



MEDIA RELEASE

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Signal Ensemble Presents the World Premiere of *Landslide*

Opens March 12 at Breadline Theatre

CHICAGO — **Signal Ensemble Theatre** is pleased to conclude its second season with the world premiere of **Ronan Marra's** new play, *LANDSLIDE*. Directed by Marra, this darkly comic drama detailing parental loss and familial tension will be staged at the Breadline Center for the Performing Arts, 1802 W. Berenice Avenue in Chicago. Performances begin March 10 and continue through April 10, 2005. **Opening night is March 12 at 8 p.m.**

After Diane miraculously survives a traffic accident, her older brother Chris returns home to help care for her. In the two years since their mother's death, the family has fallen out of contact, and Chris's marriage has gone awry. Now, with Diane indefinitely disabled, they are forced to confront their unspoken demons of guilt and fear as they try to rebuild their estranged family and shattered lives.

"I wrote it based on events in my life: my mother's death, sister's accident," notes playwright and director Ronan Marra. "And I wanted to use it as an opportunity to explore my own personal tensions and grief that I had with both events." He adds, "It was also an opportunity to write for specific colleagues from the ensemble I draw inspiration from."

Playwright and director **Ronan Marra**, Signal's general artistic director, last directed *Waiting for Godot*, as well as *Much Ado About Nothing* and his own *Learning to Fly*, for the company. In its award-winning one-act version, *Learning to Fly* has been performed in Chicago, New York, and at Marra's alma mater, Kent State University. Marra's other plays include *Off the Hook*, *Letters to Destiny*, and *The Waiter's Birthday*. Marra has also directed *Say Goodnight, Gracie*, by Ralph Pape; *The Swan*, by Elizabeth Egloff; and *The Messiah*, by David Keller. He is a network playwright with Chicago Dramatists.

The cast of *Landslide* features Signal Ensemble members **Melanie Keller** as Sarah and **Christopher Prentice** as Chris, with Jeff Award nominee **Georgann Charuhas** as Diane. Keller recently appeared as Gwendolen in First Folio's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Prentice was last seen as Estragon in Signal's *Waiting for Godot*. Nominated for a Jeff Award for best actress for her work in the Artistic Home's *After the Fall*, Charuhas also appeared in Signal's *Learning to Fly*.

The design/production team for *Landslide* includes **Melania Lancy** (setting), **Laura M. Dana** (costumes), **Julie E. Ballard** (lighting), **Brandon Bruce** (sound), and **Lara Maerz** (production manager). Joseph Stearns, Ronan Marra, and Christopher Prentice are the producers.

Performances of *Landslide* are at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, with 3 p.m. matinees on Sunday. General admission tickets are \$15, with discounts for seniors and students (\$10), and can be purchased by credit card online at signalensemble.com or reserved by telephone at (773) 347-1350. Cash and checks only are accepted at the box office. Special priced preview tickets are \$10. There are \$10 industry nights every Thursday.

(more)

Productions Plus is the exclusive corporate sponsor of *Landslide*.

Performer's Bios

Georgann Charuhas (Diane) has been a member of the Artistic Home ensemble since 1999. Roles played include Maggie in *After the Fall* (Jeff Nominee, Best Actress), Shirley Kaplan in *Street Scene* (After Dark Award, Best Ensemble), Popeye Jackson in *The Miss Firecracker Contest* (Jeff Recommended), and Miss Scoons in *Angel City*. Other credits include Diane in *Learning to Fly*, Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, Adel in *Self-Torture and Strenuous Exercise*, Vicky in *In the Boom Boom Room*, Mel in *Does This Woman Have a Name?* and Deborah in *Off the Hook*. Charuhas studied in London and holds a B.A. in theatre from St. Mary's University.

Melanie Keller (Sarah) played Beatrice in Signal Ensemble's *Much Ado About Nothing*. She was most recently seen as Gwendolen in First Folio's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She understudied and performed the role of Blanche in Chicago Shakespeare's *King John*. She has also worked with ShawChicago, Rising Moon, Metropolis, Breadline, Lifeline, Powertap, and BackStage. Keller trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, and is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University. ***Signal Ensemble Member***

Christopher Prentice (Chris) is a co-founder of Signal Ensemble and played Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, the Chaplain in *Catch-22*, and Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Other Chicago credits include John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins* (Boxer Rebellion), Jaques in *As You Like It* (Velvet Willies), and the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. Regional work includes American Players Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Dallas Theater Center, Illinois Shakes, Next, and First Folio. Prentice holds a B.F.A. from Southern Methodist University. ***Signal Ensemble Member***

About Signal Ensemble Theatre, NFP

While producing a diverse slate of plays, Signal Ensemble Theatre uses the actor as focal point to clearly present the playwright's vision. Incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 2004, Signal's second season featured critically acclaimed productions of *Catch-22* and *Waiting for Godot* at the Chopin Theatre. Signal Ensemble members are Ronan Marra (General Artistic Director), Christopher Prentice (Producing Artistic Director), Joseph Stearns (Managing Artistic Director), Meredith Bell, Brandon Bruce, Tiffany Carter, Melanie Keller, Ronald Kuzava, Vincent L. Lonergan, Charles Schoenherr, and Aaron Snook.

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LANDSLIDE
FACT SHEET

WHAT: Signal Ensemble Theatre presents the world premiere of *Landslide* by Ronan Marra

THEATER: Breadline Center for the Performing Arts, 1802 W. Berenice Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60613

DATES: March 10 – April 10, 2005
Previews: March 10 & 11, 2005
Opening: March 12, 2005 at 8:00 p.m.
Regular run: March 13 – April 10, 2005

TIMES: Thursdays through Saturdays at 8:00 p.m.
Sundays at 3:00 p.m.

WHO: Written and directed by Ronan Marra
Cast: Georgann Charuhas, Melanie Keller, and Christopher Prentice
Production: Melania Lancy (setting), Laura M. Dana (costumes), Julie E. Ballard (lighting), Brandon Bruce (sound), and Lara Maerz (production manager)

DESCRIPTION: After Diane miraculously survives a traffic accident, her older brother Chris returns home to help care for her. In the two years since their mother's death, the family has fallen out of contact, and Chris's marriage has gone awry. Now, with Diane indefinitely disabled, they are forced to confront their unspoken demons of guilt and fear as they try to rebuild their estranged family and shattered lives.

INDUSTRY: Every Thursday, with picture/resume or business card

TICKET PRICES: \$15 General Admission
\$10 Senior citizens and students (with ID)
\$10 Industry (with picture/resume/business card)
\$10 Groups of 15 or more
\$10 Preview general admission

TICKETS: Purchase with credit card online at signalensemble.com or reserve by phone at (773) 347-1350.

INFORMATION: (773) 347-1350