Rivendell Extends WRENS Through 10/20

September 26, 2012

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble has announced the first production in its 2012-2013 Season dedicated to the theme “reinvention,” WRENS, by Anne McGravie and directed by Rivendell Theatre Ensemble’s co-founder Karen Kessler, has been extended through October 20 at Rivendell’s new performance venue, 5779 N. Ridge. Performance tickets are $30 with the schedule Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m. and Saturdays at 3 and 8 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14 at 6 p.m. is a benefit performance of WRENS with the original 1996 award-winning cast reprising their roles. Tickets may be purchased by calling 773.334.7728 or visiting www.RivendellTheatre.org.

Tara Mallen, artistic director, says, “We are very happy to extend this production. After each performance the audience comes out of the theatre moved by the experience and wanting to talk more about Anne’s (McGravie) profound story. It has been a nostalgic and exciting time because WRENS put Rivendell on the map, and this time, it is bringing audiences to our new home in Edgewater. The extension allows more people to see this critically acclaimed production and expand Rivendell’s audience base.”

Rivendell burst onto the off-Loop scene in 1996 with its groundbreaking world premiere production of Anne McGravie's WRENS, which earned three Joseph Jefferson awards and secured Rivendell’s status as “a major force on the Chicago fringe” (Chicago Tribune). This season, RTE co-founder Karen Kessler returns to direct an all new cast featuring Ensemble members Ashley Neal, Mary Cross, and Rebecca Spence with Meg Warner, Jodi Kingsley, Amanda Powell, and Katrina Kuntz. McGravie’s moving semi-autobiographical examination of loyalty, morality and duty during World War II centers on a group of young Women's Royal Navy Servicewomen packed together in a tiny barrack on the eve of VE Day. With humor and wisdom, McGravie shines a light on the complex emotions of these women as they are confronted with the bittersweet prospect of peace at last and the impending loss of their newfound wartime independence.

The all-female production team includes Joanna Iwanicka (set), Diane Fairchild (lights), Christine Pascual (costumes), Kate Hopgood (sound), Stephanie Hurovitz (production stage manager), and Jen Seleznow (production manager).

ABOUT ANNE MCGRAVIE, playwright

Anne McGravie is a Scottish-born (Edinburgh) playwright who lives and writes in Chicago. Equity and non-equity theatres in Chicago, New York, Australia and the U.K have produced her work. She is a founding member of the Chicago Alliance for Playwrights, a member of the Women's Theatre Alliance, The Dramatists Guild, and International PEN (San Miguel Chapter).
The founder of PACE Theatre Group at Cook County Department of Correction, she is also the recipient of an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship. A few of her notable ChicaGo Productions include The Cairn Stones at Bailiwick theater; The Poppy Garden at Footsteps Theater; The Hiroshima Project at Bailiwick; No Place Like Home at Steppenwolf Theatre Company which McGravie both collaborated on as a writer and performed in; and of course several productions (including the world premiere at Rivendell) of one of her most personal plays, WRENS, based on Anne’s first hand experience serving in the Women’s Royal Naval Service during World War II.

At age 86, McGravie is enjoying perhaps her busiest season to date. Anne’s most celebrated play, WRENS, (JEFF recipient, Illinois Arts Council Fellowship, Ragdale) reunites her with Tara Mallen and Rivendell Theatre for this remount in Rivendell’s beautiful new theatre. At the same time, Susan Padveen’s Neapolitans is producing The Clown Next Door. In October, McGravie’s short play A Stone-cold Case will be part of the opening celebrations for Loyola University Drama Department’s NewhArt Theatre, Sarah Gabel, Artistic Director. In addition, McGravie’s “Inishfree” was one of the short stories that introduced Brigham Young University’s production of Arabian Nights.

Kathleen Thompson and her e-publishing company, Around the Block Press, are producing McGravie’s first novel, Dancing on Ashes.