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Unicorn Theatre Opens '06-'07 Season with Chilling Comedy

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The Pillowman, a disturbing look at what defines art, the realities of censorship, and the importance of individual rights.

Kansas City, Mo. - *infoZine* - The Unicorn Theatre opens its 33rd Season September 1, 2006 with the black-as-night comedy *The Pillowman*, by Martin McDonagh, writer of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan* and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*.

Set in an unnamed totalitarian state, the play opens with Katurian, a writer of macabre fairy tales, being interrogated for his involvement regarding murders that mirror the happenings of his unpublished stories. The two investigators, Tupolski and Ariel also have his brother, Michal, in custody. As the police resort to increasingly absurd and hilariously unconventional methods to crack the case, Katurian's stories come to life, blurring the line between fact and fiction, truth and storytelling. USA Today remarked that "McDonagh's argument isn't simple or rhetorical. Presenting Katurian as a psychically ravaged man who values his work more than his life, McDonagh reflects not only on the value of art but also its potential price." This play contains violence and strong language and is not recommended for children or those who are easily offended.

About the show

The Pillowman had its world premiere on November 13, 2003 at the Royal National Theatre and received the 2004 Olivier Award and an Evening Standard Award nomination for Best New Play. It opened on Broadway to rave reviews at the Booth Theatre in April of 2005 where it won the Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play (Foreign). In *The Pillowman*, McDonagh provides a disturbing look at what defines art, the realities of censorship, and the importance of individual rights. The New York Times calls *The Pillowman* "gripping, unsettling, and exhilarating."

About the playwright

Martin McDonagh has seen his stage plays receive numerous awards and wide critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Born and raised in South London of Irish-born parents, Mr. McDonagh became familiar with the Connemara region of County Galway, the setting for most of his plays, during annual visits to relatives. His unsolicited script, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, had its world premiere in the new Town Hall Theatre, Galway, Ireland in February 1996 in a Druid Theatre/Royal Court Theatre co-production before playing the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in March of that year. Reviews were exceptional across the board and houses were full to capacity. *Beauty Queen* was revived, amid a blaze of publicity, in October of the same year at the Royal Court's main house at the West End venue The Duke of York's Theatre, following an Irish tour and reviewed again with enormous enthusiasm. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, the first play in Mr. McDonagh's Leenane Trilogy, was revived for a second time, together with the premieres of the second and third plays in the series, *A Skull in Connemara* and *The Lonesome West*, by Druid/Royal Court in Ireland and London in June to September 1997. After the *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* opened on Broadway, it received the 1998 Drama Desk Award, the 1998 Drama League Award and six Tony Award nominations including the nomination for Best Play. Mr. McDonagh's plays have been sold in 28 countries in 21 languages.

About the production

The Unicorn production of *The Pillowman* will be directed by Joe Price (Directed previous Unicorn productions of *Painted Alice*, *Bright Ideas*, *Blue/Orange*, *The Shape of Things* and *Fuddy Meers*). The cast features Nathan Darrow (as Katurian) (*The Retreat from Moscow*, *Painted Alice* and *Bright Ideas*), Darryl Stamp (as Tuploski) (*The Exonerated*, *Take Me Out*, *BeCaseHeCan*, *Wit*, *As bees in Honey Drown*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Flyin' West*, *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, *The Salvation of Iggy Scrooge*, *Red Scare on Sunset*, *Innocent Thoughts* and *Betrayal of the Black Jesus*), Rusty Snearly (as Michal) (*Frozen*, *The Exonerated*, *Omnium Gatherum* and *Take Me Out*), Mateusz Lewczenko (as Ariel) (Unicorn Debut), Joe Price (as Father) (Unicorn Stage Debut), Ingrid Andrea Geurtsen (as Mother) (Unicorn Debut), Chloe Michelle Fey (as Girl) (Unicorn Debut) and P. J. Lawhon (as Boy) (Unicorn Debut).

The Pillowman opens at Unicorn Theatre Friday, September 1, 2006 with previews Wednesday and Thursday August 30 and 31, 2006. New for the 2006/2007 season: Tuesdays AND Wednesdays at 7:30 pm, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8:00 pm, and Sundays at 3:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased by calling 816-531-PLAY ext. 10, visiting the box office at 3828 Main Street, KCMO 64111 or online at www.unicorntheatre.org. Tickets for previews are \$18.00, regular Tuesday through Thursday performances are \$20.00, Friday and Saturday performances are \$28.00, and Sunday matinees are \$22.00. Join Producing Artistic Director Cynthia Levin as she facilitates post show discussions with The Pillowman's director and cast on September 5th, 10th, and 12th. Unicorn Theatre offers \$5.00 off for senior citizens and full-time students (with valid I.D.). Group rates are available, and students with valid I.D. can purchase Rush Tickets for \$7.00 five minutes before curtain (based on availability).

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