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For Immediate Release

Main Street Theater Announces 43rd Season

Main Street Theater (MST) announces its 43rd Season which includes eight productions on the MainStage and seven at its Theater for Youth for 2018-2019.

MST's MainStage Season reflects the theater's commitment to sharing compelling, thought-provoking and engaging stories from the most insightful and articulate writers for the stage, with an audience eager to connect with a broad spectrum of the human experience. William Shakespeare's enduring influence is addressed in three productions: Lauren Gunderson's *The Book of Will* (Regional Premiere) about his company, Lillian Groag's modern translation of *Troilus and Cressida* (with Prague Shakespeare Company), and the Canadian Company La Fille du Laitier's *Macbeth Muet*, a silent, comic version of the Scottish Tragedy told entirely with hand props. Jane Austen returns channeled through Lauren Gunderson and Margaret Melcon's *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, a revival of last season's holiday hit. In collaboration with Prague Shakespeare Company, The Trojan War is examined through Euripides' *Hecuba and the Trojan Women*, through *An Iliad*, Dennis O'Hare and Lisa Peterson's adaptation of Homer's epic, and through an Elizabethan lens translated into modern English in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. Kyle John Schmidt's *The Secretary* spins a wickedly funny tale about modern gun culture, and Conor McPherson's spellbinding *The Weir* celebrates the very power of storytelling itself.

Main Street's Theater for Youth season is set as well. MST reaches over 130,000 children, educators, and family members yearly through its professional Theater for Youth whose productions are often based on literature children are reading at home or at school. The 2018-2019 season will include *Curious George: The Golden Meatball*, *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, *Jackie & Me*, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, and *Goosebumps: The Musical*. The Summer 2019 production is TBA. MST will tour *Schoolhouse Rock, Live!* across Texas as well.

Subscriptions are on sale now. Patrons can visit MainStreetTheater.com or call 713-524-6706.

2018 – 2019 MainStage Season

The Book of Will

Regional Premiere

By Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Rebecca Greene Udden

Sept. 8 – Oct. 7, 2018

After the death of their dear friend and mentor, Henry Condell and John Heminges, loyal actors in Shakespeare's playing company, the King's Men, are determined to compile the First Folio and preserve the words that shaped their lives. Their families join them in what is truly a labor of love, for they'll have to borrow, beg, and band together to make it happen. Guided by a sense of genuine loyalty, admiration, and what really matters in life, this determined lot will stop at nothing to assemble Shakespeare's Folio. Amidst the noise and color of Elizabethan London, THE BOOK OF WILL shares this unforgettable true story and sheds new light on a man you may think you know.

“THE BOOK OF WILL...unequivocally announces Gunderson as a playwright with whom to be reckoned. It is, quite frankly, one of the best plays I have ever seen. It will bring tears of both laughter and sorrow to all but the most jaded audience member’s eyes. It is, in a word, a triumph.” —Boulder Weekly (CO). “[Gunderson] has peopled the stage with lively, historically based characters...She paints a vivid portrait of the times in language sometimes formal, sometimes poetic and often...contemporary...[THE BOOK OF WILL] serves as homage to those who sacrificed to make the first folio happen and to Shakespeare’s magnificent words.” —Westword (Denver, CO).

The Secretary

Second Production

By Kyle John Schmidt

Directed by Julia Traber

Jan. 19 – Feb 17, 2019

Ruby runs a small-town gun company that aims to protect women by helping them protect themselves. With products like *The Bridesmaid*, *The Babysitter* and *The Mallwalker*, each of the company's guns is named after a woman who used a gun and saved a life--more often than not, her own. So when Shirley, the secretary at the local high school confronts a threat in her office with six bullets, Ruby responds by naming her latest gun after the reluctant hero: *The Secretary*. But as production begins on *The Secretary*, guns start going off all around town—and no one’s pulling the trigger. *The Secretary* is an offbeat, absurdist comedy about safety, survival, and guns in a world that’s up in arms.

Houston’s Wordsmyth Theater Company produced a reading of *The Secretary* in the spring of 2018.

