UMKC Theatre Presents
Powerful Original Work
“Slammed!
KC Speaks Out on the Recession”

KANSAS CITY, MO (January 11, 2010) – In the tradition of Studs Terkel, this new world premiere, “Slammed! KC Speaks Out on the Recession,” gives voice to the deeply moving stories in our community during these uncertain times. Created and directed by UMKC Assistant Professor of Physical Theatre Stephanie Roberts, and inspired by pioneering theatre artist Anna Deavare Smith and legendary chronicler Studs Terkel, “Slammed!” is the story of our community and of our times. To create this world premiere, the cast and creative team held live interviews with local Kansas Citians who have been deeply affected by the recession and, in turn, bring these voices to the stage. This unique theatrical event illuminates the chaos of change through human stories. “Slammed!” will be in previews February 12 – 16, and opens Wednesday, February 17, running through Sunday, February 21.

“Our job as theatre artists is to tell stories,” says Roberts. “Sometimes we inform, sometimes we act as Vox Populi—the voice of the people. We interviewed economists, artists, police officers, business owners, mechanics, social workers, reporters, massage therapists, waiters, architects, corporate executives, former millionaires and the former homeless. As the interviewing process continued, I realized that this is not the story of “them” but of “us”. How does a community react to a crisis— with humor, anger, tears, revolution, prayer? In “Slammed!”, you’ll see that it’s all of the above.”

One of the people interviewed, Staci Pratt, homeless liaison for Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, added “…it’s not another, it’s not outside of your world; it’s your neighbor, it’s the person who’s in line next to you at the grocery store, it’s the little kid walking down the street in front of you. This is not a separate nation; these are all our neighbors and all part of our community.”

In addition to teaching physical theatre at UMKC, Stephanie Roberts teaches commedia dell’Arte, clown, mask, and epic storytelling for the MFA Professional Actor Training Program. She has toured nationally and abroad with companies such as Annex, Tears of Joy, Living

“Slammed! KC Speaks Out on the Recession” at Studio 116, Olson PAC, Feb. 12-21
Voices and Seattle Mime Theatre. She has also taught and directed devised work for the Seattle Repertory Theatre as well Cornish College of the Arts. Ensemble-generated works include “Meanwhile” (UMKC’s Undergraduate Theatre Department), “The Best Story Never Told” (Dell’Arte International and CalArts), and “Boom! An International Lost and Found Marching Band” (KC Fringe Festival, and The St. Mane in Lanesboro, MN). Professor Roberts was recently award an ArtsKC Inspiration Grant to develop a one-woman mask play, and was chosen by the Charlotte St. Foundation for a one-year studio residency as part of the Urban Culture Project. She holds a BFA in Acting from Cornish, and an MFA in Ensemble Based Physical Theatre from Dell’Arte International School of Physical Theatre.

Donations will be accepted at each performance to benefit the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools Office of the Homeless Liaison, Neighbor 2 Neighbor, and Hope House. Items of particular need include socks and underwear for pre-school to high school students, socks for adults, deodorant, new or used winter clothing, and gently used clothing for women and children.

“Slammed! KC Speaks Out on the Recession” is the third of five graduate productions in the UMKC Theatre program’s 2009-2010 Season, which kicked off in October with “Killer Joe.”

Single tickets are adults, $15; seniors $10; students, $6; and groups of 10 or more, $5 each. Tickets are available through the Central Ticket Office at 816.235.6222.

“Slammed! KC Speaks Out on the Recession” Performance Dates:

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UMKC Theatre has been ranked by U.S. News and World Report among the top graduate theatre training programs in the country. The program trains a select group of highly talented actors, designers, stage managers and dramaturgs for careers in the performing arts. Graduates from the UMKC program are invited to the most prestigious New York competitions and auditions to exhibit their work and secure positions with national and international performing companies. The program is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and is a member of the University/Resident Theatre Association (U/RTA).

The University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), one of four University of Missouri campuses, is a public university serving more than 14,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional
students. UMKC engages with the community and economy based on a three-part mission: visual and performing arts, health sciences, and urban engagement. UMKC has been designated as Missouri’s Campus for the Arts.

More information is available online at [www.umkc.edu/theatre/](http://www.umkc.edu/theatre/).

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