

February 8, 2008

For Immediate Release

## **Brian Friel's Irish Drama**

### ***Translations***

**February 23 – March 22, 2008**

Main Street Theater brings the work of Irish playwright Brian Friel to its stage for the first time with his drama *Translations*. With previews February 23, 24, and 27, *Translations* opens Thursday, February 28, and runs through March 22 at Main Street Theater – Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd (there is no performance on Friday, February 29). Performances are on Thursdays at 7:30pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm, and Sundays at 3pm. Tickets range from \$20 - \$35 and are on sale in person at the Main Street Theater Box Office, 2540 Times Blvd., via phone at 713.524.6706, or online at [www.mainstreettheater.com](http://www.mainstreettheater.com).

#### **About *Translations***

*Translations* is set in 1833 in a rural community in County Donegal, Ireland. In a nearby field encampment, a detachment of the Royal Engineers working on the first British maps of the area are recording the local Gaelic place names and rendering them into English. This simple bureaucratic action of the colonizers has far-reaching personal and cultural effects on the small group of the hedge-school. A love that transcends language and logic finds its way into this beautifully stirring tale.

#### **About the Playwright**

Born Bernard Patrick Friel, in 1929 in Killygloher, Northern Ireland, Brian Friel has become the most acclaimed contemporary Irish dramatist. He taught for 10 years, published short stories, produced radio plays, and then became a full-time writer in 1960. He studied with Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 at his theater in Minneapolis and wrote his first successful play there, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, about a young Irishman considering emigration to the United States. In 1980 he and actor Stephen Rea formed the Field Day Theater Company, Northern Ireland, which produced Friel's *Translations* in 1981. He has written about the politics of "the two Irelands," as in *The Freedom of the City* (1973) and *Living Quarters* (1977) as well as Irish family life, as in *Aristocrats* (1979) and the internationally known *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) which won the Tony Award for Best Play in 1992. Among his other plays are *Lovers* (1968),

***More...***

*Volunteers* (1975), *Faith Healer* (1979), *Making History* (1988), and *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1999). He continues to write short stories.

Friel is married with four daughters and one son.

### **About the Production**

“I have long wanted to do one of Friel’s works, particularly *Translations*. It’s theme of the power of language over our lives is one that speaks to me,” says Main Street Theater Artistic Director Rebecca Greene Udden who is directing the production. . College of the Mainland Executive Artistic Director Mark Adams returns to the Main Street Stage to play Hugh. Mr. Adams was last seen onstage at MST in *Beyond the Fringe* and directed this season’s political satire *The Best Man*. Main Street favorite Joel Sandel (*Anna in the Tropics*, *Homebody / Kabul*) will play Hugh’s prodigal son, Owen, while Steven Laing (recently seen in MST’s *The Busy World Is Hushed*) is steadfast son Manus. Carolyn Johnson (from MST’s recent *Mr. Pim Passes By*) and Nicholas Collins (from MST’s *The Best Man*) are lovers Maire and Lieutenant Yolland. The rest of the cast includes Kay Allmand as Sarah, James Arrington as Doalty, Steve Bullitt (*Caroline, or Change*) as Captain Lancey, David Harlan as Jimmy Jack, and Lyndsay Sweeney as Bridget.

The design team includes Jodi Bobrovsky (set and properties design), Andrew Ruthven (lighting design), Craig Seanor (sound design), and Margaret Crowley (costume design). Jim Johnson is Dialect Coach. Janel Badrina is the production stage manager.

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Since 1975, Main Street Theater has produced high quality professional theater for audiences of all ages through its MainStage productions and Main Street Youth Theater. 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 22 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 Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Media Contact Only (not for print publication):

Shannon Emerick, Marketing Director

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