Kyle John Schmidt is a writer from Montezuma, Iowa. His plays have been produced by Actors Theatre of Louisville (Take 10 Apprentice Showcase and the Humana Festival), Theatre En Bloc, Crashbox Theatre, the Kid Magicians, Play-in-a-Bar, the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival, University of Texas New Theatre, and the David Mark Cohen New Works Festival. His full-length plays have been read and developed at Nashville Repertory Theatre, Seven Devils Playwriting Conference, Capital Stage, Stage West, Wordsmyth, and Hyde Park Theatre, and have been finalists for the Humana Festival, PlayPenn, the Lark’s Playwrights’ Week, and runner-up for the Princess Grace Playwriting Fellowship. Furthermore, Kyle is a winner of the Heideman Award and the Coe Playwriting Competition, as well as a former member of the Ingram New Play Lab. He received his MFA from the Michener Center for Writers.

The Trojan War Project: A Trilogy of Plays about The Trojan War

A Collaboration with Prague Shakespeare Company

Co-Directed by Guy Roberts and Rebecca Greene Udden

Music composed by Patrick Neil Doyle

Mar. 2 – Apr. 20, 2019

Main Street Theater and Prague Shakespeare Company have been collaborating since 2012. The Trojan War Project has performed once in Prague at the Estates Theater. Main Street’s production marks the American debut.

Hecuba and The Trojan Women and Troilus and Cressida

These productions offer Shakespeare’s and Euripides’ unique perspective of the Trojan War and examine humanity’s unshakable attraction to love, violence, destruction and chaos. For centuries the triumphs and struggles of Helen, Achilles, Hecuba, Ulysses and the heroes and heroines of the Bronze Age have inspired, shocked and warned us of the horrors of war and the consequences of destructive human behavior. *Troilus and Cressida* and *Hecuba and The Trojan Women* will play in repertory.

Hecuba and The Trojan Women

By Euripides

Adapted by Guy Roberts from Euripides’ plays *Hecuba* and *The Trojan Women*

Euripides' harrowing look at the aftermath of the Trojan War. With Rebecca Greene Udden as Hecuba, Jessica Boone as Athena, and Guy Roberts as Hector.

Troilus and Cressida

By William Shakespeare

Modern English translation by Lillian Groag

Commissioned by Oregon Shakespeare Festival as part of *Play on! 36 playwrights translate Shakespeare*

Shakespeare's gripping look at year seven of the Trojan War in a new modern English language translation of *Troilus and Cressida* by Lillian Groag, produced in association with Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *Play On! 36 playwrights translate Shakespeare* project. With Guy Roberts as Neptune and Jessica Boone as Athena.

Lillian Groag is half Italian and half Viennese. She was born in Argentina, raised in Argentina and Uruguay, and has resided in the United States since coming to Chicago for college in the early 1960's. Ms. Groag works in the theatre as an actress, playwright and director. Her acting credits include Broadway, Off Broadway, Mark Taper Forum, and regional theatres throughout the country. She has directed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Old Globe Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Mark Taper Forum's Taper Too, New York City Opera, Seattle Repertory, and many more. Her plays *The Ladies Of The Camellias*, *The White Rose* (AT&T award for New American Plays), *The Magic Fire* (Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays), *Menocchio* and *Midons* have been produced variously by the Old Globe Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Kennedy Center, The Guthrie Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory, Denver Center, The Shaw Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory, the Asolo Theatre, The Shaw Festival, and more. Abroad: Mexico City, Junges Theatre in Bonn, Landesbuhne Sachsen-Anhalt in Eisleben, Schauspielhaus in Wuppertal, Hessisches Landestheater in Marburg, Schauspielhaus in Stuttgart, Teatro Stabile di Bolzano, (National Tour) in Italy, and Tokyo. She has done translations and adaptations of Lorca, Feydeau, Musset, Marivaux and Molnár, produced at the Guthrie, the Mark Taper Forum Taper II, and Missouri Rep (now Kansas City Rep). She is an Associate Artist of the Old Globe Theatre. Upcoming projects: *A Nervous Splendour*, adaptation, from Frederic Morton's book, *Flypaper*, new play. Master's and PhD degrees from Northwestern University in Romance Languages and Literature, Theatre Thesis, and an Honorary PhD from Lake Forest College.

