



**S**taggering toward  
The Journey Home

**AMERICA**

### **What the Critics Say About Staggering Toward America**

Casual in blue jeans and short-sleeved shirt, with a thatch of curly hair, jolly face, and beatific smile, Reppe wraps his audience around his finger without trying. Eloquent, animated, charismatic, a spellbinding storyteller, he livens his tale with physical action, lots of laughs, a few tears. His story pours forth urgent as a lightning flash. It's beyond acting, beyond artifice, beyond artistry, inspiring and inspired by 9/11.

A wondrous tapestry of Americana unfolds. At an "Old Armenians Social Club" in L.A., survivors of Turkish tyranny tell him, "This is where we want to be. Everybody's welcome. Freedom makes it easier to breathe." Everything on the Vegas Strip "screams at you--Live!" There a hooker with a good heart holds and comforts a young man whose father was at the towers and can't be contacted; no charge for her service. A little girl in Texas sends her best-loved Teddy bear and \$6.70 from her lemonade stand to a little girl who lost her daddy on 9/11. An all-night vigil spent in Ground Zero's devastation, another in rain and mud at the Pennsylvania site of American Airlines Flight 93's crash, an area posted with flags, letters, flowers, and everywhere posters of the fallen heroes' brave last words, "Let's roll!" Reppe pulls from his pocket a small furled flag rescued from the mud there and posts it on the only prop onstage: a chair he never uses.

Staggering Toward America is a moving testimonial that combines fires and fervors of an evangelist preacher, a dynamite motivational speaker, and a three-ring circus. Reppe is the better for his pilgrimage, and so are we.

**-Polly Warfield--Backstage West--August 21, 2003**

An actor-musician with a "severe allergy to poverty," Rik Reppe left behind his starving artist roots, took a PhD in economics and started his own successful management consulting firm. Happily occupied with the pursuit of prosperity, Reppe found his life rudely interrupted by the events of Sept. 11, a day that left him grasping for answers, reassurance and a renewed sense of connection with his fellow countrymen and women.

Taking a leave of absence, Reppe went on a cross-country odyssey that culminated in visits to the Pentagon, ground zero and that lonely stretch of Pennsylvania where Flight 93 took its fatal plunge. En route, Reppe interviewed Americans--all struggling, like himself, to come to terms with that senseless, shocking day.

Reppe's solo show "Staggering Toward America," now at the Globe Playhouse in West Hollywood, is a frequently witty and highly personal assessment of the post-Sept. 11 American landscape, with a particular emphasis on what, exactly, it means to be an American. Reppe's encounters en route to the disaster sites are heartening, humorous and moving.

Under the direction of Jack Rowe, Reppe comes across as a wry, engaging performer with a residual twang and a sardonic folksiness that serve him well.

Most affecting is Reppe's rousing description of an impromptu karaoke Christmas concert at an Indiana truck stop. That hilarious and heartwarming incident, in which singers of all colors and religions came together in joyful celebration, makes a serious point about egalitarianism and inclusiveness--virtues that are alive, well, and flourishing in these United States.

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-Kathleen Foley--Los Angeles Times--August 22, 2003