



RED BANK: PERPS AND PUPPETS AT TRTC



Director Stephen Brackett (above) returns to Two River Theater for a one-night reading of *THE GREAT PRETENDER* this Thursday...while Rumson's own Maggie McDonald Condon presents her one woman comedy "whodunit" *DAMES OF OUR LIVES* on Thursday and Sunday (below).

Their acclaimed production of *August Wilson's Seven Guitars* has been entered into the books — and November's take on *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is still three weekends away from its first preview performance — but over at the branded Bridge Avenue home stage of Two River Theater Company, the coming days are abuzz and a-twitter with a special degree of activity.

It all begins at 7:30 pm this Thursday, October 22, when the building's black-box Marion Huber space hosts a free reading of *The Great Pretender*, a seriocomic new work "about life, death, and the healing power of puppets" from playwright David West Read. Stephen Brackett, who directed last season's smash musical *Be More Chill* at Two River, returns to Red Bank for this first look at a script in which a beloved TV kiddie-show host (whose wife and sidekick puppeteer has passed away) invites tension and uncertainty when he takes on a new assistant to lend life and voice to his puppet pal. There's no charge for admission, but reservations are required by taking it here or calling (732)345-1400.

Meanwhile, over at the mainstage Rechnitz Theater on the other side of the Two River arts center, a resident of the Greater Green presents the first of two performances of a one-woman "comedy whodunit" of her own devising. Written by and starring Rumson's own Maggie McDonald Condon, *Dames Of Our Lives* offers mirthful-mystery mavens a chance to Clue in on satirical sleuths Jessica Ketchum and Officer Deseldorf, as they endeavor to solve the picklish puzzle of precisely who killed Jack Blackwig. It's a dragnet that draws in such red herrings and fishy characters as bait-shop owner Shirley U. Canfelme, motel manager Norma Bates, nasally newscaster Sally Sanotty, and of course the corpse's serial widow Eleanor Pointitty Mason Dixon Potter Blackwig. Performances of *Dames* are Thursday October 22 at 8 pm, and Sunday October 25 at 4 pm. General admission tickets (\$43) can be reserved here or by calling (732)345-1400.

