



June 21, 2010
For Immediate Release

Main Street Theater Announces Its 35th MainStage Season and Introduces New/Now Series

Main Street Theater will open its 2010-2011 MainStage season with George Bernard Shaw's riff on death panels, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, September 9 – October 3, 2010. A revival of Wendy Wasserstein's Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Heidi Chronicles*, follows November 26 – December 19. January 6 – 23, 2011 MST will present the regional premiere of the bittersweet musical, *A Catered Affair* (at MST's Chelsea Market theater). Claire Hart-Palumbo will star in Joan Didion's powerful one-woman drama *The Year of Magical Thinking* January 27 – February 13, followed by the Regional premiere of Melissa James Gibson's *This*, April 7 - 24. The season will close with a new production of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, June 9 – July 3.

A second, parallel season will present world premieres and new scripts from other regional theaters. Called New/Now, the series, scheduled for MST-Rice Village, is designed to introduce Houston audiences to playwrights whose work has not yet achieved national exposure. The inaugural New/Now season will feature two world premieres and a regional premiere. Running October 22 – 31 will be *Breakfast at 8:00* by Houston playwright Thomas Hagemann. March 11 – 20, 2011 is the regional premiere of Liz Duffy Adams' *Or*. Closing the series will be the world premiere of *I Am Barbie* by Walton Beacham, May 13 – 29.

The Doctor's Dilemma

By George Bernard Shaw

Directed by Mark Adams

Previews September 4, 5, and 8, 2010

September 9 - October 3, 2010

MST – Rice Village

A doctor who has developed a cure for tuberculosis can take only one more patient. He must decide between a kindly, poor, medical colleague and a charming young artist who is a genius but a scoundrel with a young and vivacious wife (with whom the doctor is somewhat in love).

Throughout history and certainly in the present day, there are medical treatments so scarce or costly that some people can have them while others cannot. Who is to decide, and on what grounds is the decision to be made? Shaw examines this very real dilemma with his customary wit and charm.

Inspired by a London surgeon who made a fortune convincing people to let him remove their uvula, this play premiered in 1906 at the Royal Court Theatre in London with Harley Granville-Barker as the artist.

The Heidi Chronicles

By Wendy Wasserstein

Directed by Rebecca Greene Udden

Previews November 20, 21 and 24, 2010

November 26 – December 19, 2010

MST – Rice Village

Wendy Wasserstein's 1989 Pulitzer Prize-winning play chronicles the glory days of the feminist movement through the character of art historian Heidi Holland. Over a 25-year period -- from high-school in the mid-sixties through the "having-it-all" era of the late eighties -- the experiences of Heidi and her friends and lovers chart the transformative political and social changes of that exhilarating period.

Main Street Theater presented the Houston premiere of this play in 1992.

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A Catered Affair

Book by Harvey Fierstein
Music and Lyrics by John Bucchino
Directed by Andrew Ruthven
Previews January 1, 2, and 5, 2011
January 6 – 23, 2011
MST – Chelsea Market

This funny, poignant musical tells the story of a Bronx mother's efforts to give her only daughter the elaborate wedding she never had – and *her daughter never asked for* - as it explores our need for love and the true meaning of family.

A Catered Affair ran on Broadway in the spring of 2008, and the production received 12 Drama Desk Award nominations, the most of any show from the 2007-2008 season. The production also received three Tony nominations.

The Year of Magical Thinking

By Joan Didion
Regional Premiere
Directed by Rebecca Greene Udden
Previews January 22, 23, and 26
January 27 – February 13, 2011
MST - Rice Village

Claire Hart-Palumbo will perform Didion's adaptation of her stunning memoir about the sudden loss of her husband, John Gregory Dunne, at the moment that her only child lay near death. "Capturing the compassion, humor, and bewilderment of a fiercely intelligent woman whose world lurches suddenly from the ordinary to the unimaginable, *The Year of Magical Thinking* is a love letter to a child and a tribute to an extraordinary, unconventional marriage told with raw candor and a storyteller's gift for the absurd." (*Playbill*)

In 2007, Vanessa Redgrave played Didion in the Broadway production and was nominated for both a Tony and a Drama Desk Award.

This

By Melissa James Gibson
Regional Premiere
Directed by Steve Garfinkel
Previews April 2, 3 and 6
April 7 – 24, 2011
MST - Rice Village

Jane is not okay. She's a promising poet without a muse, a single mother without lessons to pass along. Her dating life's a shambles, and her helpful friends are only helping make things more complicated. Everyone handles grief differently. Everyone experiences it differently. And yet grief is universal. This bright, witty, un-romantic comedy captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends backing their way into middle age.

This had its World Premiere production in New York at Playwrights Horizons in 2009.

More...

Blithe Spirit

By Noël Coward

Directed by Claire Hart-Palumbo

Previews June 4, 5 and 8

June 9 – July 3, 2011

MST – Rice Village

The smash comedy hit by the great Noël Coward introduces us to fussy, cantankerous novelist Charles Condomine, re-married but haunted (literally) by the ghost of his late first wife, the clever and insistent Elvira who is called up by a visiting "happy medium", one Madame Arcati. As the (worldly and un-) personalities clash, Charles' current wife Ruth is accidentally killed, "passes over", joins Elvira and the two "blithe spirits" haunt the hapless Charles into perpetuity.

