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For Immediate Release

## ***Main Street Theater Announces 45<sup>th</sup> Season***

Main Street Theater (MST)'s 45<sup>th</sup> Season will include six (6) productions on its MainStage and seven (7) at its Theater for Youth for 2020-2021. Founding Artistic Director Rebecca Greene Udden leads the theater to this noteworthy milestone. "It's hard to believe this fall marks our 45th Season," says Udden, who founded the company on Main Street at Autry House in 1975. "To celebrate, we're bringing audiences and artists together for a thrilling new season of productions that can't be experienced anywhere else in Houston. At MST, we believe in the transformative power of theater. With this in mind, it's our great joy to announce our 2020-21 Season."

MST's MainStage season will open with the wildly whimsical and equally intelligent *Darwin in Malibu* by Crispin Whittell, directed by Udden. It's a meeting of the minds when Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, meet on the beach in Malibu a century after their deaths! For the holidays, Main Street will remount *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon, a Jane Austen fan favorite from the 19/20 season. 2021 will start with a wry exploration of what it might have been like to be Joan of Arc's mother in Jane Anderson's riveting new play, *Mother of the Maid*. Then MST will revive the uniquely bizarre and wonderful post-apocalyptic vaudeville comedy, *Dog Act* by Liz Duffy Adams, produced last by MST in 2012. *Dog Act* will run simultaneously with the world premiere of Adams' *Born with Teeth* at the Alley Theatre. Up next is the dynamic play, *The Best of Everything*, based on the book by Rona Jaffe. Imagine "Madmen" meets "Sex and the City..." The 45<sup>th</sup> Season will close in the summer of 2021 with Tom Stoppard's absurdly hilarious *The Real Inspector Hound*.

Main Street's Theater for Youth 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 2020-2021 season will include *Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat*, *A Little House Christmas*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, *Pete the Cat*, and *Charlotte's Web*. The Summer 2021 production is TBA. MST will tour *Dragons Love Tacos* throughout Texas in the spring of 2021.

Subscriptions are available for both stages at [MainStreetTheater.com](http://MainStreetTheater.com) or 713-524-6706. Captioned performances are also available on the MainStage. Sensory Friendly/Relaxed performances along with ASL interpreted and audio-described shows are available at the Theater for Youth.

### **2020-2021 MainStage 45<sup>th</sup> Season**

#### **Darwin in Malibu**

*Regional Premiere*

By Crispin Whittell

Sept 12 – Oct 11, 2020

Previews: Sept 6, 10, 11

Malibu, California. The present. One hundred and twenty years after his death, Charles Darwin ('the Devil's Chaplain') is hanging out at a beach house overlooking the Pacific with a girl young enough to be his daughter. His peace is rudely disrupted when his old friend Thomas Huxley ('the Devil's Disciple') washes up on the beach, closely followed by the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce. These three find themselves entangled in an enthralling and thought-provoking comedy about God, science — and plastic surgery.

"A hoot and a half...Wonderfully entertaining." —Financial Times (London). "Fiercely intelligent...an exceptionally spry play with big ideas and a big heart. You should see it—not just because it's there, but because we are here." —Guardian (London)

***The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley***

By Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon

Nov 21 – Dec 20, 2020

Previews: Nov 19 & 20

Regency romance is back with our favorite literary couple and their entertaining relations: Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam Darcy! Continuing Jane Austen's beloved *Pride and Prejudice*, the below stairs servants at the grand Pemberley estate find themselves in the midst of a holiday scandal. An unwelcome visitor has stumbled into the hall in the middle of the night—Mr. Darcy's nemesis and Lydia's incorrigible husband, Mr. Wickham! Mrs. Reynolds, the bustling housekeeper, Cassie, the resilient new serving girl, and Brian, the helplessly romantic groomsman, must each balance their holiday preparations with keeping Wickham confined. But before long, everything reaches a boiling point, festivities spiral into chaos, and the truth comes to light! An utterly delightful holiday tale.

"The play is delightful, engrossing in a light entertaining way." —Houston Press "Have you ever gotten a present during the holiday season that when you start to read it, try it on, or begin to play with it, you realize it is just what you wanted? Such a gift is Main Street Theater's holiday production, *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*." —Conroe Courier

***Mother of the Maid***

*Regional Premiere*

By Jane Anderson

Feb 6 – 28, 2021

Previews: Jan 21, Feb 4 & 5

In this riveting new play, Jane Anderson reimagines Joan of Arc's epic tale through the eyes of her mother. Isabelle Arc is a sensible, hard-working, God-fearing woman. Her headstrong daughter, on the other hand, communes with Saint Catherine, wears men's clothing, and prepares to lead the French army into battle. Motherhood in the fifteenth century isn't easy! Isabelle closely follows the baffling yet awe-inspiring journey of her curious, extraordinary daughter. Isabelle remains steadfast in her love and presence for daughter to the end, facing her own fears and doubts about her own faith along the way.

"...the quietly piercing, luminous new play..." —New York Stage Review "Full of Discovery. Powerful and Stunning" —New York Magazine "Witty and Piercing. Jane Anderson perfectly melds comedy and drama." —Daily Beast

***Dog Act***

By Liz Duffy Adams

Mar 27 – Apr 18, 2021

Previews: Mar 21, 25. 26

The post-apocalyptic wilderness was never funnier! Follow the adventures of Zetta Stone, a traveling performer, and her companion Dog (a young man undergoing a voluntary species demotion) as they wander through the former northeastern United States. Zetta, Dog and their little vaudevillesque troupe are on their way to a gig in China, assuming they can find it. A theatrical, darkly comic variation on the classic doomsday genre that hysterically and poignantly celebrates the need for language and stories when civilization has fallen into chaos. Recommended for mature audiences due to profanity, violence, and adult situations.

