



Signal Ensemble Theatre

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MEDIA RELEASE

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SIGNAL ENSEMBLE THEATRE Presents Shakespeare's Classic Comedy MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Opens: August 16, 2003 Closes: September 21, 2003

Signal Ensemble Theatre continues its inaugural season with **Shakespeare's** comedy of wittily warring lovers, deception, and public humiliation, **Much Ado About Nothing**. This production will be staged at the Athenaeum Theatre Studio, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago, 60657. Tickets are \$15 and can be reserved by telephone at 312-902-1500 or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

Signal Ensemble Member **Ronan Marra** directs this production. He wrote and directed Signal Ensemble's first production: the world premiere of *Learning to Fly*. He also directed the New York one-act version of *Learning to Fly*, as well as *Say Goodnight, Gracie*; *The Swan*; and *The Messiah*. As a playwright, Ronan's 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. Ronan 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 Network Playwright with Chicago Dramatists.

"It's Shakespeare's most human comedy," says Marra. "Each character has a very real fault that gets exploited by another character." Unlike many of Shakespeare's comedies, *Much Ado* does not have a supernatural or magical element. The Signal Ensemble was drawn to the play because of its very realistic relationships and the clarity of the language.

Much Ado About Nothing features a cast of eighteen Chicago actors: Signal Ensemble Members **Christopher Prentice** and **Joseph Stearns** play Benedick and Don Pedro; Prentice last played Picasso in New Leaf Theatre's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and Stearns last appeared in *Learning to Fly*. **Melanie Keller** plays Benedick's witty sparring partner, Beatrice. **Aaron Snook**, who last appeared in Chicago Dramatists' *Only the Sound*, and **Meredith Bell**, last seen as Rosaura in *Life Is a Dream*, play the young lovers Claudio and Hero. **Vincent Lonergan** plays Hero's father Leonato. **Brandon Bruce**, last seen in WNEP's *Pretty Things* will play the malapropic master constable Dogberry; with **Ron Kuzava**, who played Dracul for WNEP's *Renfield*, is Dogberry's second banana, Verges. **Charles Shoenherr** plays Don Pedro's bastard brother Don John; and his followers Borachio and Conrade are played by The House Theatre's **Michael E. Smith** and **Christopher Clementson**, last seen in *BS*; **Shawn Yardley** and **Tiffany Carter** play Hero's ladies-in-waiting. The cast also includes **Jennifer Faletto**, **Len Hoover**, **Dave Lykins**, **Eric Paskey**, and **Bob Wilson**.

The Design/Production team for *Much Ado About Nothing* includes **Nancy Freeman** (Setting), **Laura M. Dana** (Costumes), **Whitney Buchman** (Lighting), **Jeremy Dobbins** (Sound/Stage Manager), **Lara Maerz** (Props/Production Manager), and **Joseph Stearns** (Music).

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

Signal Ensemble Theatre
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
FACT SHEET

THEATRE: The Athenaeum Studio, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago

DATES: August 16—September 21, 2003

DESCRIPTION: Shakespeare's rollicking tale of loopy lovers that are "too wise to woo peaceably." Don Pedro and his men return from war looking for a little fun in the sun, and everyone's involved: the younger ones fall instantly in love and the older ones try desperately to stay out of it. All the passion, all the intrigue, all the deception, trickery, and most of all: romance!

REGULAR SCHEDULE: Thursday-Saturday 8:00 p.m., Sunday 7:00 p.m.

INDUSTRY NIGHT: Monday, Aug. 18, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

<u>PERFORMANCES:</u>	Saturday	8/16/03	8:00 p.m.	Opening
	Sunday	8/17/03	7:00 p.m.	
	Monday	8/18/03	7:00 p.m.	\$10 Industry Night
	Thursday	8/21/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Friday	8/22/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Saturday	8/23/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Sunday	8/24/03	7:00 p.m.	
	Thursday	8/28/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Friday	8/29/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Saturday	8/30/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Sunday	8/31/03	7:00 p.m.	
	Thursday	9/4/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Friday	9/5/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Saturday	9/6/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Sunday	9/7/03	7:00 p.m.	
	Thursday	9/11/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Friday	9/12/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Saturday	9/13/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Sunday	9/14/03	7:00 p.m.	
	Thursday	9/18/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Friday	9/19/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Saturday	9/20/03	8:00 p.m.	
	Sunday	9/21/03	7:00 p.m.	Closing

TICKET PRICES: \$15 \$10 Industry Night

TICKETS: 312-902-1500, at Athenaeum Box Office, or online at Ticketmaster.com

INFORMATION: 773-347-1350

Cast In order of speaking

Leonato, Governor of Messina.....	Vincent L. Lonergan
Balthasar, attendant on Don Pedro.....	Eric Paskey
Beatrice, niece to Leonato.....	Melanie Keller
Hero, daughter to Leonato.....	Meredith Bell
Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon.....	Joseph Stearns
Benedick, a long lord of Padua.....	Christopher Prentice
Don John, bastard brother to Don Pedro.....	Charles Schoenherr
Claudio, a young lord of Florence.....	Aaron Snook
Antonio, brother to Leonato.....	Dave Lykins
Conrade, follower of Don John.....	Christopher Clementson
Borachio, follower of Don John.....	Michael E. Smith
Margaret, waiting gentlewoman on Hero.....	Tiffany Carter
Ursula, waiting gentlewoman on Hero.....	Shawn Yardley
Dogberry, a constable.....	Brandon Bruce
Verges, a headborough.....	Ronald Kuzava
Watchman.....	Len Hoover
Watchman.....	Jennifer Faletto
Priest/Sexton.....	Bob Wilson