

**ACTORS TOURING COMPANY**  
**THE UNICORN THEATRE**

**UK PREMIERE**

**MARTYR**

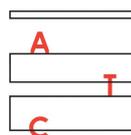
**By Marius von Mayenburg**

**Directed by Ramin Gray**

**UNICORN THEATRE**

**September 15 to October 10**

**Press Night September 17**



**ACTORS TOURING COMPANY AND THE UNICORN THEATRE PRESENT UK PREMIERE OF  
 MARIUS VON MAYENBURG'S STUDY OF RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

Benjamin won't do swimming at school. His mum thinks he's on drugs or has body issues. But Benjamin has found God and mixed-sex swimming lessons offend him. So begins the teenager's journey towards religious extremism. The school wishes to accommodate all faiths but when will they recognise the threat that his religious belief has on their own liberal ethos? As Benjamin terrorises the staff and fellow students alike, only one teacher is prepared to take a stand. How far is she willing to go and what will she risk to defend her own deeply held convictions?

Veering from the humorous to the sinister and ultimately to the shocking, *Martyr* is a provocative and urgent exploration of the clash between fundamentalism and tolerance in Western democracy. This is a play that considers how far we should go in accommodating another's faith and when it is right to take a stand for our own opposing values.

Bringing together audiences both young and old, this autumn Actors Touring Company, the UK's leading producer of international contemporary theatre is co-producing with the Unicorn, the UK's principle professional theatre company for young audiences to present a drama of our times by Germany's leading playwright, Marius Von Mayenburg.

**Artistic Director of Actors Touring Company and director of Martyr, Ramin Gray says:**

"If the defining event of our time is the clash between the fundamentalist and liberal perspective, then *Martyr* is the play for today. If theatre can play a useful role in creating a space for the important conversations to take place, then *Martyr* is the play for today. If theatre not only reflects but interrogates our social structures and values through humour, provocation and conflict, then *Martyr* is the play for today."

**Artistic Director of the Unicorn, Purni Morell says:**

"For me, theatre has always been a place for debate. Sometimes personal debate, between you and the things on your mind, and sometimes public debate. *Martyr* raises a number of questions and ideas: is it ever possible for tolerance to go too far, are there things you should fight for, how can we understand each other better. They're the age-old questions, but they're still with us, perhaps more than ever, and so perhaps more than ever now is the time to go to the theatre."

One of Germany's most prominent young playwrights, Marius von Mayenburg was awarded the Kleist Prize for young dramatists for his first play *Fireface* in 1997, the Frankfurt Writer's Foundation Prize in 1998 and was named 1999's up-and-coming writer by the magazine *Theaterheute*. His work, which includes *Turista*, *The Ugly One*, *Perplexed* and *Martyr*, has been translated into over 30 languages and performed both in Germany and abroad. Alongside his activities as playwright, Mayenburg has worked as a translator for plays such as Thomas Ostermeier's Shakespeare productions of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Measure for Measure* and *Richard III*. He is also a prolific theatre director.

Actors Touring Company tours extensively in the UK and overseas, creating fresh insight and challenging perceptions by forging partnerships writers and performers, placing them at the heart of the creative process. Under the stewardship of artistic director Ramin Gray, recent work has included the multi-award winning *The Events* by David Greig which has recently played in the US at New York Theatre Workshop having premiered at The Traverse Theatre and playing two sell out runs at The Young Vic. The production, directed by Gray, has also been staged in German and Norwegian at Schauspielhaus, Vienna, Brageteatret in Drammen. Other recent work has included Nassim Soleimanpour's *Blind Hamlet*, Ivan Viripaev's *Illusions* and Roland Schimmelpfennig's *The Golden Dragon*.

The Unicorn is the UK's leading professional theatre for young audiences, empowering them to explore the world – on their own terms – through theatre that is honest, refreshing and international in outlook. Firmly on the map as a leading producing theatre, the Unicorn has been described in the UK as having "the right to claim a place as one of our leading new-writing theatres" by Lyn Gardner of *The Guardian* and in 2014 received the prestigious Peter Brook Empty Space Award. The Unicorn Theatre was founded by Caryl Jenner in 1947 with a commitment to giving children a valuable and often first ever experience of quality theatre, and a philosophy that "the best of theatre for children should be judged on the same high standards of writing, directing, acting and design as the best of adult theatre." Today, the Unicorn is the national home of theatre for children and young people and is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation.

Before taking the post at ATC, Ramin Gray was International Associate, then Associate Director at the Royal Court Theatre where he directed many world or British premieres. These included Marius von Mayenburg's *The Ugly One* and *The Stone*, Simon Stephens' *Motortown*, and Mark Ravenhill's *Over There*. He has also directed at the RSC, Out of Joint, The Gate and in many theatres across Europe. Opera credits include the European premiere of *Bliss* by Brett Dean and Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice* at Hamburg's Staatsoper and Theater an der Wien. Ramin recently directed the premiere of the opera *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Gerald Barry at The Royal Opera House Linbury Studio and is currently directing the world premiere of *The Bright Night* by Beat Furrer at Hamburg's Staatsoper.

ATC & THE UNICORN  
 present

**MARTYR**

**by Marius von Mayenburg  
 directed by Ramin Gray**

**Unicorn Theatre  
 147 Tooley Street  
 London  
 SE1 2HZ**

**September 15 to October 10  
 7pm**

**Press night September 17  
 7pm**

**Tickets**  
 Adults: £12\* / £16 / £18  
 (concessions £3 off)

Under 18s: £8\* / £10 / £12

£10 school groups of 10+(1 teacher free for every 10 pupils)

Preview performances –  
 all tickets £10

\* Slightly restricted view

Audio-described performance:  
 Thu 24 Sep, 7pm

Captioned performance:  
 Tue 6 Oct, 7pm

Insight (free post-show discussion): Thu 8  
 Oct, 7pm

Unicorn Late  
 (free post-show music event in the foyer):  
 Thu 8 Oct, 7pm

SUITABLE FOR 15 YEARS OLD & OVER  
 CONTAINS SOME STRONG LANGUAGE  
 AND NUDITY

Approx 1 hour 40 minutes

**PRESS CONTACTS**  
**DAVID BURNS PR**  
 David Burns  
 07789 754089  
 david@davidburnspr.com

**CLÍONA ROBERTS**  
 020 7704 6224  
 07754 75 65 04  
 cliona@crpr.co.uk