

NEWS from KPM ASSOCIATES

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For Immediate Release (02/08):

“UMBRELLA” by L. Pontius

The Alchemy Theatre Company of Manhattan presents

PREMIERE Off Broadway at The Kirk Theatre (Theatre Row)

Previews Begin April 11 - Opening April 15, 2008

The Alchemy Theatre Company of Manhattan, Inc (a resident company of Theatre Row) presents *“Umbrella”* by L. Pontius, Off Broadway at The Kirk Theatre (Theatre Row), 410 West 42nd Street, NYC. It is directed by LAByrinth Theatre Company’s Padraic Lillis and stars Christa Kimlicko Jones and Judson Jones. Previews begin April 11 and opens Tuesday, April 15, at 8pm. The set & costume designer is Lea Umberger; with lighting design by Sarah Sidman and sound design by Jill BC Du Boff.

“Umbrella” is a mix of tragedy and comedy about the loneliness and despair of living in a big city and the choices we make to relieve the pressure. Helen and Frank are two strangers on a rooftop; one a peeping Tom, the other a cutter. They try to find a common ground, but it all changes as taboos and secrets are revealed and dreams fall apart. What began as an act of kindness turns into a war of wills.

L. Pontius was born and raised in the Mid-West and educated around the country, most recently receiving his MFA in Playwriting from the University of Texas. Some of his productions include: *“On Sunday Morning”* in Chicago; *“American Autobahns”* at the Minnesota Fringe Festival; and *“The Connection is Made”* and *“Running Out of Time”* both ACTF Regional Finalists. He is a member of Unbound: Playwrights for A New Century. Pontius has been commissioned to write a 15-part drama series for HUMTV. His other series, a 13-part mystery/thriller, is currently airing in Pakistan. In addition to the series, Pontius has written several episodes for an anthology series titled New York Stories, which were filmed in New York City and aired in Pakistan. Padraic Lillis (Director) directed Michael Puzzo’s *“The Dirty Talk”* (nominated NYIT Outstanding Director), the documentary play on Columbine, *“A Line in the Sand”* for the Midtown International Theater Festival (Awarded Best Production), was the dramaturg for *“The Boy in the Bathroom”* at the New York Musical Theater Festival (Awarded Most Promising New Musical and Best Book) and his play *“Ronnie’s Mask”* was produced in Chicago at the Steppenwolf Performance Garage. As a director he has worked with: Manhattan Theater Club, Roundabout, New York Theater Workshop, Pearl, Young Playwrights Festival, Labyrinth Theater, McCarter Theater, Portland Stage Company, and others. He also directed the National Tour of *“She Loves Me.”* Padraic is a Usual Suspect with New York Theater Workshop, an alumnus of the Drama League Director’s Project, and a company member of the Labyrinth Theater since 2004.

Robert Saxner is Producing Artistic Director of Alchemy. Directing work includes: New York Premieres of Christopher Durang’s *The Vietnamization of New Jersey*, Zayd Dohrn’s *Haymarket* and Ned Campbell’s *Ollie Utz is Free*; David Mamet’s *Speed-the-Plow* and Larry Kramer’s *The Normal Heart*; Regional credits include Zayd Dohrn’s *Shameless* (Red Friday Productions), Martin Jones’ *Old Soldiers* (Theatre Cooperative), the premieres of Henry Kimmel’s *Tinted Window* and Paul Mohrbacher’s *Samarkand* (Atlantis Playmaker’s Festival), John Patrick Shanley’s *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, James Christie’s *Creep*, Jean Genet’s *The Maids* (Actor’s Workshop of Boston), Heiner Muller’s *Hamletmachine*, Elizabeth Egloff’s *The Swan*, and Caryl Churchill’s *Cloud 9* (ART/MXAT’s Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University). Other directing work includes Samuel Beckett’s *Catastrophe*, *Play*, and *Act Without Words I & II* (Moscow Art Theatre School). Acting work includes Gavrila in Chekhov’s *Ivanov*, in which he also served as Assistant Director, starring Debra Winger and Arliss Howard at American Repertory Theatre. Robert has taught at Actor’s Workshop in Boston. He is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. MFA in Directing from Moscow Art Theatre School.

The ALCHEMY THEATRE COMPANY OF MANHATTAN, INC. serves to confront isolation through theatrical storytelling that probes the complexity of the human heart, and build community by allowing for a better understanding of our audience and ourselves. Two of the past acclaimed productions of ATCNY have been the first NYC productions of *“Speed The Plow”* and *“The Normal Heart”* after their original New York premieres.

www.alchemytheatre.org <http://www.myspace.com/alchemytheatre>

Performances through May 4th are: Tuesday – Saturday at 8pm; Sunday at 2pm. There are special performances Saturday 4/12 at 2pm & Sunday 4/13 at 7pm. Preview tickets (4/11-13) are \$30; then \$35; seniors \$15 off; day of student rush \$15. They are available through Ticket Central: (212) 279-4200 or www.ticketcentral.com

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