



A Benefit For Heroes

By Kendall Tamer

Photos provided by Adirondack Regional Theatre

WE'VE ALL SEEN the signs and social media posts over this last year and a half saying things like, "Thank a first responder."

With COVID-19 continuing to sweep across the country, we are especially reminded of the work they do. Not only that, but the 20-year anniversary of Sept. 11 is swiftly approaching. With all this in mind, Tom Lavin, head of the Adirondack Regional Theatre (ART), has partnered with local venues and organizations to present a benefit show for the first responders of the North Country.

"When I discovered this show, it was very profound and very hard hitting," Lavin says. "In light of COVID-19 and our need for first responders again, our frontline people, [as well as the 20th anniversary of 9/11 coming up], it seemed to be a very timely thing."

The Guys by Anne Nelson is a dramatic play based on a true story, and it follows fire captain Nick in the shadow of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Nick has been placed with the responsibility of eulogizing his friends and fellow firefighters lost in the tragedy, and he is finding the task difficult. Then he meets editor-by-trade and writer Joan,

who agrees to help him. As a result, she creates a profile about Nick and "the guys" using Nick's stories about his late comrades.

Nick will be portrayed by former City of Plattsburgh mayor Jim Calnon, and Joan will be played by actress and Clinton Community College instructor Lee Ann Thomas.

"I think the show is a really good one on a lot of levels," Calnon says. "This script truly gets to the people involved. Yes, they gave their lives, and that's a hugely important thing, but the play focuses a lot on telling you about the people involved. Yes, they're heroes, but they're family members, fathers, brothers and real humans. That's a really important part of this."

The show itself is approximately 90-minutes long and will be presented straight through without an intermission. It is done in four parts, with four separate eulogies, and explores both sorrow and levity throughout. There will even be a tango. But at the heart of the show, the message is one of connection and togetherness and how people's lives are more entwined than they may realize.

"The subject matter is tough," Lavin says, "but at the same time, it's done in a way where it's not doom and

gloom the entire time."

Thanks to funds from the Statewide Community Regrants Program, The Chapel Hill Foundation and WNBZ radio station, ART is able to do the show without needing to make any proceeds off it, and because of this, all money made can go to charitable organizations.

"Adirondack Regional Theatre is not getting a cent from the box office," Lavin says. "This is all going to first responders. It's staying in your community, and it's going to people that, in times of need, are your heroes."

Adirondack Regional Theatre will present "The Guys" at the Masonic Lodge in Essex on Aug. 27 and 28 at 7 p.m. and Aug. 29 at 2 p.m.; Samuel de Champlain Center Stage in Rouses Point on Sept. 2 at 6 p.m.; Valcour Brewing Company in Plattsburgh on Sept. 3 at 7 p.m.; Butcher Block in Plattsburgh on Sept. 4 at 7 p.m.; and Hartman Theatre at SUNY Plattsburgh on Sept. 10 and 11 at 7 p.m. and Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. Admission costs \$15 for the shows in Essex, and there will be a \$15 suggested donation for all other shows. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit adktheatre.com.