



Under embargo for print, online, and across all social platforms until May 7, 2017

## *Main Street Theater Announces 42<sup>nd</sup> Season*

Main Street Theater's (MST) 2017 - 2018 Season will offer plays that embody alternate takes on moments in history, in literature, and in the way people view the world. With 5 regional premieres on the MainStage and 7 plays based on children's books at the Theater for Youth, MST's 42<sup>nd</sup> season opens in September 2017 and runs through June 2018.

MST's Theater for Youth will continue its successful initiative offering accommodations performances for children with learning differences. The MainStage will offer its popular Part of the Art Series for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive season.

Rebecca Greene Udden is the Executive Artistic Director of Main Street Theater, and Vivienne M. St. John is the Theater for Youth Producing Director.

The 2017 - 2018 season will take place in the company's 2 residences: its Rice Village space on Times Blvd. and in midtown on Main Street at the MATCH. Founded in 1975 on Main Street, the company has operated out of its Rice Village home since 1982 and has recently completed a total renovation of that space. The organization is also resident at the MATCH, which houses the theater's offices and professional Theater for Youth in the multi-theater venue. All MainStage performances (for adults) will take place at 2540 Times Blvd., 77005, and all Theater for Youth performances (for families and school groups) will take place at 3400 Main Street, 77002.

### **2017 – 2018 MainStage Season**

#### **Enemies**

By Maxim Gorky

Sept. 16 – Oct. 15, 2017

A Collaboration with the University of Houston School of Theatre and Dance

Gorky's extraordinary play, which was written in exile and banned in his home country, presents a panoramic view of a restless society. It's 1905, and Russia is at a critical moment in its history. The bourgeoisie is no longer confident in its own values. The working class is slowly realizing the terrifying sacrifices they will have to make. Gorky approaches this unique, imaginative play, with great humanity and a broad dramatic scope, offering a glimpse into what the world might have been like between aristocratic rule and the revolution in Russia.

Maxim Gorky, whose real name was Aleksei Maximovich Peshkov, was born on March 16, 1868, in the Volga River city of Nizhny Novgorod, which in 1932 was renamed Gorky in his honor. Already

established as a major novelist and short story writer, at the turn of the century Gorky began writing plays and formed close connections with the Moscow Art Theater, which, in 1902, produced his most famous play, *The Lower Depths*. For a significant part of his life, Gorky was exiled from Russia and later, the Soviet Union. In 1932, he returned to Russia on Joseph Stalin's personal invitation and died there in June 1936.

### **Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley**

By Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon

Nov. 11 – Dec. 17, 2017

A sequel to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, *Miss Bennet* is set two years after the novel ends and continues the story, this time with nerdy middle-sister Mary as the unlikely heroine. Mary is growing tired of her role as the dutiful middle sister in the midst of everyone else's romantic escapades. When the family gathers for Christmas at Pemberley, an unexpected guest sparks Mary's hopes for independence, an intellectual match, and possibly even love.

Ms. Gunderson co-authored the play *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* with Margot Melcon, which received a 3-way world premiere in 2016 and will be published at Dramatists Play Publishing.

Lauren Gunderson is a playwright, screenwriter and short story author from Atlanta. She was named the most produced living playwright in America by American Theatre Magazine in 2016, won the 2016 Lanford Wilson Award from the Dramatist Guild, and was awarded the prestigious 2014 Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for her play, *I and You* (also a Susan Smith Blackburn Blackburn and John Gassner Award finalist). She is also a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company.

Main Street Theater has previously produced Gunderson's *Silent Sky* and *The Revolutionists* along with staged readings of *The Taming*.

### **Men on Boats**

By Jaclyn Backhaus

Feb. 10 – Mar. 11, 2018

Ten explorers. Four boats. One Grand Canyon. *Men on Boats* is the true(ish) history of an 1869 expedition, when a one-armed captain and a crew of insane but loyal volunteers set out to chart the course of the Colorado River. Oh, and all the explorers are played by women.

