**FORT SALEM THEATER SHOWCASES**

**NEW PLAY BY EMMY WINNER**

SALEM, NY -- Fort Salem Theater presents the first-ever extended run of *Our Time,* a new comedy about comedy by Emmy Award winner Ken Levine, opening June 29-30 at 8 PM and running two subsequent weekends during July.

One of the missions of Fort Salem Theater is to present new properties and productions that later enjoy life beyond the boundaries of Washington County. In the past, shows have gone on from their initial presentations to off-Broadway venues and some of Manhattan's upper-crust night spots. Shows and cabarets, such as The Singing Anchors, originate in Salem and go forth to play throughout the Capital Region.

*Our Time* enjoyed its world premiere in Saratoga Springs last fall as a part of the Local Actors' Guild's New Plays Festival, directed by David Braucher, who is also at the helm of this new production. He has brought with him three of the four original cast members (Alex Ashby, Matt DeMarco, and Tommy Swimm), who are joined by newcomer Cameron Fredericksen.

Author Ken Levine, whose earned an Emmy for his work on *Cheers,* has penned some classic episodes in sitcom history, working on *Frasier, Wings, Everybody Loves Raymond,* and *The Simpsons.* With his writing partner, David Isaacs, he is responsible for the two-part *Good-Bye, Radar,* on *M\*A\*S\*H.* Levine came to Saratoga in October from his California home to see his play at the festival and has since created rewrites for the Fort Salem run, including, to his personal pride, "some new jokes!"

*Our Time* is a semi-biographical account of the world of comedy writing in 1975 Hollywood. In this benchmark year in the Golden Age of stand-up comedy, when The Improv and The Comedy Store were turning out comics like Jay Leno and David Letterman, only an occasional woman was able to squeeze into a world dominated by insecure, funny men. Actress Alex Ashby plays a female comedy writer, who, with her male writing partner, tries to break into the sitcom world. She struggles to keep her eye on the prize while surrounded by the chaos created male comics with whom she works and plays. The four twenty-somethings in the cast portray young adults in the era in which the attending audience will recognize countless cultural elements of the world in which they came of age.

Director David Braucher, who also came of age in the seventies, brings to the project a marriage of his knowledge of the era with his exceptional ability to work creatively with young actors. As a founder of an improv group, Good Clean Fun, that for several years was in residence at New Jersey's William Paterson College, Braucher is an actor, educator and director whose creative output has been enjoyed locally at Fort Salem, Hubbard Hall, iTheatre at the National Museum of Dance, and Curtain Call in Latham. Fort audiences recognize him as the grandson in *Dracula's Grandmother* and Linus in *You're an Old Man, Charlie Brown.*

Opening on Friday, June 29, *Our Time* plays in repertory through the summer, on Fridays, June 29 and July 20; Saturdays, June 30, July 7 and July 21 (all at 8 PM); and Sunday, July 8, at 2 PM. More information is available on the theater's website (*fortsalemtheater.com)*; tickets can be ordered by calling the theater's box office: (518-854-9200).