



MEDIA RELEASE

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Signal Moves Out of Basement with ‘She Stoops to Conquer’

Goldsmith Comedy on Chopin Mainstage is Ensemble’s Most Elaborate Project

CHICAGO, REVISED MARCH 20, 2006 — **Signal Ensemble Theatre** (Ronan Marra, Christopher Prentice and Joseph Stearns, artistic directors) will cap off its third season with *She Stoops to Conquer*, by Oliver Goldsmith and directed by Ronan Marra, running March 29 through April 29, 2006, at the Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division Ave. **Opening night is Friday, March 31 at 8 p.m.** Tickets may be purchased at signalensemble.com or reserved at (773) 347-1350.

Schemes and wits abound during the course of an evening at a crumbling country estate. Two fashionable young urbanites, lost in the country, find themselves the targets of trickery at the hands of a mischievous ne'er-do-well and a barmaid who is more than she seems. Mistaking the estate for an inn, the two bachelors are shocked to encounter their would-be loves on the premises. In classic farce style, this breakneck comedy skewers social mores, families and old-fashioned courtship.

"This will be different than any Signal show so far in that, from top to bottom, it's the first all-out comedy we've done," says director **Ronan Marra**. "No absurdism, no darkness, no pausing for drama — just plain fun."

"And the scale is bigger," continues Marra, Signal's general artistic director. "Bigger venue, bigger cast, bigger set, bigger costumes."

Even with the larger scope, the production will still be vintage Signal. "Our approach doesn't change," says Marra. "We rely on the language and on the instincts of the actors, and play the script straight. We're just going to tell the story. At breakneck speed."

The cast of *She Stoops to Conquer* features Signal Ensemble members **Meredith Bell** (Constance Neville), **Melanie Keller** (Kate Hardcastle), **Vincent L. Lonergan** (Hardcastle), **Christopher Prentice** (Young Marlow), **Aaron Snook** (Diggory) and **Joseph Stearns** (Tony Lumpkin). Joining them are **Charlie Beck** (Sir Charles Marlow, Stingo), **Kyle Carroll** (Bet Bouncer, Bridget), **Bil Gaines** (Jack Slang, Oliver, First Servant), **Laura Sturm** (Mrs. Hardcastle), **Bries Vannon** (Dick Muggins, Jeremy, Roger) and **Philip Winston** (Hastings).

(more)

Directed by **Ronan Marra**, the creative team for *She Stoops to Conquer* includes **Melania Lancy** (setting), **Laura M. Dana** (costumes), **Julie E. Ballard** (lighting) **Anthony Ingram** (sound) and **Devon MacGregor** (props). **Phil Timberlake** is the dialect coach and **Stephanie Ehemann** is the stage manager.

Oliver Goldsmith (Author) was born in 1730 in Ireland, the fifth of seven children of an Anglo-Irish clergyman. He trained at Trinity College in Dublin and prepared to take holy orders, but was rejected by the bishop. He then left Ireland in pursuit of a medical degree in Edinburgh but eventually arrived in London, worn out and destitute. In London, Goldsmith worked as an apothecary's assistant, school usher, physician and hack writer. In 1758 he published a two-volume translation of *The Memoirs of a Protestant, Condemned to the Gallies of France for His Religion*. Known as an essayist, poet and novelist, Goldsmith authored two plays: *The Good Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. The latter has outlived almost all other English comedies from the early 18th to late 19th centuries.

Ronan Marra, Signal's general artistic director, is a co-founder of Signal Ensemble. Directing credits with the company include Jeff-recommended productions of *Seascape*, *Waiting for Godot* and his own *Landslide* (nominated for two Jeff Citations, including New Work), as well as *Much Ado about Nothing* and his own *Learning to Fly*. He has also directed for The Gallery Players in New York City as well as several productions at his alma mater, Kent State University. As a playwright, Marra's plays have been produced in Chicago and abroad, and he has received awards for New Work at ITN Theatre and Neverland Productions in New York. Marra is a recipient of the 2006 Illinois Arts Council Finalist Award in Scriptworks.

Productions Plus is the exclusive production sponsor for *She Stoops to Conquer*.

She Stoops to Conquer will play at the Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division Ave. March 29 – April 29, 2006. Previews are March 29 and 30 at 8 p.m. Opening is Friday, March 31 at 8 p.m. Regular performances will continue through April 29 as follows: Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. NOTE: There will be no performance Easter Sunday, April 16. There will be an added performance Wednesday, April 26 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10–\$20 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).

Known for its ensemble acting and producing a diverse slate of plays that range from classics to new works, Signal Ensemble Theatre uses the actor as focal point to clearly execute the playwright's vision. Founded by its three artistic directors (Ronan Marra, Christopher Prentice, Joseph Stearns), the company began producing in 2003. *She Stoops to Conquer* follows Jeff-recommended productions of *Waiting for Godot* and *Seascape* in Signal's third season. Signal garnered two Jeff Citation nominations for the world premiere of *Landslide* in its second season.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

FACT SHEET

- WHAT:** Signal Ensemble Theatre presents *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith
- LOCATION:** Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division Ave., Chicago, on the Mainstage
- DATES/TIMES:** WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29 – SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2006
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| PREVIEWS: 3/29 & 3/30 | 8:00 pm |
| PRESS OPENING: FRIDAY, MARCH 31 | 8:00 pm |
| Thursday, Friday & Saturday eves | 8:00 pm |
| Sunday mats | 3:00 pm |
| No perf. Easter Sunday, April 16 | |
| Special added perf.: April 26 | 8:00 pm |
- DESCRIPTION:** Schemes and wits abound during the course of an evening at a crumbling country estate. Two fashionable young urbanites, lost in the country, find themselves the targets of trickery at the hands of a mischievous ne'er-do-well and a barmaid who is more than she seems. Mistaking the estate for an inn, the two bachelors are shocked to encounter their would-be loves on the premises. In classic farce style, this breakneck comedy skewers social mores, families and old-fashioned courtship.
- WHO:** Written by Oliver Goldsmith
Directed by Ronan Marra
Cast: Charlie Beck (Sir Charles Marlow, Stingo), Meredith Bell (Miss Neville), Kyle Carroll (Bet Bouncer, Bridget), Bil Gaines (Jack Slang, Oliver, First Servant), Melanie Keller (Miss Hardcastle), Vincent L. Lonergan (Hardcastle), Christopher Prentice (Young Marlow), Aaron Snook (Diggory), Joseph Stearns (Tony Lumpkin), Laura Sturm (Mrs. Hardcastle), Bries Vannon (Dick Muggins, Jeremy, Roger) and Philip Winston (Hastings).
Production: Melania Lancy (setting), Laura M. Dana (costumes), Julie E. Ballard (lighting), Anthony Ingram (sound), Devon MacGregor (props), Phil Timberlake (dialect) and Stephanie Ehemann (stage manager)
- PRICES:** \$10-\$20
- TICKETS:** INFORMATION/RESERVATIONS: (773) 347-1350 or online at SignalEnsemble.com

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