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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HUMOR & HORROR COLLIDE IN *THE PILLOWMAN* AT BERKELEY REP
Obie-winner Les Waters stages latest shocking script from Oscar-winner Martin McDonagh

DECEMBER 6, 2006 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre begins the year with an Oscar and Olivier Award-winning writer, an Obie Award-winning director, and a play the *New York Times* called “a spellbinding stunner.” Get ready for an edgy and enthralling evening when **Les Waters** tackles the latest shocking script from **Martin McDonagh**, author of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Six Shooter*, and other hits. *The Pillowman* mesmerized audiences during its recent London and Broadway runs – now this darkly funny thriller comes to Berkeley Rep’s intimate Thrust Stage.

The Pillowman begins previews on **January 12**, opens **January 17**, and closes **February 25**. The production sponsor for this show is the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Philanthropic Fund, and the executive producers are Marjorie Randolph, the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, and Jean and Michael Strunsky. The season producers for Berkeley Rep’s 39th year are Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, and the official season sponsors are BART and Wells Fargo.

“*The Pillowman* is written by one of the most gifted writers of our time,” **Waters remarks**. “McDonagh has the capacity to blend humor with horror to create a singular drama which is both hilarious and frightening. He has a truly unique voice that mixes the dark comic lyricism of the Irish with the acerbic wit of a London street punk. This show adds a touch of Kafka for truly hysterical results.”

The Pillowman is “this season’s most exciting and original new play,” proclaims the **New York Times**. It’s a viciously funny comedy where “the laughs trail into gulps and gasps,” a mystery where “whodunit” is the least of your concerns. A man tells creepy stories to entertain his mentally challenged brother – but then grisly murders that mirror these tales slice through town, and two cops come knocking. “The audience, too, wants to know where the stories lead,” **The New Yorker** asserts, “even as it suspects that with every twist the plot will become more gruesome.” With murder, mutilation, and dismemberment on the menu, **comedies don’t come any blacker than this** – you won’t believe you’re screaming with laughter!

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1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

When *The Pillowman* premiered in London, **Martin McDonagh** earned England's prestigious Olivier Award for Best Play and a nomination for the Evening Standard Award. The Broadway production won Best Play from the New York Drama Critics Circle and Best Play nominations for the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Tony Awards. These are merely the latest accolades in a meteoric career that had humble beginnings. Born and raised in London, McDonagh dropped out of school at 16, went on the dole, and borrowed a how-to book on writing. After trying his hand at short stories, radio plays, and television scripts, he turned to the chapter on playwriting and quickly became a legend. His first play, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, was written in only eight days and netted him the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright and a Tony nomination for Best Play. Performed at Berkeley Rep in 1999, *Beauty Queen* set the tone for all his works: built on brilliant dialogue and perfectly oiled plots, they are brutal, bloody, and yet irresistibly funny. By the age of 26, McDonagh achieved the incredible: he became, as *The New Yorker* notes, **"the first dramatist since Shakespeare to have four works professionally produced on the London stage in a single season."** Six of his plays are set in his parents' native Ireland: the Galway trilogy (*Beauty Queen*, *A Skull in Connemara*, and *The Lonesome West*) and the Aran Islands trilogy (*The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and *The Banshees of Inisherin*). McDonagh also wrote and directed *Six Shooter*, which won the 2006 Academy Award for Best Short Film, and is currently filming his full-length screenplay, *In Bruges*. He promises someday to write "a romantic comedy where hardly anyone gets murdered at all."

Les Waters is in his fourth year as associate artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged *Big Love*, *Eurydice*, *Fêtes de la Nuit*, *Finn in the Underworld*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, and *Yellowman*. With *The Pillowman*, he continues his journey through a haunted world: *Time Out New York* named his off-Broadway production of *Apparition* one of the Best 5 Plays of 2005; local audiences won't forget his eerie premiere of *Finn*; and *Eurydice* is headed to Second Stage Theatre in Manhattan after making a splash here and in New Haven. Waters won an Obie Award for *Big Love* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and his other New York credits include the Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public Theater, and Signature Theatre Company. Elsewhere in America, he has directed for Actors Theatre of Louisville, American Conservatory Theater, American Repertory Theatre, the Goodman Theatre, the Guthrie Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and Yale Repertory Theatre. In his native England, Waters has worked with the Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre Club, Joint Stock Theatre Group, the National Theatre, the Royal Court Theatre, and Traverse Theatre Club. The former head of the

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MFA directing program at UC San Diego, Waters' many honors include a Drama-Logue Award, an Edinburgh Fringe First Award, a KPBS Patte, and several awards from critics' circles in the Bay Area, Connecticut, and Tokyo.

