

'Dancing' at Open Fist

BY PHILIP BRANDES

The essentials: "Atmosphere is more real than incident, and everything is simultaneously actual and illusory," the narrator says in Irish playwright Brian Friel's poetic, semi-autobiographical portrait of his mother and spinster aunts' unraveling household during a pivotal 1936 Celtic harvest festival.

Why this? Open Fist Theatre Company follows its highly regarded production of "Anna in the Tropics" with Friel's Tony Award-winning memory play. Although the company is more commonly associated with edgy contemporary material, Open Fist's deep bench of actors are equally at home with classics. Artistic Director Martha Demson heads the ensemble in the role of the schoolmarm matriarch (played by Meryl Streep in the 1998 film adaptation).

Details: An Open Fist production at Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Ave., Los Angeles. In previews; opens July 12. Performances 8 p.m. Mondays and Saturdays, 4 p.m. Sundays, through Aug. 18. Additional performances 8 p.m. July 12 and Aug. 16. \$20-\$45 (previews are pay what you want). (323) 882-6912, openfist.org



Lane Allison, left, Ann Marie Wilding, Caroline Klidonas and Sandra Kate Burck in "Dancing at Lughnasa" at Atwater Village Theatre. (Amanda Weier)