

Directing concept - martin mcdonoughs the pillowman creative writing sample

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For my directing concept, I chose Martin McDonough's *The Pillowman* - the tale of Katurian, a horror story author who finds himself being arrested by a totalitarian police state for murders that closely follow his horrific short stories. Being put in a cell with his brother Michal, he starts to recount his stories to both him and the detectives interrogating him, figuring out exactly what happened to him in his childhood and the murders that mirror his stories. I believe this play would make a wonderful addition to any given season of Mosaic Theatre or any other participating and willing theater in the Plantation, FL area.

My concept would revolve around a black box-style presentation, proscenium-style, with Katurian's scenes with Michal downstage, the cramped interrogation room upstage left with the detectives, and other actors playing out the horror stories in silhouette, behind a scrim. This would contribute to the unknown, dreamlike nature of the horror, and would allow for affecting images on a smaller budget. It would also bring Katurian's directly in front of the audience, creating an intense and frightening experience that would hold the audience's attention.

The play would be presented with very naturalistic acting set against very abstract and presentational settings - the silhouetted horror stories, the macabre nature of the mentally-challenged Michal, and the dystopian nature of the interrogation room would all serve as maddening surroundings for the relatively-sane Katurian to interact with and react to. I wish to demonstrate the relationship between an author and his works, and/or his sense of creativity, by linking Katurian to his stories through the scrim-silhouette

presentation. This would give the audience the sense that we are experiencing these stories as figments of Katurian's imagination, made more horrific by his own exaggerations.

With my concept for *The Pillowman*, it would play out almost like a Halloween show, with dark lighting, abstract imagery for the recounting of the horror stories, and a lot of dirt and grime in the sound and set designs to create a feeling of discomfort in the audience. The acting would be very naturalistic, yet bold and theatrical when it needed to be (the storytelling sequences). My hope is to create an atmosphere of dread and horror that gradually intensifies until the very end of the play, just like a good horror story should. *The Pillowman's* atmosphere would echo the very same stories Katurian tells, creating an affordable, controversial yet thought-provoking adaptation of a highly-acclaimed play that would attract younger audiences as well.

In conclusion, my concept is to turn *The Pillowman* into a maddening, dizzying and frightening look at both a scary future and a tortured mind, emphasizing the horror of Katurian's stories, and the grotesqueries of the police state that is torturing him. I want to create a haunting tale that uses darkness, silhouette, and intense lighting/set design and performances to shock and frighten the audience, as well as tremendously entertain. My directing concept would convey spookiness and dread without sacrificing affordability and effectiveness of the script, and would be a welcome addition to any of Mosaic Theatre's future seasons.

Works Cited

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