For *The Pillowman*, Waters has assembled a **macabre cast** featuring many favorite faces from past Berkeley Rep productions. **Tony Amendola** (Tupolski) was a resident actor, associate artist, and frequent director at the Theatre from 1980 until 1990. His previous credits on the Thrust Stage include *American Buffalo*, *In the Belly of the Beast*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A View from the Bridge*. Amendola worked with Waters at A.C.T., La Jolla Playhouse, and the Taper, and has been seen on many other stages in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. He appeared in the movies *Blow*, *The Legend of Zorro*, *Lone Star*, *The Mask of Zorro*, and *Read You Like a Book*, which was filmed in Berkeley. His television credits include appearances in *Alias*, *CSI*, *Seinfeld*, and *The West Wing*, as well as a recurring role on *Stargate SG-1*. **Nancy Carlin** (Mother) last performed at Berkeley Rep in *Hedda Gabler* and *Kabuki Medea*. She is an associate artist at the California Shakespeare Theater and an affiliate artist of the Foothill Theatre Company. A former company member of A.C.T., Carlin has also appeared at the Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, SF Playhouse, and TheatreWorks. She has directed for A.C.T.'s MFA program, the Aurora, the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, and PlayGround. Carlin's film credits include featured roles in *Frameup* and *Night of Henna*, and she co-produced Josh Kornbluth's *Haiku Tunnel*. **Erik Lochtefeld** (Katurian) returns to Berkeley Rep after a triumphant performance opposite Rita Moreno in Waters' production of *The Glass Menagerie* last season. Lochtefeld also appeared at Berkeley Rep in *Metamorphoses* and *The Secret in the Wings*. His New York credits include the Broadway and off-Broadway productions of *Metamorphoses*, *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci* at Second Stage, and *But I'm a Cheerleader* at the New York Music Theatre Festival. Regionally, Lochtefeld has been seen at noted theatres such as the McCarter Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Taper, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Yale Rep. An associate artist of both The Civilians and Salt Theater, **Matthew Maher** (Michal) received an Obie Award for the Foundry Theatre's production of *The Race of the Ark Tattoo*. His other New York credits include work with Clubbed Thumb, Playwrights Horizons, The Public, Target Margin Theater, Soho Repertory Theatre, Synapse Productions, and Theatre For A New Audience. Maher's regional experience includes work at Actors Theatre of Louisville, CT20 Ensemble, the McCarter, New Harmony Theatre, and Portland Stage Company. His film credits include *Bringing Out the Dead*, *Dogma*, *Jersey Girl*, *The Third Wheel*, *Vulgar*, and the upcoming *Gone Baby*

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Gone. **Andy Murray** (Ariel) performed in Berkeley Rep's acclaimed productions of *The Fall*, *Macbeth*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Locally, he has appeared in more than 20 shows at Cal Shakes and also at A.C.T., the Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Rep, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Regionally, he's been seen at CenterStage, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and Seattle Rep. Murray is a popular acting teacher at the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre and at Cal Shakes. **Howard Swain** (Father) has many credits at Berkeley Rep, including *Execution of Justice*, *Fuente Ovejuna*, *Our Country's Good*, *Pentecost*, and *The Tooth of Crime*. He has also worked at A.C.T., the Aurora, the Eureka Theatre, the Magic, the Marines Memorial Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, the Post Street Theatre, San Jose Rep, San Jose Stage, and TheatreWorks – as well as at Cal Shakes and the Berkeley, Marin, Oregon, and Santa Cruz Shakespeare Festivals. Swain's film and television credits include *Cherry 2000*, *Frameup*, *Golden Gate*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Just One Night*, *Kiss Shot*, *Metro*, *Midnight Caller*, *Miracle Mile*, *Nash Bridges*, *Night of the Scarecrow*, *Teknolust*, and *The Valley of Heart's Delight*. The ensemble for *The Pillowman* also includes four local children: **Brigette Renee Lundy-Paine**, **Brendan Reilly**, **Madeline Silverman**, and **Gabriel Vergez**.

