

AUDITION NOTICE

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER by Oliver Goldsmith

Performance Dates:

Friday, 5th – Saturday, 13th July at 7.45pm

Audition Date:

Sunday 10th March 2019 at 4pm

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

by Oliver Goldsmith

Directed by Mike Darbon

She Stoops to Conquer is one of the 18th century's most popular and enduring comedies, which takes an often-farcical look at the behaviour and marital expectations of the upper classes in Georgian England.

Wealthy, but vain, country landowner, Squire Hardcastle, wants to marry his daughter, Kate, to the eligible – and equally wealthy – Charles Marlow, son of his old friend from London, Sir Charles Marlow. Meanwhile, Hardcastle's aspirant and scheming second wife, Dorothy, plans to marry her oafish and wayward son from her first marriage, Tony Lumpkin, to Kate's best friend, companion and soon-to-be heiress, Constance Neville, despite their mutual dislike of each other.

When the young Charles and his friend, George Hastings, Constance's true love, arrive from London at an alehouse frequented by Tony Lumpkin and his cronies, looking for somewhere to stay for the night, they are persuaded by the mischievous Lumpkin to go to the "old Buck's Head", in other words, the Hardcastle's nearby manor house. On arrival, the two young men treat the older members of the Hardcastle family with impudence and disrespect, falsely believing them to be innkeepers and Kate – mistaken as a serving wench - is treated with gross over-familiarity by an arrogant Charles who, whilst at ease with ladies of a lower social standing, becomes flustered when in the company of those from his own class.

Realising the mistake yet determined to overcome obstacles and win Marlow's affections by any means necessary, Kate keeps up her pretence as a barmaid in order to get to the bottom of Charles's true character. Meanwhile, Tony Lumpkin and Constance Neville conspire not to get married so that he may gain his inheritance and she can marry her own love, Hastings. Many delightful deceptions and hilarious turns of plot are played out before the strategies of Kate and Constance conclude and the women "conquer" their men.

Originally titled *The Mistakes of a Night*, with Goldsmith only changing it to its more cryptic title a matter of hours before the play first opened at the Covent Garden Theatre on

the 15th March 1773, *She Stoops to Conquer* is a both a comedy of errors and a stunning, romantic farce acknowledged as one of the wittiest cross matches in the canon of restoration literature. Nearly 250 years later, it still plays regularly to enthralled audiences all over the world. Oliver Goldsmith has given us a rarity – a comedy that, like Shakespeare’s comedies, has withstood the test of time.

Characters: The playing ages are for guidance only

Kate Hardcastle (20 - 30): a wonderfully witty and radiant young lady. She’s obedient to her father but quite capable of bending the rules to get her way.

Charles Marlow (20 – 30): a well-educated young man who is incredibly sheepish around ladies of his own class but more than makes up for it around women of lower standing.

Tony Lumpkin (20 - 35): The mischievous, fun-loving son of Mrs Hardcastle and Kate’s stepbrother. Fond of beer and a good joke, Tony’s trick on Charles sets up the play’s main plot.

Mr Hardcastle (50 - 65): a kind but irascible country gentleman who would like to introduce his daughter to his old friend’s scholarly son with the prospect of marriage. A believer in old-fashioned manners and politeness.

Mrs Hardcastle (50 - 65): Tony’s dotting, over-protective mother, she is almost the exact opposite of her husband. Often over the top and far-fetched, she provides some of the play’s biggest comedy moments!

George Hastings (20 - 30): Charles’s friend and travelling companion, George is supportive to Charles and in love with Constance.

Constance Neville (20 - 30): Mrs Hardcastle’s niece and ward. Unwillingly engaged to her cousin, Tony Lumpkin, Constance – fortuitously - is also the heiress to a large fortune.

Sir Charles Marlow (50 - 65): Mr Hardcastle’s old friend from London, he is also the father of the younger Charles Marlow.

Diggory (35 – 65): The Hardcastle’s long-serving retainer

Maid (any age): Maid to the Hardcastle family

Landlord (40 – 70): Local publican, Runs the Three Pigeons Inn close to the Hardcastle’s house and a favourite haunt of Tony Lumpkin.

Additionally, there are also various servants, drinking companions, and other minor characters of various ages that would also need to be played by a small ensemble of actors who might also double up as stage crew.

Some singing and dancing may – no, will – be involved! In addition to the cast, I will also be looking for a choreographer if anyone would like to put themselves forward! Experience and knowledge of country dancing would be useful!

The full text of the play is available [here](#) if you would like to read it before the auditions. Some audition pieces for each of the main characters should be made available via this webpage soon. In the meantime, if you would like more information about the play, the roles available, or the rehearsal schedule then please contact Mike Darbon, the director, at michael@thedarbons.com or on 07802 914917.

Rehearsals will begin in May, so please remember to let me know if you have any holidays booked across the rehearsal period when you come to audition!

Mike Darbon