

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Brisk, 65-minute world premiere adaptation of *Master Builder* kicks off New Leaf's 5<sup>th</sup> season**

**the side project's Adam Webster to direct "gutted and rehabbed" tale of Halvard Solness**

**CHICAGO, IL** – New Leaf Theatre, in residence at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center, will kick off its fifth season Wednesday, September 13, with the world premiere of Matthew Ira Swaye's adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, directed by *side project* Artistic Director Adam Webster.

*The Master Builder* tells the story of self-taught architect Halvard Solness whose fear of the younger generation causes him to grip tightly onto his empire and thwart the progress of underlings. Then, 23-year old Hilda Wangle pays an unexpected visit. Having met Halvard under questionable circumstances 10 years prior, Miss Wangle proceeds to undermine his authority and question his memory. What exactly she has come for might be exactly what Solness needs.

The adaptation, a brisk, 65-minute version, updates the language, reducing it to its barest essentials, while both retaining traditional sensibilities and flirting with post-modern sensibilities, Webster says. "Which is interesting since it is based on the work of the Father of Modern Drama. And not just any play, in particular the play in which he discloses his own fears at the younger generation of writers coming up through the ranks via Halvard's fear of being usurped or replaced."

### **About the production**

*The Master Builder* will open Wednesday, September 13 and run through October 21, 2006, at 7:30 p.m. Showtimes are Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. There will be no show September 15-16, but an added Saturday matinee at 4 p.m. on October 21. Tickets are \$15 general, \$12 sr/student. Thursdays are \$5 Industry Nights. Call 773-274-9026 for information. Online ticket reservations available at [www.newleaftheatre.org](http://www.newleaftheatre.org)

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Webster will preside over a cast featuring Steve Ratcliffe as Halvard Solness and Jenny Hylas as the mysterious Hilda Wangle. Rounding out the cast will be Phil Carlin as Dr. Herdal, Craig Joseph as Ragnar Brovik, Leonard Kraft as Mr. Brovik, Calliope Porter as Kaia Fosli, and Annie Slivinski as Aline Solness. Light Design by Margaret Hartmann; Sound Design by Nick Keenan; Set Design by John Sundling; Costume Design by Anna Weber; and Dramaturgy by Joe Tracz

### **About the season**

The rest of the season will include the U.S premiere of David Hare's 2003 play, *The Permanent Way*, directed by New Leaf Artistic Director Brandon Ray. The play, about the British rail disasters echoes current concerns of increased terror threats, privatized welfare, response to natural disasters, disbursement of relief funds, and the government's overall role in keeping us safe and sound.

*January 17-February 17.*

The company will end the season with Bilal Dardai's comic rewrite of Greek mythology, *Vox Pandora*, directed by Beverly Longo. The play concerns Hope, the sole remaining inhabitant of Pandora's infamous box, and what ensues when she is convinced to leave the box and enter our world. *April 18-May 19.*

### **About the company.**

The company ended last season with Lisa Loomer's *Accelerando*, which was "Recommended" by the *Chicago Sun-Times* ("lighthearted and absurd... rapid-fire romance...creatively staged") and heralded by *The Tribune*, which said the show was "*Frankie and Johnny* (meets) *Annie Hall*... clever...endearing."

New Leaf's spring 2005 show, *As It Is in Heaven*, was heralded by local press as well, and was nominated for a Jeff Award for Best Ensemble. In addition to being "Highly Recommended" by the *Chicago Reader*, the *Pioneer Press* called the play "engrossing," the production "engaging" and the cast a "uniformly fine ensemble." Other heralded past productions also include *Brilliant Traces* ("Highly Recommended... enchanting... perceptive direction" – *Chicago Reader*) and a world premiere adaptation of *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* ("Recommended" – *Sun-Times*; "powerful" – *Chicago Reader*)

For more information on the company or show visit [www.newleaftheatre.org](http://www.newleaftheatre.org).

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