



# **Alton Little Theater Dishes Up Sheer Nourishment With a Musical of Heart and Soul**

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If after the events of recent months, you need a reason to embrace life again, the musical you've been waiting for has arrived. Alton Little Theater will open its 78th Season with **THE SPITFIRE GRILL**, on stage from September 16th through 25th with nine performances, including two matinees. The production, scored and written by James Vakq and Fred Alley, is based on the 1996 film by Lee David Zlotiff and depicts the journey of a young woman just released from prison who decides to start her life anew in a rural Wisconsin town. She precipitates a journey within the town itself toward its own tenuous reawakening. The longing for a place like Gilead, WI- removed from the big, troublesome world is real, perhaps now more than ever. Director, Diana Enloe, hopes that seeing the show will become a priority for those living in the greater St. Louis area.

The seven member ensemble production offers a homespun charm and engaging, infectious melodies in a mixture of country, Bluegrass and Broadway-style ballads. Director Enloe has assembled a talented group of trained vocalists in Mary Kate Malone-Nolte, Pamela Geppert, Debbie Maneke, Steve Loucks, John Kuehn, and Anne Frakes to handle the unabashedly sentimental music that "flows with a graceful honesty, carrying the message of hope and redemption". Michael Cox is cast in the only non-singing role and also serves as stage manager for the production along with his wife, Lee Cox. Allison Neace serves as Musical Director for the production, with Michael Frazier heading up the pit orchestra.

THE SPITFIRE GRILL won the Richard Rogers Production Award after opening on Broadway in 2001 and has received rave reviews in regional theaters around the country and in the U.K. Media reviews often describe the story as glowing like an "Indian Summer morning" and Director Enloe paraphrases one of the title song's lyrics - "say what you want, play where you will, someone should keep singing the songs from the Spitfire Grill"! Reservations are now being taken at 618-462-6562. Tickets prices for the 78th Season are \$20 for Adult tickets for Musicals and \$8 for students (through college with ID). New discounts are available for groups of twenty or more.

Season Tickets are still on sale through September 25th for just \$70- which includes two musicals and three plays. Backyard Dreams has donated a beautiful egg-grill to be raffled off to Season Ticket holders as part of the production's promotion since the show's story involves a raffle that attracts national attention. PR Director, Lee Cox, hopes that audiences will embrace the musical that she fell in love with in Racine, Wisconsin four years ago. Cox was thrilled when talented singers brought the script to Enloe's attention because they found it so heartfelt, thoughtful, and magical with its elements of myth and folklore. Cox remembers the tag line from the Racine production, "The Spitfire Grill may be the only place to eat in Gilead, WI - but your heart and soul will feel the nourishment. "

Photos & Interviews with Director Emeritus, Diana Enloe 618-463-0391