"...off-the-canyon-walls funny..." —Variety. "...you will surely want to spend time with the hearty title characters of MEN ON BOATS...[a] rollicking history pageant...MEN ON BOATS makes canny use of the obvious distance between performers and their roles to help bridge the distance between then and now." —NY Times.

Playwright Jaclyn Backhaus is based in Brooklyn and serves as co-founder of the arts development group Fresh Ground Pepper. She is also a member of Clubbed Thumb's Falcons, where she developed *Men on Boats* which premiered in Clubbed Thumb's 2015 Summerworks Festival and SuperLab in conjunction with Playwrights Horizons. Ms. Backhaus is also the resident playwright for Theater Reconstruction Ensemble.

## **Daisy**

By Sean Devine

Mar. 31 – Apr. 29, 2018

It is the fall of 1964. With a presidential election looming, a group of advertisers working for Lyndon B. Johnson unleash the most infamous political commercial ever conceived: the “Daisy” ad. This ad played only once, but it carved a scar deep into the American psyche. Based on actual people and events, *Daisy* explores the power of manipulation and the moment in television history that launched the age of negative ad campaigns -- and forever changed how we elect our leaders.

Written by Canadian playwright Sean Devine, *Daisy* premiered in Seattle at ACT Theatre. His newest play, *When There’s Nothing Left to Burn*, will premiere at the University of Lethbridge in the fall of 2017. He is currently working on a new play called *The Authoritarians* for the Resident Ensemble Players in Delaware.

## **Daddy Long Legs**

Based on the novel by Jean Webster

Music and Lyrics by Paul Gordon / Book by John Caird

May 19 – June 17, 2018

A heartwarming Cinderella story about a witty and winsome young woman and her mysterious benefactor, based on the treasured novel that inspired the classic 1955 film of the same name starring Fred Astaire. Filled with soaring melodies, sophistication, and charm, *Daddy Long Legs* is a “rags-to-riches” tale of newfound love.

*Daddy Long Legs* features music and lyrics by Tony Award-nominated composer/lyricist, Paul Gordon (*Jane Eyre*), and Tony-winning librettist/director, John Caird (*Les Misérables*).

## **2017 – 2018 Theater for Youth Season**

### **Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type**

Based on the book by Doreen Cronin

Sept. 24 – Oct. 14, 2017

### **Akeelah and the Bee**

Based on the Book by Doug Atchison

Oct. 29 – Nov. 11, 2017

### **A Charlie Brown Christmas**

Based on the Book by Charles M. Schulz

Nov. 20 – Dec. 16, 2017

### **Holes**

Based on the Book by Louis Sachar

Jan. 28 – Feb. 18, 2017

### **Hello, Miss Piggle Wiggle**

Based on the Book by Betty MacDonald

Mar. 4 – 31, 2018

**Junie B. Is Not a Crook**

Based on the Books by Barbara Park

1 week only: Spring Break 2018: Mar. 12 – 17, 2018

*This production will also tour throughout the season.*

**Sideways Stories from Wayside School**

Based on the Book by Louis Sachar

Apr. 15 – May 19, 2018

\*\*\*\*\*

**About Main Street Theater**

Main Street Theater provides theater experiences for all ages. Founded in 1975, our MainStage produces professional, intimate, literary plays for adults and operates under an Actors' Equity Association union contract; our Theater for Youth produces professional, engaging productions based on children's literature for families and school groups, both in-house and on tour around Texas; and we offer Education and Outreach programs on-site and at satellite locations around the Greater Houston area for youth aged 4 – high school. We work out of 2 facilities: our Rice Village home on Times Blvd., and as part of the MATCH (Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston) on Main Street.

Main Street Theater is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for not-for-profit theaters, of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (formerly ASSITEJ), the world theatre network of theatre for children and young people, and a founding member of Houston Arts Partners. Main Street Theater is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Media Contact Only (not for print publication):

Shannon Emerick, Director of Marketing and Development

713.524.3622 / [shannon@mainstreettheater.com](mailto:shannon@mainstreettheater.com)