

New Play Reading Series Continues at the Cumberland Theatre

Women of a Certain Age will be Second Free Reading Series Offering

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The Cumberland Theatre will continue their New Play Reading Series this month with the play *Women of a Certain Age* by Steve Duprey. The series features original plays that have not yet been formally produced. Submissions are accepted from all over the country; however, a special emphasis is placed on playwrights who reside in the state of Maryland.

The plays submitted are read and evaluated by a selection committee. Selected plays receive an informal reading held at the theatre for a live audience. The playwright may attend to hear audience feedback or the session will be recorded for their use as they adapt and refine their work.

This year, three plays were chosen for a reading: *Waiting for Fair* by F.J. Hartland, *Women of a Certain Age* by Steve Duprey and *Poolside* by Chad Marriott. This year's play selection committee consisted of Steve Cairns, Heather Wallen and Barry Weinberg.

The second reading will be held this Wednesday, March 22nd and will feature Duprey's original comedy centering on four college friends, now in their sixties, who discover that one of them has been "gifted" with an abandoned baby. They try to figure out what's next; for the mother, for the baby, and for the four of them. Utilizing the often ignored "older woman" demographic, the play examines the themes of lasting friendships, older female empowerment and the current adoption system. It is a character-driven comedy with some bawdy language and an interesting twist at the end.

"I really enjoyed reading this," said Steve Cairns, a selection committee member. "I feel that it has a strong story line that is defined and driven by very good dialogue. I enjoyed the uniqueness of the dilemma the characters find themselves in and how it exposes the depth of the friendship shared between the four main characters."

The reading will feature the talents of local actors Ellen McDaniel-Weissler, Luann Lancaster and Lura Thompson as well as visiting actor Joan Crooks.

The theatre began the reading series in 2019 with the play *Good Morning, Miss America* which went on to have an Off-Broadway production and is currently being developed into a feature film. "It is exciting to be a small part of the process of developing a new work," said Artistic Director Kimberli Rowley. "Every theatrical journey starts somewhere and we are excited to see where these plays end up and how they evolve, knowing that CT was a stop along the way."

The reading is free for the public to attend and will begin promptly at 7:00 pm. The lobby bar will be open for refreshment. All readings are held at the theatre at 101 North Johnson Street. For more information on the reading series, selection process and dates, please visit cumberlandtheatre.com.