**Programme Notes for Agreement**

**The Play** is about the final four days leading up to the Good Friday Agreement starting with the Unionists rejection of the Mitchell agreement and Blair and Ahern’s arrival at the talks in Castle Buildings. It reminds us of how hard-won the agreement was, but it’s also a play about the nature of agreement; about leadership and about political risk. That’s one reason the play is called Agreement and not the Agreement as it has resonances beyond its particular setting. As well as being a Belfast story it has an international appeal.

**The Set:**

The set comprises a huge oval structure suspended at an angle over the stage, dominating the scene. Clouds pass across the face of the structure which is actually a screen for video footage, so from time to time images are projected onto it. The various strands of the agreement are written up on it and when some of the key players are being interviewed the action is shown on the stage and simultaneously a shot of it appears on the overhead screen as though in a television interview.

Beneath this screen, as though a reflection, a circular platform constructed of what appear to be honey coloured stone or marble slabs is marked out on the stage. There is a paler decorative inner ring in white. There are no curtains and banks of lights are visible to the right of the stage.

A number of desks, up to a maximum of 7, all fitted with castors, appear at various times on the stage and are shuffled around to provide a break in the action and to suggest different rooms within Castle Buildings. Towards the end of the play all the desks are aligned and covered with a white cloth to make a long conference table. There is also, at centre back, a table equipped with paper cups and a thermos flask for coffee or tea. At two points in the play a set of 5 urinals in a long line, descend from above. The action takes place in Castle Buildings, Stormont, from Tuesday 7th April until Friday 10th April.

Most of the cast are on the stage throughout the play, though Bertie Ahern and Mo Mowlam leave from time to time and Tony Blair arrives later. When two characters engage in negotiation or dispute the remaining members of the cast continue about their business in the background, maybe examining papers, maybe making tea or coffee at the coffee dock. Frequently characters address us, the audience, to keep us up to speed with the action, past and present.

**The Characters**

George Mitchell, played by Richard Croxford, is 65 years old. He is a short, dapper figure, with receding grey hair, a square face, deep set eyes with square spectacles and a thin mouth. Like all the men he wears a formal dark coloured lounge suit with a white shirt and sombre tie. He wears highly polished black lace up shoes.

Tony Blair is aged 45. He is a slim figure of medium height dressed in a well tailored dark suit. His greying hair recedes a little from his high forehead and his deep set eyes are blue in colour. His face is oval with high cheekbones and he has a tight lipped smile. This part is taken by Martin Hutson.

Gerry Adams, aged 50, played by Chris Corrigan, is a slim figure who sports a dark beard and moustache and plentiful dark hair, tinged with grey. He has an oval shaped face and dark eyebrows under a wrinkled forehead. Like the others he is attired formally in a dark grey lounge suit, white shirt and tie.

Bertie Ahern, aged 47, arrives in a black overcoat which tops a black suit. He has a round face, dark slightly receding grey hair, compelling eyes and a bulbous nose over thick lips. His figure is broad shouldered and authoritative. This part is taken by Ronan Leahy.

David Trimble is 54 years old at the time of the action. He has a narrow ascetic face with a high forehead and a good head of sandy coloured hair. He has a ruddy complexion and his eyes, framed by spectacles, are set wide apart under thick eyebrows. He has a square chin under a full mouth. Like the other men he wears a dark grey suit, white shirt and tie. This part is played by Ruari Conaghan

John Hume, the senior member of the drama, is 61 years old. His part is played by Dan Gordon. He is fairly short and stocky with a careworn square face, an abundance of dark hair tinged with grey and penetrating eyes under his spectacles. His suit is grey with a black trim on the collar and front reveres with the obligatory white shirt and tie beneath the jacket.

Mo Mowlam is aged 49. She is a rather dumpy figure. Her face is oval. She has well defined cheek bones and blue eyes under dark eyebrows. Her mouth is large but not full and she has a neat nose and slightly dimpled chin. The most important feature of Mo is her hair. She begins with a neat blonde bob but this is a wig and at times during the action she removes it to reveal some straggly locks of hair surrounding a central bald patch. She first appears in a beige suit, with a knee length skirt and takes off her jacket to reveal a purple blouse. Later the suit she wears is cerise in colour and under it she sports a white top. Often she potters around at the coffee and tea making table. The part of Mo is taken by Andrea Irvine.

President Clinton does not appear on the stage but his voice is heard on the telephone. The same is true of the Radio Reporter and Newsreader who do not appear but are voice overs. Conleth Hill is the voice of Bill Clinton and Jonathan Blake is the Radio Reporter with Anne Marie Foster as the voice of the Newsreader.

At Sightlines we all hope you will enjoy the show.