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*For Immediate Release*

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**The Hilberry Theatre interprets *Translations***

Featuring a company as strong as ever, the Hilberry Theatre continues its highly anticipated 44<sup>th</sup> season with *Translations* by Brian Friel at 8 p.m. on Friday, April 13.

*Translations* plays in rotating repertory through May 19, 2007.

Set in Baile Beag in County Donegal, Ireland in 1833, personal and political conflicts are intertwined at the deepest levels when a small community faces the brink of irrevocable transformation through changes that unravel the lines of communication between people and countries. *Translations* is a gripping drama which both uses and explores the richness of language and history to weave its tale, complimented by both American Sign Language and signed in exact English.

Most of the action takes place in the home of Hedge School master Hugh O'Donnell, where, in accordance with British law, Catholic pupils are taught classics and mathematics. Hedge Schools were underground throughout the eighteenth century. In 1782 the Crown allowed a measure of legal status to the operation of these schools, but they were still based in barns and sod houses. As the play begins, O'Donnell's

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school has already lost at least two of its pupils to brewing political unrest as British troops and engineers have begun to conduct an ordinance survey intended to map the landscape for military intelligence and standardize the Gaelic place names in the King's English. Against a beautiful backdrop, Lieutenant Yolland, a British soldier falls in love with Marie, a peasant girl, and with Ireland. Together, the strength of their love signifies the deepest of human connections is possible and their touching bond prevails despite the human barriers of cross-cultural communication.

First performed in 1980 in the Guildhall Theatre in Derry, Brian Friel's *Translations* was one of the flagships of the Field Day Group. This was a gathering of writers and artists and their project was to reinvigorate the political consciousness of Irish literary art with a respect for its traditions of nation, self, and language which extended past the republican rhetoric of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Wayne State University's production of *Translations* will be performed with American Sign Language Shadow Signers, built into every production for the entire run. According to Dan McDougall, signer for the Hilberry production, "Brian Friel's *Translations* parallels the Deaf experience as American Sign Language is an indigenous foreign language, constantly influenced and impacted on by English and devalued by the dominant, hearing culture."

Directed by **Lavina Hart**, the cast includes: **Christopher M. Bohan** (Manus), **Michael Boynton** (Lieutenant Yolland), **Megan Callahan** (Marie), **Christopher Corporandy** (Hugh O'Donnell), **Tiffanie Kilgast** (Bridget), **James Kuhl** (Jimmy Jack), **Benny Lee Harris Lumpkins, Jr.** (Captain Lancey), **Patrick Moltane** (Owen), **Michael**

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**Brian Ogden** (Doalty), **Caroline Price** (Sarah) and Shadow Signers **Dan McDougall** and **Shelly Tocco**. The production staff for *Translations* includes: **Brad Darvas** (Scenic Designer), **John Woodland** (Costume Designer), **Jared Cole** (Technical Director), **Andrew Morehouse** (Lighting Designer), **Justine Brock** (Sound Designer), **Lex van Blommestein** and **Jeremy Weing** (Props Masters) and **Darek N. Lane** (Stage Manager) with original music composition by **Chris Collins**.

*Translations* plays through May 19, 2007 in rotating repertory with *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance. Ticket prices range from \$15 - \$28 with student rush tickets available the day of the performance for \$10. Group discounts are also available with hearing impaired groups qualifying for a minimum amount of discounted tickets at \$3 each. For tickets and further information, please call **(313) 577-2972** or visit the Wayne State University Box Office at 4743 Cass Ave. on the corner of Cass Avenue and Hancock. Performance information may be obtained by visiting the theatre's website at [www.hilberry.com](http://www.hilberry.com).

*Translations* is supported in part with a grant from the Marshall Field's/Macy's Gives and the Hilberry season is sponsored by *Between the Lines*, *Dearborn Times-Herald* and *GreatStuff*.

**Photo #1:** (from left to right) Michael Boynton as Lieutenant Yolland and Megan Callahan as Marie.

**Photo #2:** (from left to right) Michael Boynton as Lieutenant Yolland and Megan Callahan as Marie.

*\*Photo credit: Eric Vaughn Messing*

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***Translations Performance Breakdown:***

Wed. 2 p.m.: May 16

Thurs. 8 p.m.: April 19, May 10, 17

Fri. 8 p.m.: April 13, 20, May 11, 18

Sat. 2 p.m.: April 14, May 12

Sat. 8 p.m.: April 14, May 5, 12, 19

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