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Rosanne Raneri is holding auditions for

Approaching Simone by Megan Terry

(Won the Obie Award for Best American Play in 1970)

Performances will take place on Friday, July 29, Saturday, July 30, and Sunday, July 31

at Hudson Valley Community College’s Maureen Stapleton Theatre.

The play is being produced as a Master’s Thesis final project and will be directed by Rosanne Raneri.

Auditions will be held on Tuesday, June 1 and Wednesday, June 2, 7:00 to 10:00 pm

at Maureen Stapleton Theatre, Siek Campus Center, Hudson Valley Community College,

80 Vandenburgh Avenue (Route 4), Troy, NY, 12182.

Auditioners will be asked to read from the script and to sing four bars of any song a cappella. Auditioners may also be asked to participate in a simple improvisation that involves movement. Prepared monologues are not required.

For more information please contact Rosanne at rosanneraneri@msn.com

Approaching Simone tells the compelling story of philosopher and activist Simone Weil, who believed that “attention is the rarest and purist form of generosity.” The play chronicles Weil’s unusual life, and emphasizes the socio-political forces that shaped her outlook and the opposition her extreme determination and altruism received. Weil dedicated herself to those who suffered and were oppressed, and sought to change society’s negligence and apathy.

\*Important note: This provocative play falls under the new realism category; it will combine elements of conventional realism and non-realism. Actors will be asked to do some vocalizing and singing, and to occasionally move in unconventional or abstract ways.

Plot: Brilliant, sympathetic Simone Weil, living in France in the 1920s, 30s, and early 40s, feels a strong desire to be of service to the poor and working class and acts out against her family’s wishes. She struggles with her family’s disapproval, and the onset of severe headaches. Weil becomes a teacher and promotes independence, bold thinking, and altruism, but is fired for her progressive methods and outlook. As she develops her intellectual awareness and compassion, she begins to form the philosophy that leads to her eventual acclaim, but she battles her own low self-esteem and the doubts of others. Her interactions with family members, friends, employers, comrades, priests, and political officials reveal the complex personal negotiations that structure society and reality. She becomes a factory worker, and goes to fight in Spain. After experiencing war up close, she becomes an activist and tries to persuade officials to let her be of service to soldiers on the front line during World War II. Finally, Simone (age 34), in sympathy with those starving in France during the war, starves herself to death. This ultimate activism inspires many questions about responsibility and the welfare of our fellow human beings.

AVAILABLE ROLES for 4 women, 3 Men

Simone: 20 – 35 years old, fiercely intelligent, direct, idealistic, sympathetic, sensitive,

 passionate, an extreme activist, perhaps a bit innocent but old for her age

Carolina/Ensemble member: 20 – 45 years old, African-American, jazz/blues singer, bright,

 charismatic, likable, flirtatious, gutsy

Two Female Ensemble members: 20 – 50 years old. Each actor will play a variety of

 roles and will have the opportunity to explore a range of characteristics and states of

 being. Roles that will be assigned include chorus/narrator, Simone’s mother, friend,

 student, doctor, comrade, school board member, worker, soldier.

Three Male Ensemble members: 20 – 50 years old. Each actor will play a variety of roles

 and will have the opportunity to explore a range of characteristics and states of being.

 Roles that will be assigned include chorus/narrator, Simone’s father, mentor, friend,

 priest, comrade, school board member, manager, worker, official, soldier.

\*The Ensemble members are an essential, vital part of the play, and for this production are considered principle roles.

Rehearsals will begin the first week of June. Dates and times will be arranged with actors, but

rehearsals may be scheduled on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and/or Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 10:00 pm in June, and on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings from 6:30 to 10:00 pm in July. There may occasionally be rehearsals scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays during the day.