An Iliad

By Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare

Based on Homer's *Iliad*, translated by Robert Fagles

Main Street will bring back this genuinely epic production for a very limited run in connection with The Trojan War Project.

Back from the frontlines in an empty theater, The Poet, spins a tale of unquenchable rage, quarrelsome gods, and grieving widows with the music of the muses, capturing the contradictory conditions of glory and violence with spellbinding modernity. Featuring Guy Roberts as the Poet and Jessica Boone and Fanette Ronjat as the Muses.

The Weir

By Conor McPherson

Directed by Andrew Ruthven

May 11 – June 9, 2019

In a bar in rural Ireland, the local men swap spooky stories in an attempt to impress a young woman from Dublin who recently moved into a nearby "haunted" house. However, the tables are soon turned when she spins a yarn of her own.

"You shed all sense of time at this beautiful and devious play." —NY Times. "A spellbinder that transfixes you." —Guardian. "Sheer theatrical magic...a modern classic. Tremendous." —London Daily Telegraph. "With bewitching fluency allied with a gift for locating the greatest emotions in the smallest details, and a faultless ear

for idiom, McPherson achieves something remarkable." —Times Literary Supplement (London). "The writing is rich, vivid and often wonderfully funny." —London Telegraph.

Best known for *The Weir*, *Shining City*, and *The Seafarer*, Conor McPherson has won Evening Standard, Laurence Olivier, Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, and Drama Desk awards and is a two time Tony Award nominee as well. Along with being a prolific playwright, Mr. McPherson has written and directed numerous film and television works throughout his career. Born in Dublin, his works have been produced all over the world including on Broadway.

In the fall, Main Street Theater is bringing in Canada's La Fille Du Laitier, a unique theater company that bills itself as a "Theater Delivery Service."

Macbeth Muet

Nov. 1 – 11, 2018

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth perform a silent pantomime of their love story. Watch Shakespeare's classic, performed entirely without words, as Shakespeare's power couple are transformed through their dark and fateful choices in this hilarious, high-speed romp of object theatre, dance, and pure madness. For ages 13+

This production will offer Houston audiences something completely new and different and will be the perfect button to Main Street's season opener, *The Book of Will*.

Main Street Artistic Director Rebecca Greene Udden first saw La Fille Du Laitier's Macbeth Muet in New York and was captivated by their ingenuity – and the show was hilarious! La Fille du Laitier is a theatre delivery service, "bringing creative and innovative theatre to your doorstep! We want to reinterpret and reimagine theatre classics, bringing them to a modern audience, both young and old, at an affordable price. La Fille du Laitier believes in reclaiming our right to madness, and the freedom of the imagination!"

While the production at Main Street will be performed in the theater itself, La Fille du Laitier generally performs out of a mobile theatre truck, just like the food trucks you see around any city. Performances could happen at any time, surprising the community with performances they might not normally get the chance to see. Their goal is to initiate people from the community into art they might not normally go out to experience, or have the money to afford.

And over the holidays, Main Street Theater will be bringing back its hit production:

Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley

By Lauren Gunderson and Margaret Melcon

Directed by Claire Hart-Palumbo

Nov. 23 – Dec. 23, 2018

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.

2018 – 2019 Theater for Youth Season

Curious George: The Golden Meatball

Based on the books by Margret & H.A. Rey

Sept. 30 – Oct. 27, 2018

Mr. Popper's Penguins

Based on the novel by Richard & Florence Atwater
Nov. 11 – Dec. 21, 2018

Jackie & Me

Based on the book by Dan Gutman
Jan. 27 – Feb. 17, 2019

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Based on the book by Judith Viorst
Mar. 3 – 30, 2019

Goosebumps: The Musical

Based on the books by R.L. Stine
Apr. 14 – May 11, 2019

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. United Airlines is the official airline of Main Street Theater.

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