

'SILENT WITNESS'

BY JOE TODARO



Professional theatrical company River City Repertory is bringing a critically acclaimed one-woman show to the area this month that examines the humor and pathos, the pain and resilience of the children of the Holocaust.

"Silent Witnesses" was written and will be performed by Stephanie Satie based on interviews and conversations with child survivors of the Holocaust. They were shaped by their experiences as the children of the 20th century's most infamous events. Their memories were formed in the child's mind and focuses through the lenses of their maturity.

River City Rep Artistic Director Patric McWilliams said a scheduling issue with the previously announced production, "The Waverly Gallery," compelled the troupe to adjust. McWilliams had seen "Silent Witnesses" in New York. "I thought that will be a way for us to have something of quality really fast without having to switch gears and go into a whole other production mode," he said.

Despite the subject matter, McWilliams said the play is not dark but features touching moments as well as plenty of humor. Satie plays all the roles in the show and McWilliams was very complimentary of her performance.

"Sometimes," he said, "in those oneperson shows, you can hit one note and stay there. I thought she sidestepped that so beautifully, keeping up the flow and feeling of the show. Going into very light humorous moments and then bringing it back to darker things. She kept such a wonderful varied quality throughout the show. It's a really wonderful performance. I liked that it took the subject matter and didn't just go for one point of view. It shows a wide range of effects and reactions. It doesn't just sit on one note and pound on it."

McWilliams described the show as a collage of the women's emotions and reactions to the way events shaped their lives. The single performer format is one River City Rep has used before. McWilliams recalls that audiences were taken by "Dodging Bullets," another oneactor production, and expressed the desire to see more such plays. McWilliams said they are trying to schedule such productions each year to satisfy the audiences.

"It's a style that's not done here often," McWilliams said. "It's a technique that I think is worth being seen. It highlights actors and how they can shift and change and do their storytelling with a pared down from all the tech work. It makes you focus on the actor and the text."

"Silent Witnesses" will be staged at the Bossier Arts Council's East Bank Theatre on Barksdale Boulevard in downtown Bossier City. It opens for four performances only Jan. 23. Performances will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 23, 24 and 25 and at 3 p.m. Jan. 26. Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$10 for students. For reservations and more information, call 868-5888.