

PROGRAM NOTES

In November and December of 2001, feeling disconnected from the events of September 11, 2001, Rik Reppe shut down his successful management consulting practice, threw a sleeping bag, tent and some clothes in the back of his pickup, and hit the road. His trip took him to the Pentagon, the World Trade Center and a lonely hole in the ground in Shanksville, PA. As he traveled, he set out to ask as many people as he could what it meant to be an American. Maybe, if he got lucky, he'd find a country he could love.

Along the way he met a dazzling cast of characters who provided him with meaning, friendship and an equally beautiful and heartbreaking look into the American psyche. And he found, to his great surprise, a nation he could love and the meaning of home.

Upon further reflection...

Six years ago when I took the trip that gave birth to *Staggering Toward America* I went for three reasons. First, I felt disconnected from the events of 9/11...in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy I sometimes felt like I was hearing about a horrible thing that happened in Beirut. Second, the news analysis drove me nuts. A bunch of smart people who represented maybe .0001% of the population would come on TV

and tell me what Americans thought, felt, needed, wanted, etc. They didn't sound like the people I knew. I wanted to hear from people more like the folks I grew up with or hung out with in the various places I've lived. Finally, as I spun around in circles of my own making I realized that I had no idea what it meant to be an American or what America is. From there it was a very short hop to figuring out that this meant I didn't fully understand the idea of home.

After the trip I knew what it meant. I fell head over heels in love with every dysfunctional inch of this country. In fact, it is the dysfunction—our differences and flaws and foibles—that I find most appealing. The *Staggering* trip instilled in me a hunger to keep driving, keep going places...not to see those places, but to meet the people. What I thought was a three month trip just after 9/11 turned into a six year ramble. It's been a glorious ride. It's been glorious because I keep learning more about my home. Glorious because I have seen places of immense beauty and staggering ugliness and everything in between. Mostly it's been glorious because I keep getting to meet all y'all.

Thanks for making the ride so much fun.

Rik Reppe

CONNECTING HOP ARTISTS TO THE COMMUNITY

While at Dartmouth, Rik Reppe led a *Class Divide* discussion about his work in partnership with the Tucker Foundation, and met with Tuck students to discuss his experiences as a management consultant. For more info on Hop Outreach & Arts Education, call 603.646.2010 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu.

HOPKINS CENTER MANAGEMENT STAFF

Jeffrey H. James Director

Associate Director/General Manager **Marga Rahmann**
Business and Administrative Officer **Jay Cary**
Director of Programming **Margaret Lawrence**

Director of Marketing **Mary Bashaw**
Director of Hopkins Center Film **Bill Pence**
Director of Student Performance Programs **Joshua Price Kol**



Please turn off your cell phone inside the theater.



Assistive Listening Devices available in the lobby.



If you do not wish to keep your playbill, please discard it in the recycling bin provided in the lobby. Thank you.



HOPKINS CENTER

presents

Staggering Toward America

Written & Performed by Rik Reppe

Directed by Jack Rowe

CLASS
DIVIDE

Part of Class Divide, a three-year Hopkins Center initiative examining social and economic class issues.

This project is made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program, a component of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

This performance is also made possible in part by generous support from the Nathan W. Pearson 1932 and Sons Fund and the Kenneth 1952 & Elle Roman Fund in support of the Hopkins Center Visiting Performing Artists Fund.

Cosponsored by



Wednesday, November 7, 2007 • 7 & 9:30 pm

Warner Bentley Theater • Dartmouth College