Red Orchid Theatre and a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Martasia Jones (*LD*) was born and raised in Chicago and is an alumni of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she received her BFA in Acting. Theatre credits include *9 Parts Of Desire*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Polaroid Stories* in the role of Persephone/Semele. Earlier this year, she appeared in the Goodman Theatre's New Stages Festival in the staged reading of *Florissant & Canfield*, the Goodman's *Every 28 Hours* series as well as a reading of *Serial Black Face* with Definition Theatre Company, where she is an ensemble company member. She was also seen in Jackalope Theatre's *Annual Living Newspaper Festival*. Film credits includes Spike Lee's newest joint, *Chiraq*.

Dan Flannery (*Robeck*) has worked at numerous Chicago Theatres, including Timeline, The Artistic Home, Steppenwolf, Stage Left, and Steep. He played "Atticus Finch" in Wisdom Bridge's production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and reprised the role for Collaboraction years later. He taught On Camera Acting at Act I Studios for 20 years. Among his film credits are David Lynch's *The Straight Story*, *Contagion*, *The Weatherman* with Nicholas Cage, *The President's Man* (a CBS movie of the week with Chuck Norris), and *Holiday Baggage* with Cheryl Ladd and Barry Bostwick. Dan has had appearances in television's *ER*, *Boss*, *Chicago Fire* as well as a recurring role on *Empire*.

ABOUT NNPN

National New Play Network (NNPN) is the country's alliance of non-profit professional theaters dedicated to the development, production, and continued life of new plays. Since its founding in 1998, NNPN has supported more than 200 productions nationwide through its innovative National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere program, which provides playwright and production support for new works at its Member theaters. Additional programs - its annual National Conference, National Showcase of New Plays, and MFA Playwrights Workshop; the NNPN Annual and Smith Prize commissions; its residencies for playwrights, producers and directors; and the organization's member accessed Collaboration, Festival, and Travel banks and online information sessions - have helped cement the Network's position as a vital force in the new play landscape. NNPN also strives to pioneer, implement, and disseminate ideas and

programs that revolutionize the way theaters collaborate to support new plays and playwrights. Its most recent project, the New Play Exchange, is changing the way playwrights share their work and others discover it by providing immediate access to information on more than 9,500 new plays by living writers. NNPN's 30 Core and more than 75 Associate Members - along with the more than 150 affiliated artists who are its alumni, the thousands of artists and artisans employed annually by its member theaters, and the hundreds of thousands of audience members who see its supported works each year - are creating the new American theater. nnpn.org

FACT SHEET

Title: *Winter*
Written by: Julie Jensen
Inspired by *ROBECK, IN ENDING LIFE: Ethics and the Way We Die*
By Margaret Pabst Battin © 2005 Oxford University Press

Co-Directed by: RTE Members Megan Carney and Mark Ulrich

Part of the National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere

Featuring: Barbara E. Robertson, Sean Cooper, Steve Haggard, Martasia Jones and Dan Flannery

Creative Team: RTE Member **Elvia Moreno** (scenic design), **Michael Mahlum** (lighting design), **Aurora Klok** (scenic charge), **Stephanie Cluggish** (costume design), **Blake Burke** (properties), **Robert Hornbostel** (sound), and **LJ Luthringer** (co-sound designer). The Stage Manager is **Jennifer Thusing**.

Previews: **January 7 – 14, 2017**
Saturday, January 7 at 8:00pm
Sunday, January 8 at 4:00 pm
Wednesday, January 11 at 8:00pm
Thursday, January 12 at 8:00pm
Friday, January 13 at 8:00pm
Saturday, January 14 at 8:00pm

VIP opening: **Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 6:00pm**
PRESS Opening: **Monday, January 16, 2017 at 7:00pm**
Regular run: **January 19 – February 11, 2017**

Schedule: **Thursdays-Saturdays at 8:00pm**
Saturdays at 4:00pm (January 21 & 28 and February 4 & 11 only)
Town Hall Discussions will follow the Saturday matinees
An additional industry performance will be held Monday, February 6 at 7:30pm

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

Tickets: **General Admission**
Previews: \$25
Regular Run: \$38
Student, Senior, Active Military, Veteran
Preview: \$15
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 and 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.

Notes of Interest

- This marks the World Premiere of *Winter* inspired by distinguished author and University of Utah professor Margaret Pabst Battin's story, *Robeck*.
- This production of *Winter* is part of the National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere.
- *Winter* is the first show of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's 2017 season, "Exploring the Mind/Body Connection." The season continues with the world premiere of *The Firebirds Take the Field* by Lynn Rosen, directed by Jessica Fisch and featuring RTE members Meighan Gerachis, Rebecca Spence, and Tara Mallen; and concludes with the Midwest premiere of *Cal in Camo* by former RTE member William Francis Hoffman, directed by RTE member Hallie Gordon, and featuring RTE members Keith Kupferer and Eric Slater.
- Rivendell fills an important role in the Chicago region as the only Equity theater dedicated to producing artistically challenging and original plays created by and about women.

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 neighborhood, 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 Allstate Insurance Company; 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 H. Driehaus Foundation; The Reva and David Logan Foundation; The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust; SIF Fund at The Chicago Community Trust; The University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement; Cultural Outreach Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events; and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is also very grateful for the support received from 100 Women Who Care.

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