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For Immediate Release

Main Street Theater Announces Its 2009-2010 MainStage Season

Main Street Theater will open its 2009-2010 MainStage season with the English-language premiere of a new adaptation of Isabel Allende's best-selling novel, *The House of the Spirits*, on September 10, 2009 and running through October 11. Alfred Uhry's *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* follows November 12 – December 13. January 7 – 24, 2010 Celeste Roberts will star in Terrence McNally's *Master Class* (at MST's Chelsea Market theater). A double-bill of Caryl Churchill's chilling *A Number* and Sophie Treadwell's seminal *Machinal* will open February 18, to run through March 13, followed by the American premiere of Lans Traverse's family drama, *Driftwood*, April 1 through April 25. The season will close with a new production of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, May 13 – June 6.

The House of the Spirits

Adapted from the Novel by Isabel Allende

By Caridad Svich

English-language Premiere

Directed by Rebecca Greene Udden

Previews September 5, 6 and 9

September 10 - October 11, 2009

MST – Rice Village

Caridad Svich's adaptation of Isabel Allende's stunning, sensual, best-selling novel was commissioned for NYC's Repertorio Espanol, where it is currently on stage through August 2009. The play is told from the point of view of the youngest of three generations of women, Alba, whose swirling memories - frightening and amusing, lyrical and fantastic - illuminate the stage as she records her family's history and ultimately finds the strength to recover her own story. MST's production will be the English-language premiere of this play which critics call "a tumultuous and supernatural family saga that restores the story's vibrant magical realism."

The House of the Spirits charts the rise and fall of the Trueba family in an un-named Latin American country (reminiscent of Chile). The piece spans the 1920s through the 1970s, as the country moves through enormous sociopolitical changes that culminate in a devastating dictatorship. Author Allende complemented the production at Repertorio Espanol with, "It was a true celebration to watch the show...it's extraordinary because it is presented with immense creativity and originality. The novel's spirit was replicated in the play. It's very authentic."

Caridad Svich is a playwright-translator-songwriter-editor of Cuban-Argentine-Croatian-Spanish descent. She has written over 40 plays and fifteen translations and her work has been seen at venues across the US and abroad. Among her key works: *12 Ophelias*, *Alchemy of Desire/Dead-Man's Blues*, *Any Place But Here*, *The Booth Variations*, *Fugitive Pieces*, *Iphigenia...a rave fable*, *Instructions for Breathing*, *Lucinda Caval*, *Thrush*, and *The Labyrinth of Desire*. She's received fellowships from the NEA, Pew Charitable Trusts, TCG, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and California Arts Council. In Texas, her plays have been seen at Kitchen Dog Theater (Dallas), and Salvage Vanguard Theatre (Austin). She's translated nearly all of Federico Garcia Lorca's plays as well as works by Calderon de la Barca, Lope de Vega, Julio Cortazar and contemporary writers from Cuba and Mexico. She is an alumna playwright of New Dramatists, founder of NoPassport theatre alliance &a! mp; press, associate

editor of Contemporary Theatre Review (Routledge) and contributing editor of TheatreForum. She has edited several books on theatre and performance and her works are published by TCG, Playscripts, Smith & Kraus and more. She holds an MFA from UCSD. She's currently on commission from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts and teaches at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. Her website is www.caridadsvich.com

The Last Night of Ballyhoo

By Alfred Uhry

Directed by Steve Garfinkel

Previews November 7, 8, and 11

November 12 – December 13, 2009

MST – Rice Village

It's December, 1939, and *Gone with the Wind* is having its premiere in Atlanta. The world is in the midst of great change. But this winter the city's Jewish elite can only focus on who is going to Ballyhoo, the social event of the season! Alfred Uhry's comedy of romance and revelations will delight one and all. Directed by MST favorite Steve Garfinkel.

