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Feb. 19, 2008
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International Mysteries Writers' Festivals announces its DREAMTEAM of directors

OWENSBORO, Ky. – The new works presented at this year's International Mystery Writers' Festival will be under the direction of a group of national award-winning directors. The list of directors coming to this year's Festival reads as a *Who's Who* among professionals in the industry of presenting new works, according to Festival Co-Chairman Zev Buffman, who made the announcement today in Owensboro, Ky.

Buffman announced the three directing giants joining this year's Festival are: Tony award-winning director Brian Bedford, who serves as one of the star actors and directors for the Stratford Festival in Canada; Mark Bellamy, artistic director for the Vertigo Theatre, Calgary, Canada; and Sean Daniels, associate artistic director, Actors Theatre of Louisville.

Bedford, one of the most acclaimed classical actor/directors today, studied acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where his classmates included Peter O'Toole, Albert Finney and Alan Bates.

Bedford's performance in Peter Shaffer's first play, "Five Finger Exercise," brought him to Broadway, where he has subsequently starred in more than 20 productions, receiving five Tony nominations for best actor and best director and winning the award for Molière's "The School for Wives." Other honors include the Drama Desk Award, Obie, Outer Circle Critics Award and Los Angeles Drama Critics Award. Bedford was recently inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame. Since receiving numerous awards and many different projects spanning the globe, Bedford in recent years lent most of his time to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada. He has starred and directed in multiple works presented at the Festival

Bedford will be directing the U.S. premiere of Agatha Christie's play "Chimneys." After being lost for more than 70 years, the play was found, and the rights were awarded to the International Mystery Writers' Festival.

Bellamy's career started at a very young age as a childhood actor, stealing the show in the Broadway hit "Oliver." He became rather quickly one of the most highly demanded choreographers in the industry. Bellamy has done everything from directing thrillers, operas and musicals to supervising the entire multi-theatre operation and artistic direction of the most highly regarded year-round mystery play theatres in the world, the Vertigo Theatre, Calgary, Canada, which is the country's official theatre for mystery.

Bellamy will be lending his talents and expertise in directing the new Sherlock Holmes piece "The Final Toast" by Mystery Writers of America Grand Master and Edgar-winner Stuart Kaminsky.

Daniels was associate artistic director at California Shakespeare Theater in Berkeley, Calif. Prior to that, he was in Atlanta for 10 years as Artistic Director of the theatre he co-founded, Dad's Garage, winner of both "Best Theatre" and "Best Place to Get Art Without the Pretense". Daniels many honors include winning best director and best production awards across the country, and singled out for his work in *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times*, *American Theatre*, the BBC and *People* magazine. He is widely acknowledged as an innovative artist and theatrical visionary. Daniels was named "one of the Top Up and Coming Artists under 30" by *American Theatre Magazine*. Daniels is currently the associate artistic director for Actors Theatre of Louisville. Daniels will be directing the two new works being presented in the Jody Berry Cabaret Theatre during the Festival, "The Last Appointment" by Donald C. Drake and "Fleming, An American Thriller" by Sam Bobrick.

"Last year's festival had many ingredients that lent themselves to reaching out to such super directing talents in the industry," said Buffman, who also serves as president & CEO of RiverPark. "My quest was in finding directors that would be at home in directing brand new works and also have the knowledge of what it means to present new works within the complex 'high-speed zone' format of our world-renowned international Festival.

"Brian Bedford's knowledge of the stage, direction, acting and long-term involvement with one of the greatest festivals of the world, the Stratford Festival, made him a perfect candidate to reach for.

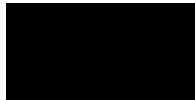
"Next, contacting Mark Bellamy, the artistic director of the famous Vertigo Theatre that presents mysteries year-round was another ideal choice. In fact, the Agatha Christie play "Chimneys" that will be directed by Brian Bedford was discovered in Calgary by the Artistic Director of the Vertigo Mystery Theatre

“Finally, the selection of Sean was made because of his abilities as a director, his creative talents as an actor, and his undeniable knowledge of co-presenting one of the largest Festivals of new works.

The Humana Festival and The International Mystery Writers’ Festival have been working together since the International Mystery Writers’ Festival began preparations to launch. Both projects bring the most attention across the globe in presenting and launching new works. The economic impact value of the two festivals generates millions of dollars into the local economies as well as the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Festival or to reserve tickets, log on to www.newmysterries.org.

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The Kentucky Arts Council, a state agency in the Commerce Cabinet, provides operational support funding for RiverPark Center with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.