Houston audiences will have a wonderful opportunity to sample Liz Duffy Adams' work when the Alley Theatre offers the world premiere of her newest play, *Born with Teeth*, around the same time as Main Street's production of *Dog Act*.

"Peppered with astonishing and exhilarating eruptions of storytelling and wondrous plays within the play." —San Francisco Chronicle "Liz Duffy Adams has a few tricks that put her a notch above your average Brechtswept wasteland: A genuinely crystalline ear for rough, poetic dialogue; a handful of simple, honest themes -- possibilities for kindness in a savage world, guilt as a luxury and a form of selfishness -- in lieu of sprawling world-building..." —New York Magazine

### **The Best of Everything**

*Regional Premiere*

Adapted by Julie Kramer

Based on the book by Rona Jaffe

May 15 – Jun 13, 2021

Previews: May 9, 13, 14

Imagine "Madmen" meets "Sex and the City!" *The Best of Everything* is new adaptation of Rona Jaffe's 1958 bestseller about ambitious secretaries in the big city. These girls want thrilling careers and grand adventures—and husbands and children too, in due time. Today we call that "having it all." These gals call it "the best of everything." And wisely enough, they're not sure it's possible.

"It's *Stage Door* in a *Mad Men* world, with a jigger of *Peyton Place*, and Kramer treats its soapiness like a bubble bath whose froth conceals some pretty dirty water." —Time Out NY "This clever adaptation of Rona Jaffe's novel is an absolute treat... *The Best of Everything* nimbly lives up to its title." —TheaterMania.

### **The Real Inspector Hound**

By Tom Stoppard

Jul 17 – Aug 8, 2021

Previews: Jul 11, 15, 16

Attending the premiere of a new murder mystery, two feuding theater critics soon find themselves drawn into the play-within-a-play! In the hilarious spoof of Agatha Christie-style mysteries that follows, the mists roll in around isolated Muldoon Manor, and the critics become implicated in the lethal activities of an escaped madman. It's brilliant comedy as only Tom Stoppard can do!

"*The Real Inspector Hound* is an exceedingly clever lampoon, sharply in focus..." —The New York Times "What absurd fun Tom Stoppard created when he let fantasies run wild." —Evening Standard "Witty and delicious parody of the fog bound whodunit." —Guardian "A tour de force of theatrical metaphysics." —Daily Mail "A masterpiece.... Stoppard mines murder mystery conventions and strikes gold." —Independent on Sunday

## **2020-2021 Theater for Youth Season**

### **Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat**

Adapted by Katie Mitchell

Based on the book by Dr. Seuss

Sept 22 – Oct 24, 2020

“The sun did not shine. It was too wet to play. So we sat in the house. All that cold, cold, wet day.” So begins the wildly popular Dr. Seuss classic that generations of children have read. But never fear, the Cat in the Hat appears, along with Thing One and Thing Two (bringing mayhem and fun!), to take Sally, her brother, and the fish on a madcap adventure!

### **A Little House Christmas**

Adapted by James DeVita

Based on the LITTLE HOUSE books by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Nov 3 – Dec 19, 2020

The beloved Ingalls family that has captured the hearts of children for generations share their struggles and joys of pioneer life. Join Mary and Laura in this holiday classic about family, friendship and the Christmas spirit.

### **The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963**

Adapted by Reginald André Jackson

Based on the book by Christopher Paul Curtis

Jan 20 – Feb 13, 2021

It's 1963 and the Watsons, an African-American family, journey from Flint, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama to take their troublesome son, Byron, to live with his grandmother, a trip that lands them in one of the darkest moments in America's racial history. A fictionalization of the 1963 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, Curtis' novel won the Newbery Honor and the Coretta Scott King Awards.

### **Pete the Cat**

Book and Lyrics by Sarah Hammond

Music by Will Aronson

Based on the *Pete the Cat* series of books by Kimberly and James Dean

Feb 23 – Apr 3, 2021

Everybody loves Pete, the groovy, guitar playing cool cat. Everyone but Jimmy, the world's most organized second grader. But all that changes when Pete the Cat and Jimmy take a once-in-a-lifetime road trip. The whole family will love Pete's hilarious, jazzy antics in this toe-tapping musical!

### **Charlotte's Web**

Based on the book by E. B. White

Adapted by Joseph Robinette

Apr 13 – May 14, 2021

The tender story of a wise and kind spider named Charlotte who devises a plan to save her friend, Wilbur the pig. *Charlotte's Web* is the “just about perfect” tale of friendship, love and life.

**ON TOUR:****Dragons Love Tacos**

By Ernie Nolan

Based on the book by Adam Rubin with illustrations by Daniel Salmieri

On Tour: Feb 9 – May 21, 2021

At the MATCH: Feb 16 – 20, 2021

Dragons love tacos. They love chicken tacos, beef tacos, great big tacos, and teeny tiny tacos. Unfortunately, where there are tacos, there is also salsa. And if a dragon accidentally eats spicy salsa... well, watch out!! The silly, dragon-dancing journey about first impressions and trying new things is a recipe for laughs and fun!

**About Main Street Theater**

Main Street Theater provides theater experiences for all ages. The MainStage produces professional, intimate, literary plays for adults and operates under an Actors' Equity Association union contract; the 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 a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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