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**RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE ANNOUNCES SEASON 2017
"THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION"
including the World Premieres of
Winter by Julie Jensen, *The Firebirds Take the Field* by Lynn Rosen,
and the Midwest premiere of *Cal in Camo* by
former RTE member William Francis Hoffman**

Chicago, IL— Rivendell Theatre Ensemble proudly announces its 2017 Season, "The Mind/Body Connection." The season includes three new plays linked under this mind/body connection and told from distinctly female perspectives. These bold works explore how we separate our primal, instinctive physical beings from our intellectual and emotional selves. The season will be performed at **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago.**

The 2017 Season opens with the world premiere of **Julie Jensen's *Winter***, co-directed by RTE ensemble members **Megan Carny** and **Mark Ulrich**, and part of the National New Play Network's Rolling World Premiere. 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**. The season 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**. Additional casting will be announced soon.

These three works are told from the perspective of three distinct generations of marginalized women: the very old who have been shoved aside, a woman isolated in rural Indiana desperately struggling to bond with a newborn baby, and teenage girls from an economically devastated town that have little or no control over their family life or living situations, All of these women are challenged with regard to their autonomy and have little or no opportunity for self-determination.

Artistic Director Tara Mallen comments, "The relationship between the mind and body is complex. We all have amazing potential to heal and transform ourselves through our thoughts, perceptions, and choices. Yet within our culture, we continually ignore the interconnection of all things, causing fractures deep within ourselves. We are delighted to present the premiere of three bold new works exploring women at distinctly different stages in their lives, yet all wrestling with the consequences of separating their physical beings from their intellectual and emotional selves. And forces us to reconsider what 'wholeness' really means."

The Rivendell 2016-17 season is:
The World Premiere of

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Winter

Written by Julie Jensen

Co-Directed by RTE members Megan Carney and Mark Ulrich

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

Opening January 2017

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* was inspired by distinguished author and University of Utah professor Margaret Pabst Battin's story, *Robeck*.

Winter is a beautiful, empowering story about a woman whose once-brilliant mind is now diminishing. Her family all have different ideas about what is right for her, meanwhile she's ready to take matters into her own hands. *Winter* is funny, touching and intensely topical.

Winter is being produced at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble as part of a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere. Other partnering theaters are Salt Lake Acting Company (Salt Lake City, Utah) and Central Works Theater Company (Berkeley, CA). For more information: www.nnpn.org.

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. 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. 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.

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. Megan 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). Megan 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.

**The World Premiere of
The Firebirds Take the Field
Written by Lynn Rosen
Directed by Jessica Fisch
Featuring RTE members Meighan Gerachis and Rebecca Spence
Opening April 2017**

It's been 25 years since molecular neuroscientist Avery Kahn left Highland Falls, NY. But when 18 local girls, cheerleaders mostly, are stricken with a mysterious ailment, Avery reluctantly returns home to tackle what the locals derisively call the "girl disease." As Avery becomes affected—and infected—by the girls, the case becomes more personal than she ever expected.

Inspired by real events in LeRoy, New York in Fall 2011.

Lynn Rosen (Playwright) is a resident playwright at New Dramatists (class of 2021), Playwright-In-Residence at Women's Project Theater, and a two-time recipient of an Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan New Play Commission. Full-length plays include: *In the Blue*, *Man and Beast*, *Apple Cove* (Women's Project Theater; Todd Mountain Theater Project), *Goldor \$ Mythyka: A Hero Is Born* (commissioned/produced by New Georges), *Washed Up On The Potomac* (one-act version produced by Centerstage – Baltimore, and the EST Marathon), *Progress In Flying* (EST/Sloan Commission), *Back From The Front* (Working Theater; published in "Out of Time & Place"), and *Nighthawks* (Studio Theatre; Willow Cabin Theatre; published by Samuel French). Lynn's work has also been produced/developed by: Barrington Stage Company, Red Bull Theater, Fault Line Theatre, The New Group, Lark Play Development Center (Writing Fellow), Geva, The New Harmony Project, SPACE on Ryder Farm, and terraNOVA Collective's *Groundbreakers*. Lynn was also named one of "50 To Watch" by The Dramatist magazine. For Women's Project, Lynn is currently writing the book for a musical titled *Gurley!*, about Helen Gurley Brown, and she is developing her play *The Firebirds Take The Field* with EST/Sloan. *Firebirds* received a RoughCut workshop and public presentation November 2014 in EST's First Light festival. She is co-creator/co-writer of the brand new award-winning web series *Darwin*, directed by Emmy-winner Carrie Preston, with whom she is also developing a TV pilot. Her monologue, *The Amazing America Auction*, originally commissioned by Centerstage – Baltimore, is now included in Hal Hartley's feature film *My America*. She grew up in Gary, Indiana and graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Theater Arts from Brandeis University.

