

SKY GILBERT'S WHY WE TORTURED HIM: A MEDITATION ON THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE OPENS OCTOBER 29TH IN HAMILTON AT THE PEARL

**EXPERIENCE THE CONTROVERSIAL SHOW EVERYONE
IN HAMILTON HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT!**

Hamilton, Ontario (Wednesday, October 1, 2009) For Immediate Release – WHY WE TORTURED HIM: A MEDITATION ON THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE is the fourth Sky Gilbert work presented by Hammertheatre to have it's World Premiere in Hamilton, Ontario. Previous critically acclaimed and sold out Hammertheatre productions by Sky Gilbert include *CRACK* (2007), *LADYLIKE* (2007) and *STEVEN AND CHRIS DESIGN YOUR MIND* (2009).

"In this play I explore the difference between the true nature of violence and the rhetoric about violence that is so often played out in the media," says Writer and Director Sky Gilbert. "I want the audience to walk away from this play with a deeper understanding of good and evil and of the evil that we all carry within ourselves. Though I think it is important that criminals are punished, I also think it is important that we don't demonize criminals. They are human too and some of the impulses that criminals have we all have. No man is an island and to be human is to be implicated by the acts of other human beings."

THE PLAY

WHY WE TORTURED HIM: A MEDITATION ON THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE is an hour-long exploration of the difficult questions so many of us ask ourselves when horrific and violent crime stories are played out in the media. The most important question being – Why? In Sky Gilbert's fictional examination of these powerful and poignant issues Brandy and Doug are Gary's torturers. Are they sexual perverts, victims of poverty, fundamentally evil, or a mixture of all three? You decide.

SHOW DATES AND TIMES

All performances of **WHY WE TORTURED HIM: A MEDITATION ON THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE** will take place in The Pearl Company's intimate 70-seat theatre located at 16 Steven Street, in Hamilton, Ontario. Tickets are \$15 with Pay-What-You-Can Sunday Matinees. Tickets can be purchased in person at the Box Office. Reservations can be made by calling 905-524-0606. Cash only.

Thursday, October 29, 2009 at 8:30pm (Opening)

Friday, October 30, 2009 at 8:30pm

Saturday, October 31, 2009 at 8:30pm

Sunday, November 1, 2009 at 2:30pm

Tuesday, November 3, 2009 at 8:30pm

Wednesday, November 4, 2009 at 8:30pm

Thursday, November 5, 2009 at 8:30pm

Friday, November 6, 2009 at 8:30pm

Saturday, November 7, 2009 at 8:30pm

Sunday, November 8, 2009 at 2:30pm (Closing)

CREATIVE TEAM

MARK CRAWFORD (DOUG): Mark last appeared on stage in Hamilton in Norm Foster's *Opening Night* at Theatre Aquarius. Recent onstage credits include Trinculo in *The Tempest* (Canadian Stage Company), *The Miser* (Sudbury Theatre Centre), *Bluenose* (Carousel Players), *The Inspector General* (Talk is Free Theatre), *Mary's Wedding* (Thousand Islands Playhouse), *Romeo and Juliet* (Driftwood Theatre), *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge* (Theatre and Company), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Festival of Classics). Mark is a graduate of the University of Toronto-Mississauga and Sheridan College joint theatre programme. Mark will next be seen as George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* at Theatre New Brunswick.

ALEX FIDDES (GARY): Alex is a recent graduate of Sheridan College's music theatre program. Past roles include The Boy in *Icarus Redux* (Open Season Theatre), Ugly in *Honk Jr.* (GADZ Productions/Theatre Aquarius), Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Uxbridge Players), and Mr. Bungee in *A New Brain* (Theatre Sheridan). Alex is also currently composing for an upcoming production of *Metamorphoses* at Sheridan College this fall. He is an active solo artist who has performed at The Opera House, Showplace and the Toronto Fringe Festival.

SKY GILBERT (WRITER/DIRECTOR): Sky is a writer, director, and drag queen extraordinaire. He was the Artistic Director of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre for eighteen years and has published five critically acclaimed novels. Sky has received two Dora Mavor Moore Awards, the Pauline McGibbon Award, The Margo Bindhardt Award, The Silver Ticket Award, and the ReLit Award. This fall, his 2008 novella *Wit in Love* (Quattro Books) is being dramatized by Toronto's award winning DNA THEATRE and his third collection of poetry *A Nice Place To Visit* is being published by ECW Press. Dr. Gilbert holds a University Research Chair in Creative Writing and Theatre Studies at The School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph. **Website:** <http://home.istar.ca/~anita/>

DENISE LISSON (SET AND COSTUME DESIGN CO-ORDINATOR): Hamilton is home base for Denise who has painted scenery for theatrical productions which have traveled all over the world including; *The Lion King*, *Mama Mia* and most recently the American tour of *Fiddler On The Roof*. She has been the head scenic artist at Theatre Aquarius, Great Lakes Scenic Studios and currently in the production theatre department at Sheridan College where she is also an instructor. She is excited to be working with Sky and three young emerging designers and technicians on the design team for this production.

HALEY MCGEE (BRANDY): Haley is a Toronto-based actor and playwright. Growing up in Waterloo, Haley has a strong connection to Hamilton—her mother grew up on the mount, and she has spent much time in Jerseyville. Theatre: *Summer of My Amazing Luck* (1000 Islands Playhouse), *The Date* (New Ideas Festival), *Hungry* (Public Energy), *Schoolhouse*, *The Last Green Hill* and *Beautiful Lady* (4th Line Theatre). As a playwright Haley's work has been presented at BUZZ (Theatre Passe Muraille), Write From The Hip (Nightwood Theatre), the Toronto Fringe Festival (2007), and The GYM Playoffs! (CanStage).

STEPHEN NEWMAN (STAGE MANAGER): Steve is very excited to be working with Sky and a very talented cast on this original production. Steve spent 35 seasons with Theatre Aquarius in Hamilton as Stage Manager and Production Director and served on the boards of Arts Hamilton and the inaugural Hamilton Fringe Festival. Steve stage managed the Hamilton International Tattoo and the Rochester Marine Tattoo working with casts of over 700 military and civilian performers. In 2008 Steve received The Hamilton Arts award in the production category and this past summer had the privilege of working with the Brott Music Festival and The National Academy Orchestra.

Poster and promotional materials for WHY WE TORTURED HIM: A MEDITATION ON THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE were designed by Ian Jarvis.

THEATRE COMPANIES

HAMMERTHEATRE: Sky Gilbert founded Hammertheatre in January 2007. Hammertheatre is devoted to theatre research in Hamilton, particularly in plays by Artistic Director Sky Gilbert that deal with issues of gender and sexuality in experimental ways.

THE PEARL COMPANY: Established in 2006 by guitarist/composer Gary Santucci and arts ambassador Barbara Milne, The Pearl Company is an arts and performance facility in the heart of Hamilton's Landsdale neighbourhood. **Website:** <http://thepearlcompany.ca>

SPONSORS

Hammertheatre's production of WHY WE TORTURED HIM: A MEDITATION ON THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE thanks the **ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL** for its financial support.

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