

Aug. 9, 2010

Rogers Little Theater
RLT Real Live Theater
116 S. Second St., Rogers, AR 72756
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**RLT DIVERSITY SERIES BEGINS WITH 'LANGUAGE OF TREES'
Opening Night Talk Back For Audience To Respond To Issues Of War**

ROGERS, Ark. — RLT's next production, *Language of Trees*, offer hopes in a moment of despair, and serves a reminder that we are diverse, yet the same because of the effects of war.

Language of Trees by Steven Levenson kicks off RLT's 25th Anniversary Season as one of four plays in RLT's newly revamped 2ndStage Series, themed "Diversity Unites." The play is schedule for three performances: Aug. 27-28 at 8 p.m. and Aug 29 at 2 p.m. inside the Victory Theater, which is home to RLT Real Live Theater/Rogers Little Theater.

When an American translator (Charlie Riedmueller) ventures to a Middle East combat zone, an overfriendly neighbor (Brenda Nemec) back home volunteers to help the man's wife and son (Amy Eversole, Hunter Low) as they come to terms with his absence. As events abroad begin to spiral out of control, lives are turned upside down and all are forced to confront the complexities of war, the fragility of language, and the meaning of neighborliness in an age of terror. Cast also includes newcomer Wes Cottrell.

"It's a powerful story that is very current and told in a very dramatic, yet funny way, and in a sense a very ironic way," said Ed McClure, director and chair of productions at RLT. "We are at war on many fronts right now, and this show

offers peace in the midst of war and in the midst of terror."

This year's 2ndStage Diversity Unites Series will be staged "in the round," with few props and no set, so about 50 audience members will be on all four sides of the stage.

"The 2ndStage series really strips away the superficial level as far as scenery and big production value, and really focus in on the story and characters," McClure said. "Being so close to the performers, I hope the audience gets the sense of despair that some of the characters feel as well as the hope and notion that the leaves come out in the spring and that life goes on."

RLT is planning an Opening Night Talk Back after the hour-and-15 minute performance Aug. 27 to give audience members a venue for expressing their reactions. The question-and-answer time will last no more than 30 minutes after the performance.

"Community dialogue will be an integral part of this new series," said RLT Executive Director Richard Dean Prudenti. "We plan to feature three panelists familiar with the issues that face families 'back home' and those who have experienced loved ones leaving to fight overseas."

"We believe there is a reason for what we are doing. Extra-ordinary circumstances very often bring about common emotions. Part of what we hope from the Talk Back is confirmation that what we are doing has relevancy," Prudenti said.

Other productions in the 2nd Stage series are *A Walk in the Woods* by Lee Blessing, *I am My Own Wife* by Doug Wright, and *The Tricky Part* by Martin Moran.

Tickets are \$10 a seat, and because of the mature nature of the scripts children 12 and under are not admitted. Shows begin at 8 p.m. for the Friday and Saturday performances, and Sunday show time is 2 p.m.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.rogerslittletheater.org, call RLT's box office at 631-8988, or visit the theater at 116 S. Second St. in historic downtown Rogers.

About *Language of Trees*

We are diverse, yet the same, because of the effects of war...

"Imaginative and engaging. Plays about the conflict in Iraq have mostly focused on the experience of soldiers or the politicians who put them in danger, but Steven Levenson's sensitive drama is welcome for the imaginative sympathy it extends to the families left behind." —NY Times.

"Affecting, stylistically ambitious and poignant. Levenson displays a refreshing willingness to experiment with language and tone." —Variety.

"Impressive and ambitious in scope." —Associated Press. "Heart-tugging. This keenly scripted drama tells a deeply human tale about connection and communication. Levenson's tools include sharp, slow-burning dialogue and startling levels of empathy." —Time Out New York.

"Riveting. *The Language Of Trees* is full of nail-biting suspense [and] snappy dialogue." —Village Voice.

About RLT

For almost 25 years, Rogers Little Theater has been Real Live Theater where Real Lives are Transformed. Beginning as a small community theater group putting on theatrical performances wherever their productions were welcome, the nonprofit organization known as RLT now finds its home at the beautifully renovated Victory Theater, 116 South Second Street, in historic downtown Rogers, where it annually presents six MainStage dinner theater productions, four 2ndStage/Diversity Unites productions, youth programming and other special events and presentations.

Next season's impressive slate of six Main Stage productions are *Nunsense*, *The Odd Couple*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, and *The Sound of Music*. Memberships are on sale now through Aug. 31.

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