



## SIGNAL ENSEMBLE THEATRE

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# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 16, 2003

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**SIGNAL ENSEMBLE THEATRE**  
**Presents The World Premiere Of**  
**LEARNING TO FLY**

Opens: June 9, 2003    Closes: June 25, 2003

Signal Ensemble Theatre makes its Chicago debut with the world premiere of **Learning to Fly**, a new play by **Ronan Marra**. This inaugural production will be staged at Wing and Groove Theatre, 1935 1/2 W North Ave. in the Flat Iron Arts Building. Tickets are \$10 and can be reserved by telephone at 773-347-1350.

At 35,000 feet, you're stuck with whomever you're sitting by. Will and Sarah are stuck with each other. Tense negotiations over whose seat is whose spark a debate in which the two passengers discover a striking series of coincidences in their lives. A quick flight from DC to Charleston takes a harrowing and hilarious detour to the past.

Originally written as a one-act, *Learning to Fly* received its first production at Kent State University's Fringe Festival in the spring of 2000. This was followed by another production in October at New York City's ITN Theatre. While making the rounds in NYC, the play scored second place at Neverland Productions one-act competition.

In June of last year, *Learning to Fly* had its Chicago premiere at Bailiwick's Director's Festival. It was after this staging that the development of the two-act script began. Signal Ensemble Theatre's inaugural production is the world premiere of the full-length version of *Learning to Fly*.

The play's author **Ronan Marra** directs this production. His plays have received productions, workshops and readings every year since 1997, when his first play, *Off the Hook*, debuted at Kent State University. The play was last seen in September at New Leaf, and has been adapted to serve as "Part One" of a longer piece, entitled *Maintenance*. His plays *Letters to Destiny* and *The Waiter's Birthday* were also produced by KSU. Ronan also directed the New York production of *Learning to Fly*, and has directed productions of *Say Goodnight, Gracie*, by Ralph Pape, *The Swan* by Elizabeth Egloff, and *The Messiah*, by David Keller. He has been seen onstage in Chicago in *Twelfth Night* at First Folio and *Life Is a Dream* and *Hamlet* at Chase Park. Ronan is a member of Signal Ensemble and a Network Playwright with Chicago Dramatists.

*Learning to Fly* features several notable Chicago actors: **Erin Myers**, who was recently seen in The Hypocrites' *Machinal* plays Sarah; **Georgann Charuhas** who played Maggie in The Artistic Home's *After the Fall* plays Diane; **Kevin Schwendeman**, who created the character of Will, reprises the role for this production; Signal Ensemble Member **Joseph Stearns**, last seen as the Narrator in Inequity's *James and the Giant Peach*, plays Glenn; **Ian Crossland**, who appeared in Marra's *Off the Hook*, plays The Voice.

The Design/Production team for *Learning to Fly* includes **Whitney Buchman** (Lighting Design) and **Jeremy Dobbins** (Sound Design/Stage Manager).

Signal Ensemble Theatre is dedicated to telling great stories well. Through clean, clear, and interesting staging of classic, contemporary, and modern works, we seek to engage and entertain the audience by inviting them to celebrate the human condition.

[www.signalensembletheatre.com](http://www.signalensembletheatre.com)

Signal Ensemble Theatre  
LEARNING TO FLY  
FACT SHEET

THEATRE: Wing and Groove Theatre

DATES: June 9, 2003—June 25, 2003

DESCRIPTION: A quick flight from DC to Charleston takes a harrowing and hilarious detour to the past.

PERFORMANCES:

Monday	6/9/03	7:30 p.m.	Opening
Tuesday	6/10/03	7:30 p.m.	
Wednesday	6/11/03	7:30 p.m.	
Monday	6/16/03	7:30 p.m.	
Tuesday	6/17/03	7:30 p.m.	
Wednesday	6/18/03	7:30 p.m.	
Monday	6/23/03	7:30 p.m.	
Tuesday	6/24/03	7:30 p.m.	
Wednesday	6/25	7:30 P.m.	Closing

TICKET PRICES: \$10

TICKETS/INFORMATION: 773-347-1350

PERFORMERS BIOS

**Georgann Charuhas (Diane)**

Georgann Charuhas is known to be curiously strong, much like the popular mint that comes in a kitschy tin. She is a native of Westchester, Ill. and a member of The Artistic Home Acting Ensemble. Roles played include: Maggie in The Artistic Home's Jeff-Recommended production of *After the Fall*, Miss Scoons in *Angel City*, Deborah in Ronan Marra's *Off the Hook* for the 2002 Abbey Hoffman Festival, Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, and Adel in *Self-Torture and Strenuous Exercise*.

**Ian Crossland (The Voice)**

Ian graduated from Kent State University with a B.A. in theatre in 2001. Some of Ian's favorite roles have been Matt in *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, Laertes in *Hamlet*, Wallace in *Women and Wallace*, and DJ Vince Fontaine in *Grease*. Ian has performed with director Ronan Marra before, appearing in his last production, *Off the Hook*. Some other shows Ian has performed in are *Life Is a Dream*, *Dial "M" for Murder*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *City of Angels*, and *Scapin*

**Erin Myers (Sarah)**

Since moving to Chicago in 2001 Erin Myers has worked with WNEP (*Oleanna*), Foreground Theatre Company (*Missing/Kissing*, *New Anatomies*), and with the Hypocrites (*Machinal*, now Jeff-Nominated in 7 categories, including Best Ensemble). Originally from Northeastern Ohio, Erin has worked with many Cleveland theatre companies including Ensemble Theatre, Cain Park, Lyric Opera Cleveland and Cleveland Public Theatre. Education includes a Bachelors' degree in Music, Vocal Performance from CCM, The University of Cincinnati, and an MFA, Acting from Kent State University.

**Kevin Schwendeman (Will)**

Kevin Schwendeman made his Chicago debut last summer at the Bailiwick Director's Fest performing the role of Will in the one-act version of *Learning to Fly*. He is looking forward to reprising the role once again after originating the role at Kent State University. Favorite roles include Steve in *Say Goodnight, Gracie* and William Reach in *Down The Road* at B005 Theatre, Ohio, and Polonius in *Hamlet* and Sir Wilfred in *Witness for the Prosecution* at KSU.

**Joseph Stearns (Glenn) Signal Ensemble Member**

Joe's favorite Chicago roles include Fabian in *Twelfth Night*, Antipholus S. in *The Comedy of Errors*, Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Guildenstern in *Hamlet*. He also played Papa Bear in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, and the Narrator in *James and the Giant Peach*; both late night adult versions of the popular children's favorites. A musician and composer, he also wrote the songs for the aforementioned musical *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. He has written songs for *Life is a Dream* at Chase Park Theatre, and set Elizabethan ballads to music for a show of love scenes from Shakespeare entitled *The Only Love Gods*. He is a graduate of the Columbia College Theatre Department.