Jessica Fisch (Director) Recent credits: *Trudy, Carolyn, Martha and Regina Travel to Outer Space* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, Humana Festival), *Fefu and Her Friends* (Goodman Theatre/Rivendell Latina/o Celebration) *Opulent Complex* and *That Thing That Time* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Tens), *The Rosenkranz Mysteries: A Evening of Magic* (Royal George Theatre), *Far Away* (SITE Festival), *42 Stories* (Raven Theatre, [Working Title] series), *Machinal*, *Spike Heels* (Northwestern University). Selected New York credits: *The Realm* (The Wild Project), *strive/seek/find* (Abingdon Theatre), the 2009 Playwrights Horizons Stories on 5 Stories Benefit, *Personal History* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *The Redheaded Man* (Barrow Street Theatre/Down Payment Productions/FringeNYC/FringeEncores), *Dressed In Your Dreams* (Public Theater/Emerging Writers Group), an adaptation of the cult 1960's gothic vampire soap opera *Dark Shadows* (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Jessica was a resident director at Ensemble Studio Theater, the Playwrights Horizons Directing Resident, a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and the founding Artistic Director of Down Payment Productions. Upcoming Projects: *Straight White Men* (Associate Director, Steppenwolf) and *Late Company* (Cor Theatre) MFA: Northwestern University.

**The Midwest Premiere of
Cal in Camo
Written by William Francis Hoffman
Directed by RTE member Hallie Girdon
Featuring RTE members Keith Kupferer and Eric Slater
Opening September 2017**

Centered on a new mother who can't seem to love her baby or her husband, *Cal in Camo* probes the nature of family bonds and questions whether the psychological wounds of the past irrevocably impact our capacity for connection. Called "a vernacular, mysterious cocktail of a play" by the *New York Times*, *Cal in Camo* is laced with lacerating humor and punctuated by moments of blinding resonance.

William Francis Hoffman (Playwright) was born and raised in St. Louis Missouri. Prior to moving to Los Angeles in 2007, he spent seven years in Chicago where in addition to attending Columbia College, was a member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. He is a current member of the Actor's Gym in Los Angeles California

Hallie Gordon (Director) is an Artistic Producer Steppenwolf/Artistic Director Steppenwolf Young Adults and an Ensemble member at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. For Rivendell, Hallie directed last season's critically acclaimed *Dry Land* as well as *Eat Your Heart Out*. She also directed *Eclipsed* at Northlight Theatre, for Steppenwolf *1984*, *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*, and *Harriet Jacobs* adapted for the stage by Lydia R. Diamond. A new premiere of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, also adapted by Lydia R. Diamond, won a Black Excellence Award from the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago and transferred Off-Broadway to The New Victory Theatre. She has directed 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. In June 2017, she will be directing the upcoming Steppenwolf production of *HIR* by Taylor Mac.

Tickets

General Admission

Previews: \$25

Walk-up: \$38

Student, Senior, Active Military, Veteran

Preview: \$15

Walk-up: \$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

This year, Rivendell is offering three new subscription packages for our 2017 Season. Each package provides a 30% discount off the usual pay-per-show rate.

Subscriptions include: 3 tickets (1 per show), Reserved Seating, Free Unlimited Exchanges, Exclusive Invites to RTE Events, and 10% off additional ticket purchases purchased through the box office.

Preview Subscription: \$59.00

Be one of the first to see Rivendell's shows at any preview performance.

Town Hall Subscription: \$80.00

Join Rivendell for a Saturday matinee and one of celebrated Town Hall discussions immediately following the performance.

Friday Night Subscription: \$80.00

The Friday Subscription Package includes one ticket to each of our 2017 shows on a Friday that works with your schedule.

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

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.

FRESH PRODUCE: New Play Lab

This season Rivendell Theatre Ensemble will re-launch its new work development series featuring a new commission from **Aaron Todd Douglas** developed in collaboration with members of RTE, December 6-18, 2016.

Rough Magic: AND STILL I RISE: A Celebration of the Defenders of Democracy & Peace

Monday, December 19, 2016 at 7:00pm will be Rivendell's one night only Rough Magic celebration. Rough Magic was created as a pathway for artists to be an active force for social justice and positive change. Rivendell and a broad collection of artists will use performance, visual art, shared meals, and shared stories to celebrate the amazing work of three grassroots Chicago organizations. Cost is \$10 which will be donated directly to one of three service organizations of attendees choice.

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](https://twitter.com/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 Gaylor 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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