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Blind Fish Productions To Present

AMERIKUS REX

A new play by Kevin Rice

Directed by John Giampetro

Performances Begin Thursday, October 7th

At The Belt, 336 West 37th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues)

Blind Fish Productions will present *AMERIKUS REX*, a new comedy by Kevin Rice. John Giampetro will direct. Performances will be at The Belt, 336 West 37th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues), and will begin on Thursday, October 7th, continuing through Sunday, October 31st.

AMERIKUS REX is a scathing political satire that re-casts our present political situation to Rome in the year 13AD. Casear Augustus is on his deathbed and must pick a successor. His stepson, Tiberius, is the logical choice. Augustus, however, doubles the field of candidates by recalling to Rome Tiberius' brother, Cornelius, who has been in exile for the last ten years on the isle of Amerikus. Against the historical background of backstabbing, blood lust, and sexual intrigue, Cornelius foments further conflict upon his arrival. The influence of his ten years in banishment is immediately apparent from his business suit, cowboy hat, and bizarre and broken Latin spoken with a Southern accent. Cornelius' simplistic new persona does not deceive his mother Livia who, together with the slave-sophisticate, Clea and her stammering nephew Claudius form the party of opposition to Cornelius. Throughout the play, the entire Familia is working to expose Cornelius in his ambition to seize the mantle of the Roman Empire for his own nascent empire of Amerikus. Much more than mere Bush-bashing, this new satire is a biting and thorough skewering of our current empire as seen through the prism of ancient Rome.

AMERIKUS REX is aiming to have production values that are as ambitious as its political ideals. The set designer, Tim Baumgartner, will take over the Belt Theater to create a contemporary version of ancient Rome. The costume designer, Ramona Ponce is best known for her work with Lypsinka, Varla Jean Merman and the Ridiculous Theatre Company; she will bring a similarly "fabulous" sensibility to her work on *AMERIKUS REX*. Political events include the Friday, October 8th performance, which will be a benefit for the political action committee Downtown for Democracy. In addition, the producers have made a special offer to audiences: arrive 10 minutes before show time, tell a George Bush joke, and purchase a ticket for just \$10.

Playwright Kevin Rice is a founder of the critically acclaimed Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, where he has made his presence known as an actor, director and playwright over the last twenty years. His original comedy, *One Night In The Life Of Denise Ivanovich*, received its World Premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe 2000 and was named "Critics Pick" by the Boston Globe in a subsequent professional Equity production in Wellfleet. Mr. Rice has also directed two Russian-language productions of his original plays in Russia: *Siberian Summer* in 1995 at the Pushkin Russian Dramatic Theatre and, in 2002, his adaptation of the Russian novel, *Oblomov*, at the renowned Sakha Theatre in Yakutsk, where it continues to run in repertory. As an actor, he is best known for originating the role of JFK in Gip Hoppe's original Boston production of *Jackie*.

The cast for *AMERIKUS REX* will be Caitlin Gibbon (Irish Arts Center, Cherry Lane Theatre, several plays with Kevin Rice), Adam Green (recent NYU grad), Dan Matisa (John Houseman Theatre, Joe's Pub), Jack R. Marks (numerous Broadway credits, as well as several films, including "The Eyes Of Laura Mars" and "Girlfight"), and Valorie Niccore ("All My Children", "Another World", "The Dating Game"). John Giampetro, co-founder and principal director for New York's Accidental Theatre Company, will direct.

AMERIKUS REX will begin performances on Thursday, October 7th and will continue through Sunday, October 31st. The schedule will be Thursdays through Saturdays at 8:00pm, and Sundays at 3:00pm. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased by calling Smarttix at (212) 868-4444, or online at www.smarttix.com. Photos will be available for download at www.brettsinger.com/clients/amerikusrex.html.

AMERIKUS REX

Written By Kevin Rice, Directed by John Giampetro

Presented by Blind Fish Productions

The Belt, 336 West 37th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues)

SCHEDULE: Thursdays through Saturdays at 8:00pm, Sundays at 3:00pm

TICKETS: \$15.00; Call (212) 868-4444 or www.smarttix.com

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