Four **frighteningly talented designers** have signed on to create the horrifically funny world of *The Pillowman*. **Antje Ellermann** (scenic designer) designs for theatre, television, and opera – and Berkeley Rep audiences saw her stunning work in last season's *9 Parts of Desire*. She has received an NEA/TCG Career Development Grant and nominations for an Emmy Award, a Lucille Lortel Award, and an Ovation Award. In addition to *9 Parts*, her New York credits include *The Cook*, *Drizzle*, *Hesh*, *Sakharam Binder & Trust*, and *When it's Cocktail Time in Cuba*. **Anna R. Oliver** (costume designer) designed dazzling costumes for Berkeley Rep's productions of *Fräulein Else*, *The Magic Fire*, and *Missing Persons*. Her work has also been seen locally at A.C.T., the Aurora, Brava Theater Center, Cal Shakes, Marin Theatre Company, San Francisco Opera, and San Jose Rep – and further afield at BAM, Canadian Opera Company, Dallas Opera, Dallas Theater Center, Houston Grand Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera, the Old Globe, and Seattle Rep. **Russell H. Champa** (lighting designer) collaborated with Waters on the Berkeley, New Haven, and New York productions of *Eurydice*. On Broadway, Champa designed Julia Sweeney's *God Said "Ha!"* His other credits in the Big Apple include shows at Classic Stage Company, La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Stage & Film, the Promenade Theatre, and the Union Square Theatre. Champa's regional credits include A.C.T., the Actors' Gang, Cal Shakes, Intiman Theatre, the Kennedy Center, Long Wharf, the Magic, McCarter Theatre, Primary Stages, San

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Jose Rep, Seattle Rep, the Taper, Trinity Repertory Company, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Wilma Theater. **Obadiah Eaves** (sound designer) created sound for Berkeley Rep's *9 Parts of Desire*, and won the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Sound Design for the show's New York run. He designed the Broadway productions of McDonagh's *Lieutenant of Inishmore* and Conor McPherson's *Shining City*. He has also created sound and composed music for world premieres by Woody Allen, Jon Robin Baitz, David Mamet, Suzan-Lori Parks, Jose Rivera, and Nicky Silver. Eaves' music can be heard in many films; on the Discovery Channel, HBO Family Channel, the Learning Channel, and Nickelodeon; and on recordings by his band, *Big Hair*. Back on the West Coast after touring with Berkeley Rep's *Brundibar*, the stage manager for this production will be **Michael Suenkel**, the Theatre's resident production stage manager.

Theatre-lovers who don't die laughing can enjoy **19 special events** during the run of *The Pillowman*:

- *Target @ Teen Night* begins at 6:30 PM on Friday, January 12 and includes a preview performance, dinner catered by Bar Ristorante Raphael, and a behind-the-scenes discussion with a member of the artistic team. Tickets are \$5 for members of Berkeley Rep's Teen Council, \$20 for all other teens. For more information, call 510.647.2978 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org.
- *Opening night* festivities are held on Wednesday, January 17, including a pre-show dinner for donors at Downtown Restaurant and a post-show party for the audience catered by Bar Ristorante Raphael and Raymond Vineyard & Cellar.
- *night/OUT*, an event for the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community, takes place on Thursday, January 18. The post-play party features dance music mixed by a cutting-edge DJ, gourmet hors d'oeuvres from Downtown Restaurant, gorgeous blossoms from Darling Flower Shop, and complimentary drinks from Triple Rock Brewery and Raymond Vineyard & Cellar.
- *Page to Stage*, a free talkback with Les Waters sponsored by Peet's Coffee and Tea, occurs on Monday, January 29 at 7:00 PM.
- Three *post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM shows on Thursday, February 1; Tuesday, February 13; and Friday, February 16.
- Free 30-minute *docent presentations* about the show are held every Tuesday and Thursday during the run at 7:00 PM: January 16, 18, 23, 25, and 30 and February 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, and 22.

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Tickets for *The Pillowman* are on sale now, priced from \$33 to \$61. Hold onto your seats! Purchase tickets for three or more shows in Berkeley Rep's 2006/07 Season and receive a significant discount, as well as priority seating and special benefits. **Discounts** are also available for senior citizens, full-time students, groups, UC Berkeley alumni, employees of K-12 schools, and anyone under 30 years of age. For every weeknight performance, half-price HotTix go on sale that day at noon at the box office. All discounts are subject to availability.

