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TWO RIVER THEATER COMPANY presents

The Off-Broadway hit play

VISITING MR. GREEN

Jeff Baron's comic story of generational conflicts

NOVEMBER 3 - 20, 2005

Directed by Jonathan Fox

Starring Ben Hammer and Aaron Serotsky

Following its NJ run, the entire production will be presented at The English Theatre of Frankfurt, Germany

(Red Bank, NJ) Traffic accidents happen every day, but in *VISITING MR. GREEN*, a traffic accident causes two worlds to collide.

Chance, not choice, brings together a young corporate executive (Two River company member Aaron Serotsky) and an elderly Jewish widower (Ben Hammer) in Jeff Baron's touching comedy. Directed by Two River Artistic Director Jonathan Fox, *VISITING MR. GREEN* plays November 3 -20 at Two River Theater Company's new home at 21 Bridge Avenue in Red Bank. The official press opening is Saturday, November 5 at 8pm. For tickets (\$32-\$48) call 732-345-1400 or buy online at www.trtc.org.

The play opens on a cluttered New York apartment where old newspapers, piles of unopened mail and dead flowers are the main décor. It's the home of Mr. Green, an 86-year-old retired dry cleaner and a devout Orthodox Jew, whose life is in as much disarray as his walk-up apartment. His wife has passed away, and he's recovering from a fall when he wandered into traffic and was almost hit by a car. Now, Mr. Green is as closed off as a hermit.

Enter Ross Gardiner, a harried American Express executive and the driver of the car. Having been cited for reckless driving, Ross has been sentenced to six months of community service and assigned to help Mr. Green once a week. Ross doesn't want to be there, and cantankerous Mr. Green certainly doesn't want his help, but when the judge will not budge about the sentence, the two men must try to deal with each other. It's a rocky road full of comic bumps and pathos, and it's unclear if both men will reach the end of the road together.

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The idea for the story came to playwright Jeff Baron from one of his friends, who volunteered to look after an elderly man, but Baron set the idea aside for awhile. In the meantime, his grandmother needed more help living on her own, and he made regular visits to help her out. After her death, Baron sat down to write his first play and the character of Mr. Green is based on his grandmother who helped raise him. The character of Ross was fashioned after himself, as Baron is a Harvard graduate who was once an American Express up-and-comer. Turning away from the corporate world, Baron wrote for television and film for several years and in the mid-1990s turned to playwriting. Jeff Baron grew up in central New Jersey and currently lives in Manhattan

His first play, *VISITING MR. GREEN*, opened Off-Broadway in December 1997 at the Union Square Theatre. Starring Eli Wallach and David Alan Basche, it ran for 354 performances and brought Baron national and international recognition. *VISITING MR. GREEN* has been performed in 27 countries and in 21 languages. It was nominated as Best Play by The Drama League, and has since received Best Play awards in Israel, Greece, Germany and Turkey.

The design team for *VISITING MR. GREEN* includes Neil Prince (Sets), Deborah Caney (Costumes), Brenda M. Veltre (Lighting) and Kevin Dunayer (Sound). Marci Glotzer is Production Stage Manager.

Ben Hammer (Mr. Green) made his Broadway debut in *The Great Sebastians*, starring Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. In the original production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, he alternated with Joseph Schildkraut in the part of Mr. Frank. Paddy Chayevsky's *The Tenth Man*, directed by Tyrone Guthrie; *Mother Courage* starring Anne Bancroft, directed by Jerome Robbins; *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* starring Christopher Plummer; Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*; and again with Anne Bancroft in *Golda* directed by Arthur Penn. There were many others plays, such as *The Deputy*, *The Gathering*; Off-Broadway too - *More Stately Mansions*; Tony Kushner's *Slavs*; *The Golem*; *Meshugga*; *The Madwoman of Chailot*; *Camping with Henry and Tom*; *The Last Dance for Sybil*, written by Ossie Davis, and more. Among his feature films - *Sleepers*, *The Jagged Edge*, *The Beastmaster*, *Analyze That*, *The Competition*, and finally - TV and TV films *The Execution of Pvt. Slovic*, *The Winds of War*, *Raid on Entebbe* *The Howard Hughes Story*, *Law & Order*, and *Ed*.

Aaron Serotsky's (Ross Gardiner) previous roles at Two River include Don Jose in *Carmen* and Stephen Hoffman in *Old Wicked Songs*. He has appeared at theatres across the country including Denver Center Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre; Alliance Theatre, George Street and Cincinnati Playhouses; the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; and the Utah Shakespearean Festival. This past spring, Aaron made his international debut at Vienna's English Theatre in *VISITING MR. GREEN*, and will reprise his role in this production when it travels to Frankfurt, Germany early next year. His musical work includes the Chicago premiere of *The Immigrant*, for which he has been nominated for a 2005 Joseph Jefferson Award, as well as the First National Tour of *Titanic*. He has been seen on ABC's *All My Children*, and is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music.

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Jonathan Fox has directed Two River Theater Company's productions of: *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Tragedy of Carmen*, *Salome*, *Old Wicked Songs*, *A Delicate Balance*, *La Bête*, *Light UpThe Sky*, *Blood Wedding*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Illusion*, *Betrayal*, and *Machinal*. He has directed in San Francisco, New York, Philadelphia, and Germany, including the German premiere of Maria Irene Fornes's play, *Mud*, at the Horizont Theater in Cologne. Jonathan is a recipient of the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellowship for research in Germany.

Two River Theater Company, under the direction of Executive Producer Robert M. Rechnitz and Artistic Director Jonathan Fox, was founded in 1994 as Monmouth County's first professional regional theater in 30 years. Two River's mission is to perform from the world body of dramatic literature, including new works, those plays which most richly direct our gaze to the life of the human spirit in all of its shifting modes, its thought, its suffering, its passion, its joy and laughter. As one of New Jersey's leading regional theatres, Two River Theater Company, a not-for-profit arts organization, is supported in part by grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Dept. of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, in addition to contributions from many corporations, foundations, businesses and individuals. Two River Theater Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group and the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

Two River Theater Company, located at its new 350-seat, state-of-the-art theater at 21 Bridge Avenue in Red Bank, NJ, 07701, is easily accessible by car from New York City (60 min. from midtown), Philadelphia (75 minutes) and New Jersey via the Garden State Parkway (Exit 109). From NY's Penn Station: NJ Transit's North Jersey Coast line offers nonstop service (approx. 90 minutes) from Manhattan to Red Bank on selected days and times, convenient for weekday matinees, evening performances and Saturday/Sunday performances. For further information call NJ Transit at 1-800-772-2222 or visit www.njtransit.com. Two River Theater Company is barrier-free and completely accessible to people with disabilities. Children under the age of 4 are not permitted into mainstage shows. Tickets/Information: Tickets \$32-\$48. Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express accepted. \$12 student tickets available for any performance with current ID.

Box Office phone: 732-345-1400 Website: www.trtc.org

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