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Michael French
Marketing & Public Relations Coordinator
College of Performing and Visual Arts
Southern Utah University
Office: 435-865-8667
michaelfrench@suu.edu

**SUU'S DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS & DANCE
PRESENTS BRIAN FRIEL'S TONY AWARD-WINNING PLAY
"DANCING AT LUGHNASA"
NOVEMBER 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10**

Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah: On a rural Irish farm in the summer of 1936, the five unmarried Mundy sisters try to maintain their faith and spirits as they struggle with life's emotional and economic hardships. **SUU's Department of Theatre Arts & Dance** invites you to meet the unforgettable Mundy sisters when it presents Brian Friel's Tony Award-winning play *Dancing at Lughnasa*. This beautifully crafted ensemble drama will be performed on November 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 at 7:30pm with a matinee performance on Saturday November 8 at 2pm in the **Randall L. Jones Theatre** on the SUU campus in Cedar City. The production is directed by the Utah Shakespeare Festival's **Melinda Pfundstein**.

Widely regarded as the playwright's masterpiece, *Dancing at Lughnasa* is an endearing memory play, loosely based on the lives of Brian Friel's mother and aunts who lived on the west coast of Donegal. Set in the summer of 1936 on a rural Irish farm, the play is told from the point of view of adult Michael Evans, who recalls a time when love briefly seems possible for three of the five Mundy sisters (his mother Chris and his aunts Rose, and Kate). However, with arrival of frail elder brother, Jack, who has returned from a life as a missionary in Africa, coupled with a series of tribulations, these small events soon begin to crack the foundation of the tight-knit family. *Time Magazine* chose *Dancing at Lughnasa* as one of the Best Plays of 1991, while the *New York Daily News* proclaimed, "Simply a wondrous experience. Experience it."

After an absence, SUU alumna, Theatre Arts and Dance adjunct faculty member and Utah Shakespeare Festival favorite **Melinda Pfundstein** returns to the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance as a director. Ms. Pfundstein recently delighted Festival audiences with her diverse performances in *Twelfth Night* (Olivia), *Into the Woods* (Baker's Wife) and *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (Irene Alder). As director of *Dancing at Lughnasa* Ms. Pfundstein is savoring the opportunity of staging such a special work of theatre. "A few thoughts have stayed with me since I first sat down with *Lughnasa*. What does it

take to live in the present without being haunted by the past? How do we trust in spite of losing some part of ourselves in the process? What if we could all be who we are without fear of pushing our loved ones away? Much of what dictates the answers to these questions has to do with what was passed down, or what always has been: tradition. It makes us feel safe, connected, purposeful. It keeps our feet planted on the ground, but in this way, tradition can also keep us from moving forward, and it is no small feat to grapple with this dynamic. Nonetheless, we all have to grapple one time or another with staying stuck or moving forward when, as eldest sister Kate says: ‘suddenly you realize that hair cracks are appearing everywhere; that control is slipping away; that the whole thing is so fragile it can’t be held together much longer.’”

Collaborating with Pfundstein on developing her vision for *Lughnasa* are set designer **Alana Pichot**, costume designer **Andrew Haueter**, lighting designer **Andie Szekely**, composer and sound designer **Brad Gowers** and props master **Seth Burgess**. **Elisa Black** is the assistant director. **Austin Andrews** serves as stage manager, with assistance from **Tammi Colombo** and **Erin Odell**. **Melinda Pfundstein** is also the show’s choreographer.

The remarkable Mundy sisters are portrayed by **Samantha Allred** (Maggie), **Kaitlyn Curry** (Kate), **Madisen Hayes** (Rose), **Halie Merrill** (Agnes) and **Jane Wright** (Chris). The men in their lives are embodied by **Joshua Leigh Hopkins** (Michael, the show’s narrator), **Nikolas Mikkelsen** (Gerry, Michael’s father) and **Nathan Smithson** (Father Jack).

Share the joys and heartaches of the Mundy clan by attending this poignant and lyrical play. Ticket prices are: **\$10 Adult General Admission; \$5 Youth** and **free for Faculty/Staff** and **SUU students with a valid ID**. Faculty and staff are entitled to bring one guest. You can purchase the **CPVA Flex Pass** which offers six admissions to any theatre, dance or music event and can be used for a single entrance to a production or can be used to admit six people to one event. The cost of the Flex Pass is **\$40** per pass (a \$65 value). For tickets or the Flex Pass, call the SUU Ticket Office at (435) 586-7872, Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm, or purchase in person at the Centrum Arena box office. Single tickets may be purchased online at www.suu.edu/pva/arts.

The 2014-2015 Theatre Arts & Dance Series includes a 50th anniversary production of the beloved musical *Fiddler on the Roof* and the American classic Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This series also includes two dance performances, *Collective Objects, An Original Student-Choreographed Concert*, and *Committed Step, An Original Faculty-Choreographed Dance Concert*.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE

The **Southern Utah University College of Performing and Visual Arts** is comprised of nationally

accredited departments of Art and Design, Music, Theatre Arts and Dance, as well as a graduate program in Arts Administration and the new Center for Shakespeare Studies. The College offers 16 different degree areas, including liberal arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; professional Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in art and theatre degrees; and a Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration degree. More than 60 full- and part-time faculty and staff are engaged in teaching and mentoring over 550 majors in the College. Over 1100 students enroll each year in over 195 arts classes on the SUU campus. The College presents 100 performances, lectures, presentations, and exhibitions each year. The College's affiliate organizations include the Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, Utah Shakespeare Festival and the SUU Ballroom Dance Company. For more information about the College of Performing and Visual Arts, contact the Office of the Dean at (435) 865-8561, or by e-mail at cpvamktg@suu.edu.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS: *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*

- WHAT:** On a rural Irish farm in the summer of 1936, the five unmarried Mundy sisters try to maintain their faith and spirits as they struggle with life's emotional and economic hardships. SUU's Department of Theatre Arts & Dance presents Brian Friel's Tony Award-winning play *Dancing at Lughnasa*, directed by SUU alumna and Utah Shakespeare Festival favorite Melinda Pfundstein.
- WHO:** Southern Utah University, College of Performing and Visual Arts, Theatre Arts & Dance Series
- WHEN:** Nov. 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10 @7:30pm, Nov. 8 @ 2pm
- WHERE:** Randall L. Jones Theatre, Southern Utah University, Cedar City, UT
- TICKETS:** (435) 586-7872, Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm or visit: www.suu.edu/pva/arts
- PRICES:** General Adult Admission: \$10; SUU Alumni with card: \$8 Student & Youth: \$5; SUU Faculty, Staff and Students: Free with valid I.D. CPVA Flex Passes \$40 each, good for six admissions