Berkeley Rep's Thrust Stage is located at 2025 Addison Street, one block from Berkeley's downtown BART station and close to AC Transit bus lines. The theatre is accessible to the handicapped, offering wheelchair seating and special services for those with hearing- or vision-impairment. For tickets or information, call **510.647.2949** or toll-free at **888.4.BRT.Tix** – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Founded in 1968, the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre has established a national reputation for its ambitious programming and dynamic productions. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tony Taccone and Managing Director Susan Medak, Berkeley Rep seeks to engage its audience in an ongoing dialogue of ideas. Through its bold choice of material and vivid style of production, Berkeley Rep reflects a commitment to diversity, excitement, and quality. The company is especially well known for its presentations of important new dramatic voices and its fresh adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In 2001, Berkeley Rep opened the Roda Theatre, a 600-seat proscenium theatre that complements the 400-seat Thrust Stage, and the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, housed in the Nevo Education Center. The addition of these two buildings has transformed what was once a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex.

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THE PILLOWMAN

FACT SHEET

WHO: Written by Martin McDonagh
 Directed by Les Waters
 Designed by Antje Ellermann (sets), Anna R. Oliver (costumes),
 Russell H. Champa (lights), and Obadiah Eaves (sound)
 Featuring Tony Amendola, Nancy Carlin, Erik Lochtefeld, Brigitte Renee Lundy-Paine, Matthew Maher, Andy Murray, Brendan Reilly, Madeline Silverman, Howard Swain, and Gabriel Vergez

WHAT: *The Pillowman*, a darkly funny thriller where “whodunit” is the least of your concerns

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s Thrust Stage
 2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: Previews on 1/12 - 1/16/07 – Performances on 1/17 - 2/25/07

- Tuesdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays & Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
- No performance on Friday 2/23
- No matinees during previews or on 1/18, 1/27, 2/1, 2/10 & 2/15

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
jan 12–feb 25					jan 12 8pm ●	13 8pm ●
14 7pm ●	15	16 8pm ●	17 8pm ■	18 8pm ▲	19 8pm	20 2/8pm
21 2/7pm	22	23 8pm	24 7pm	25 2/8pm	26 8pm	27
28 2/7pm	29	30 8pm	31 7pm	feb 1 8pm ◆	2 8pm	3 2/8pm
4 2/7pm	5	6 8pm	7 7pm	8 2/8pm	9 8pm	10 8pm
11 2/7pm	12	13 8pm ◆	14 7pm	15 8pm	16 8pm ◆	17 2/8pm
18 2/7pm	19	20 8pm	21 7pm	22 2/8pm	23	24 2/8pm
25 2/7pm						

□ docent talks
 ● previews
 ■ opening night
 ▲ night/OUT
 ◆ discussion

Special Events –
Target @ Teen Night: Friday 1/12 @ 6:30 PM
Opening night: Wednesday 1/17 @ 8:00 PM
night/OUT (LGBT event): Thursday 1/18 @ 8:00 PM
Page to Stage (free talkback with Les Waters): Monday 1/29 @ 7:00 PM
Post-play discussions: Thursday 2/1, Tuesday 2/13 & Friday 2/16 @ 8:00 PM
Docent presentations: Tuesdays 1/16, 1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13 & 2/20 @ 7:00 PM
 & Thursdays 1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8, 2/15 & 2/22 @ 7:00 PM

HOW MUCH: Previews\$33 Sundays (2 PM & 7 PM) \$49
 Tues (8 PM) / Wednesdays (7 PM) ..\$45 Friday evenings (8 PM)..... \$55
 Thursdays (2 PM & 8 PM)\$47 Wednesday opening (8 PM) \$61
 Saturday matinees (2 PM).....\$47 Saturday evenings (8 PM) \$61

Discounts:

- ½ price tickets available to those under 30 (some restrictions apply)
- ½ price rush tickets for students and seniors sold ½ hour before curtain
- 20 half-price HotTix go on sale Tuesday through Friday at noon
- Groups of 15+ may contact 510.647.2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

TIX & INFO: 510.647.2949 – toll-free 888-4-BRT-Tix – www.berkeleyrep.org