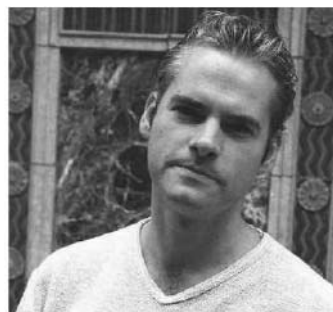


Posted on Sun, Aug. 27, 2006

Five plays to mark on your calendar

By ROBERT TRUSSELL



Theater critic Robert Trussell chooses his top five theater events for the fall.

'The Pillowman' by Martin McDonagh

Local audiences have seen two professional productions of McDonagh plays — "The Beauty Queen of Leenane" at the Unicorn and "The Cripple of Inishmaan" at Kansas City Actors Theatre — but neither is as provocative as this intense, brutally comic, horrifying play about censorship and art. Directed by Joe Price, who staged "Inishmaan" for KCAT. Performances begin Wednesday and continue through Sept. 24 at the Unicorn. (816) 531-7529.

'Jitney' by August Wilson

KC Rep continues exploring the work of the late August Wilson, the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner whose plays dramatize African-American life in the 20th century. "Jitney," set in the Hill District of Pittsburgh in the 1970s against the backdrop of an unlicensed cab company, is a moving father-son drama. The director is Lou Bellamy, who staged Wilson's "Two Trains Running" and Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" for the Rep. It runs Sept. 22-Oct. 15 at the UMKC Performing Arts Center. (816) 235-2700.

'With Their Eyes: The View of 9/11 From a High School at Ground Zero'

This show presents an oral history of events on the morning that terrorists attacked and destroyed the World Trade Center. The text is based on interviews with the students, faculty and staff at Stuyvesant High School in New York City. Runs Sept. 26-Oct. 22 at the Coterie. (816) 474-6552.

'Three Sisters' by Anton Chekhov

It has been quite awhile since Kansas City audiences have seen a high-quality production of Chekhov, so this UMKC Theater Department production is most welcome. Barry Kyle, professor of theater arts, will stage a recent adaptation of Chekhov's classic by British playwright Nicholas Wright. The cast features veteran actor Gary Holcombe (a UMKC acting instructor) appearing with MFA students. Runs Nov. 4-Nov. 12 at the Helen F. Spencer Theatre at the Performing Arts Center. (816) 235-6222.

'The Great American Trailer Park Musical' by Betsy Kelso and David Nehls

This off-Broadway hit has too much fun kicking around familiar redneck stereotypes, and to do it justice the Unicorn has assembled some of Kansas City's finest musical-comedy actors: James Wright, Karen Errington, Jessalyn Kincaid, Jake Walker, Cathy Barnett, Teri Adams and Julie Taylor. Nov. 29-Dec. 31 at the Unicorn. (816) 531-7529.

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