



MEDIA RELEASE

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Signal Ensemble Revives its 'Waiting for Godot' **Aug. 11 – Sept. 4 at Chopin Studio**

CHICAGO, July 11, 2005 — Due to audience demand **Signal Ensemble Theatre** will open its 2005/06 season with a revival of its acclaimed production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, running Aug. 11 through Sept 4, 2005, in the studio at the Chopin Theatre (1543 W. Division). **Opening night is Thursday, Aug. 11 at 8 p.m.** Tickets may be purchased at SignalEnsemble.com or reserved at (773) 347-1350.

Widely lauded as a seminal masterwork of the 20th century, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is at once a vaudevillian farce and a heartrending expression of our fear of uncertainty. Also a study of intimate relationships in all their comfortable and irritating glory, it illustrates our need for companionship, our want of understanding, and our desperate hope that something good is waiting for us.

Waiting for Godot was Samuel Beckett's first professionally produced play. It opened in Paris in 1953 and has since become a cornerstone of modern theater. In it, two seemingly vagrant men, Estragon and Vladimir, are waiting to keep an appointment with someone named Godot. During a seemingly interminable cycle of days and nights blending together, the two longtime friends do anything to pass the time: they play word games, bicker, laugh, and muse on the Bible and the chance of God seeing them. The only figures they encounter are Pozzo, his slave Lucky, and a boy.

Rather than highlighting the play's well-known elements of clowning and absurdism, Signal's production focuses on the characters' friendship and humanity. Setting the piece right where Beckett wished it, on a road with a tree, Signal continues its mission to let the words lead the way through ensemble-based collaboration and performance.

Signal's production originally opened at the Chopin studio in January 2005 and won critical acclaim. The Chicago Reader's Mary Shen Barnidge deemed the production "highly recommended" and called it "immediate and engaging." The show is "very contemporary and very Chicago," wrote Theatre Scene's Jason Tyne, adding that it was "simple and vibrant."

Signal general artistic director **Ronan Marra** returns to direct the production. For Signal he directed his own Jeff-nominated *Landslide*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and his own *Learning to Fly*. Marra also directed

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the award-winning one-act version of *Learning to Fly* in New York, as well as *Say Goodnight Gracie*, *The Swan*, and *The Messiah*. *Learning to Fly* has been mounted at theaters in New York, Chicago at the Bailywick, and Marra's alma mater, Kent State University.

Samuel Beckett (Author) was born in Dublin in 1906 and graduated from Trinity College. He spent most of his life in Paris, where he died in 1989. Originally written in French, *Waiting for Godot* (En Attendant Godot) was translated into English by Beckett. One of the most celebrated authors of the 20th century, Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969. His other plays include *End Game*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, and *Happy Days*. He is the author of several novels including *Murphy*, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*.

Reprising their roles in *Waiting for Godot* are Signal Ensemble members **Christopher Prentice** (*Landslide*, *Catch-22*; title role in Velvet Willies' *Hamlet*) as Estragon, **Aaron Snook** (*Catch-22*, Dramatists' Jeff-winning *Only the Sound*) as Vladimir, and **Joseph Stearns** (*Catch-22*, *Much Ado About Nothing*; 5.2.1's *The Sleeper*; Velvet Willies' *Hamlet*) as Pozzo. **Benton Reynolds** (Lookingglass' *Formula 28*, Boxer Rebellion's *God's Country*) returns as the Boy. **Anthony Ingram** joins them as Lucky.

The creative team for *Waiting for Godot* includes **Nancy Freeman** (setting), **Laura M. Dana** (costumes), **Julie E. Ballard** (lighting), **Lara Maerz** (props), **David Blixt** (original violence). **Stephanie Ehemann** is the stage manager.

Productions Plus is the exclusive production sponsor for *Waiting for Godot*. The play is produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service Inc.

Waiting for Godot will play in the studio at the Chopin Theatre (1543 W. Division) Aug. 11 through Sept. 4, 2005 as follows: Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. There will be two Monday performances, Aug. 15 and Aug. 29, at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$10 to \$15 and may be purchased online at **SignalEnsemble.com** or reserved at (773) 347-1350. The Chopin Theatre is accessible by the CTA Blue Line train (Division) and buses (70-Division, 56-Milwaukee, 18-Ashland).

About Signal Ensemble Theatre, NFP

Known for its ensemble acting and producing a diverse slate of plays that ranges from classics to new works, Signal Ensemble Theatre uses the actor as focal point to clearly present the playwright's vision. Founded by its three artistic directors, the company began producing in 2003. Signal's second season featured critically acclaimed productions of *Catch-22*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Landslide* (nominated for two Jeff Citations).

WAITING FOR GODOT

FACT SHEET

WHAT: Signal Ensemble Theatre revives its production of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

LOCATION: Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division, Chicago, in the Studio

DATES/TIMES: THURSDAY, AUGUST 11 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2005

PRESS OPENING: Thursday, August 11	8:00 pm
Monday eves (8/15 & 8/29 only)	7:00 pm
Thursday, Friday & Saturday eves	8:00 pm
Sunday mats	3:00 pm

DESCRIPTION: In *Waiting for Godot*, two seemingly vagrant men, Estragon and Vladimir, are waiting to keep an appointment with someone named Godot. During a seemingly interminable cycle of days and nights blending together, the two longtime friends do anything to pass the time: they play word games, bicker, laugh, and muse on the Bible and the chance of God seeing them. The only figures they encounter are Pozzo, his slave Lucky, and a boy.

WHO: Written by Samuel Beckett

Directed by Ronan Marra

Cast: Anthony Ingram (Lucky), Christopher Prentice (Estragon), Benton Reynolds (Boy), Aaron Snook (Vladimir), and Joseph Stearns (Pozzo)

Production: Nancy Freeman (setting), Laura M. Dana (costumes), Julie E. Ballard (lighting), Lara Maerz (props), David Blixt (original violence), Stephanie Ehemann (stage manager)

PRICES: \$10-\$15

TICKETS: INFORMATION/RESERVATIONS: (773) 347-1350 or online at SignalEnsemble.com

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