

The Secret Garden at The Festival Theatre

✖ The Festival Theatre is delighted to announce that acclaimed Scottish actress Siobhan Redmond is to lead the cast in its brand new musical production of Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic children's novel *The Secret Garden* this Christmas.

Redmond, who is renowned for her hard-hitting television roles in shows such as *Holby City*, *The Bill* and *Between The Lines*, as well as recent stage appearances for the National Theatre of Scotland in *The House of Bernarda Alba* and the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Dunsinane* by David Greig, will star as the frosty but faithful housekeeper Mrs Medlock.

She is joined by Danish musical star Caspar Philipson as Archibald Craven and by West End favourite Graham Bickley, perhaps best known as Joey Boswell in Carla Lane's comedy series *Bread* for the BBC, who plays the role of Dr Neville Craven. One half of the legendary duo Hale and Pace, Norman Pace, fresh from his appearances in *Chicago* adds a touch of comic genius to the role of Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener.

John Stalker, Chief Executive, said: "I am thrilled that Siobhan is joining *The Secret Garden* company. She is a towering figure in British theatre and along with all the other superb members of our cast our audiences are promised a veritable garden of delights at the Festival Theatre this Christmas."

The cast of 20 also includes local children Sophie Kavanagh and Toby Hughes, who were hand-picked by West End casting director David Grindrod, to appear as Mary Lennox and Colin Craven in the show.

✖ Based on the classic novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The*

Secret Garden is the latest in an exciting line of in-house productions from the Festival Theatre. Featuring the enchanting music of Lucy Simon and the spellbinding lyrics of Marsha Norman, the show won two Tony Awards when it first opened on Broadway in 1991 and received a triumphant revival from the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2000.

First published in 1911, Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel continues to appeal to readers of all ages and regularly appears in the Top 10 of all time favourite children's literature. In a sad and lonely house on the Yorkshire moors, the melancholy routine of a family in mourning is turned upside down with the arrival of a young orphan, Mary Lennox. When the curious child discovers the key to the hidden door of a secret walled garden – a secret she shares with her bedridden cousin Colin – a long-locked away magic is released, changing the lives of all, forever.

The Secret Garden will be appearing at the Festival Theatre from Thursday 9 December 2010 to Saturday 8 January 2011, before transferring to the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto, Canada at the invitation of prolific producer and theatre manager David Mirvish.