Master Class

By Terrence McNally

Directed by Mark Adams

Previews January 2, 3 and 6

January 7 - 24, 2010

MST – Chelsea Market

Terrence McNally's creates a Master Class given by Maria Callas to reveal the contradictory personality of this revered as well as reviled artist -- proud and egotistical yet also vulnerable and self-pitying. As Callas tries to impart to her hapless students the dedication it takes to invest dramatic music with real feeling, the play pays tribute to the dedication of a great singer and actress to her chosen art. Of the 1995 production in New York, the New York Times raved, "...For Mr. McNally, the play demonstrates his ability to create rich, vivid, satisfying theater...MASTER CLASS is an unembarrassed, involving meditation on Callas' life and the nature of her art. Such subjects are not easily dramatized, certainly not with this brio."

Maria Callas is teaching a master class. She's glamorous, commanding, larger than life—and incredibly funny. An accompanist sits at the piano, at the ready. Callas' first "victim" is Sophie, a ridiculous, overly-perky soprano. Before the girl can sing a note, Callas stops her—she can't stand hearing music massacred! And now what has started out as a class has become another stage for Callas herself. She glories in her own career, dabbles in opera dish and flat-out seduces the audience. MST's production will star Celeste Roberts as Callas.

A Double Bill of Murder and Alienation in the Face of New Technology:

Previews February 13, 14, and 17

February 18 – March 18, 2010

MST – Rice Village

Machinal

By Sophie Treadwell

Directed by Troy Scheid

and

A Number

By Caryl Churchill

Houston Premiere

Directed by Andrew Ruthven

Machinal is a tragedy of isolation turned to murder, loosely based on the sensational 1927 murder trial of Ruth Snyder, who received the electric chair for killing her husband. Sophie Treadwell used the case as a

springboard for her own speculations about what circumstances might drive a seemingly harmless stenographer to commit murder.

Caryl Churchill's startling one-act *A Number* examines the emotional repercussions of human-cloning and explores the nature of the father-son relationship. Salter has three sons. His wife gave birth to the eldest. A lab created the second. The third he didn't even know existed. Forced to explain and try to make sense of his decisions, Salter stares into the questioning, accusing faces of his own flesh and blood who confronts him with the fact that each is merely one of "a number." The play premiered in 2002 at the Royal Court Theatre in London with Michael Gambon and Daniel Craig.

Driftwood

By Lans Traverse

World Premiere

Directed by Cheryl L. Kaplan

Previews March 27, 28 and 31

April 1 - 25, 2010

MST - Times Blvd.

A wheat farm in Alfalfa County, OK is the setting for Lans Traverse's raw and gripping play *Driftwood*. Moving between 1933 and 1954, the play exposes the gritty underbelly of a family torn apart by greed. Orville, the son who was given a medical education while his sisters went to work, moves like snake amongst his family members, tricking his sisters out of their inheritance and ultimately turning his own parents out of their house. Yet in the end, it is Orville who must face what he's done and stand alone, while the strength of family brings the others together and gives hope for the future.

A finalist at New York's Summer Play Festival, *Driftwood* will have its world premiere at Main Street Theater.

Arcadia

By Tom Stoppard

Directed by Rebecca Greene Udden

Previews May 8, 9 and 12

May 12 – June 6, 2010

MST - Times Blvd.

"It's the best possible time to be alive, when everything you thought you knew is wrong." In Tom Stoppard's time-traveling masterpiece, *Arcadia*, the time is 1809, as the Coverly gardens are being transformed to the Gothic picturesque and the young genius Thomasina is forming a startling scientific theory while the adults around her are preoccupied with illicit passions and professional rivalries. The time is also two hundred years later, as academic adversaries Hannah and Bernard piece together puzzling clues from 1809 in their search for an increasingly elusive truth about Lord Byron and his connection to the Coverleys. Both worlds intersect and even collide as the quests for knowledge and passion run their courses, and everyone is forced to confront the reality of the attraction Newton left out.

First produced in 1993, Main Street Theater presented the Houston premiere in 1996 at its then newly-opened Chelsea Market theater.

Subscriptions to all six productions range from \$60 - \$160.

Single tickets range from \$20 - \$36.

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 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