New/Now Series

Breakfast at Eight

By Thomas Hagemann

World Premiere

Directed by Andrew Ruthven

Preview October 21

October 22 – 31, 2010

MST - Rice Village

For many years, John and Abby have taken for granted the indestructibility of their marriage, yet in a long night of reckoning, they face a new reality and now must choose whether to move forward with each other or alone. From the dark of night literally into the light of the morning, *Breakfast at Eight* is a very honest, compassionate look at the fragility of even the strongest bonds.

A graduate of Rice University and a prominent attorney, Mr. Hagemann and his family reside in Houston.

Or

By Liz Duffy Adams

Regional Premiere

Director Troy Scheid

Preview March 10

March 11 – 20, 2011

MST - Rice Village

In this saucy farce, Adams weaves a tale around Aphra Behn, 17th century spy-turned-playwright, King Charles II, her erstwhile employer, and Nell Gwynne, the most accomplished and notorious actress of her day. While war rages, Aphra and her friends celebrate free love, cross-dressing and pastoral lyricism. A passionate, joyful look at all kinds of freedom: sexual, spiritual, artistic, and political.

Or had its world premiere in New York at the Women's Project in 2009.

Liz Duffy Adams is a recipient of a New York Fellowship of the Arts Award (2006–2007), the Weston Playhouse Music Theatre Award (2008), the Frederick Loewe Award for Music-Theater (2006), and the Will Glickman Award (2004). An MFA graduate of Yale School of Drama, she got her BFA at NYU's Experimental Theater Wing. Plays include *Neon Mirage* (2006 Humana Festival anthology play with six other playwrights); *A Wrinkle in Time* (commissioned/produced by Syracuse Stage); and *A Fabulous Beast* (One Dream Theater, starring Edie Falco). Her work has been written, produced, or developed at the Humana Festival, SPF, Portland Center Stage's JAW/West, Portland Stage Company's Little Festival of the Unexpected, Syracuse Stage, Bay Area Playwrights

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Festival, MacDowell Colony, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Millay Colony for the Arts, Shotgun Players, Clubbed Thumb, and Crowded Fire among other organizations. Publications include *Poodle with Guitar and Dark Glasses* in Applause's *Best American Short Plays 2000-2001*, numerous short plays and monologues in anthologies from Heinemann and Smith & Kraus, and several plays published by Playscripts, Inc. Adams is a New Georges Affiliated Artist, an alumna of the Women's Project's Playwrights Lab, and a recipient of a Children's Theater Company/New Dramatists "Playground" commission. As profiled in *American Theatre* magazine by Jean Schiffman, "To Adams, we're all endangered and slightly mad; the world's a quasi-menacing, topsy-turvy place; and the mysteries of the future—and the past—beckon. Her plays unfold in expansive, often post-apocalyptic settings. They're vibrantly theatrical, textually thick, compact and comical.... Adams' language is an assured and often hilarious blend of the formal, the lyrical and the colloquial. Hers is an utterly unique and captivating voice."

I Am Barbie

By Walton Beacham

World Premiere

Directed by Cheryl L. Kaplan

Previews May 11 and 12

May 13 – 29, 2011

MST - Rice Village

What if Barbie could talk? What if she could really tell you what it was like to be a sex symbol and role model all at once- and to have all those careers - all those outfits! Well, now she can. In this world premiere production, Barbie is 50, and she's got a voice. She's here to let you in on it all. Ken and Skipper are along for the ride, as well as her creator and mother, Ruth. Buckle your seat belts: it's a wild ride...

Walton Beacham holds degrees from Georgia Tech (B.S.), Georgia State University (B.A. Literature), and the University of Arkansas (M.A. Literature, M.F.A. Fiction). He has taught math, physics, literature, and creative writing at the University of Arkansas, University of Richmond, and Virginia Commonwealth University where he was Associate Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing. He was Book Editor for the Sunday book section for the "Richmond Times Dispatch," contributor to the "Richmond Mercury," and contributor to "The Nation." He left his position as Associate Professor of English to become vice president of Salem Press, and then founder and president of Beacham Publishing Corp (1985-present). His two-act play *Blood Sunday* was selected through a juried competition for a reading on the main stage of The Players Theatre in Sarasota, Florida in July 2007. His short play, *Stormy*, won Theatre Odyssey's 2009 short play festival. The first scene of *Barbie* was produced as part of Theatre Odyssey's 2010 short play festival.

Performances are Thursdays at 7:30pm,
Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00pm, and Sundays at 3:00pm.

For more information, including information about subscriptions and single & group ticket pricing, please call 713-524-6706 or visit www.mainstreettheater.com

Since 1975, Main Street Theater has produced high quality professional theater for audiences of all ages through its MainStage productions and Theater for Youth. The Main Street Theater Kids On Stage program offers performing arts classes and camps for children 5 years to 14 years of age. The organization produces plays at two locations, 2540 Times Boulevard in Rice Village and 4617 Montrose Boulevard at Chelsea Market.

Main Street Theater is a member of the Fresh Arts Coalition, a collaboration of 25 arts organizations that work collectively to raise awareness of the size and diversity of the arts in Houston, and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for not-for-profit theaters. Main Street Theater offers a lively year-round repertory of classic and contemporary plays for audiences of all ages and provides a much-needed showcase for Houston theater professionals. Main Street Theater is also a member of Actors' Equity Association and of ASSITEJ, the world theatre network of theatre for children and young people. 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, Marketing Director / 713.524.3622 ext. 105 / shannon@mainstreettheater.com