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She Stoops to Conquer – A Review

Author: *White Rabbit* Team

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Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Instituto Chileno Británico de Cultura, the British Commonwealth Community Society organized a one-day only production of Oliver Goldsmith’s comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* in English. The event took place in the Aula Magna of the Universidad de Los Andes on the 27th of April of the present year. On this occasion, Lighthouse Theatre Ltd. visited Chile as part of their Latin American tour, which includes Argentina, Uruguay and the Welsh Patagonia as some of their upcoming destinations.

Last April, Oliver Goldsmith’s comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* was brought to the Chilean stage by four accomplished British actors – Robert Rowe, Llinos Daniel, Sonia Beck and Adrian Metcalfe –, all of whom played more than one role, managing spectacularly to make the play even more of a delightful romp. *She Stoops to Conquer* – adapted by Jonathan Lamb for this production and directed by Derek Cobby – is a classic comedy of errors: Mr. Hardcastle plans to marry his daughter Kate to Charles Marlow, who, in his turn, cannot bring himself to woo women of his own status. Through the mischievous intercession of Mrs. Hardcastle’s good-for-nothing son Tony Lumpkin, Marlow mistakes the Hardcastle household for an inn, his host for its innkeeper, and Kate for its barmaid. Hilarity and confusion ensue, as Kate “stoops” to play her lower-class, Marlow unwittingly falls in love with his prospective intended, and Mr. Hardcastle strives to understand the whole muddled situation.

With minimal sets and props, Lighthouse Theatre Ltd. effectively evoked the atmosphere of the late Georgian era. The costumes, which were brought directly from Wales and shared the

simplicity of the scenery, hung on stage throughout the whole performance, enabling the audience to witness the moment in which the actors changed into different characters. This innovative approach added even more to the suspense of the play, as the spectators looked forward to seeing which character the actors were going to play next, all the while waiting for the general confusion of the plot to unravel. The quick wardrobe changes never became a source of interruption, and the performance flowed seamlessly and coherently throughout the hour-and-a-half masterful adaptation of the original two-and-a-half-hour play.

With an outstanding cast, all of whom offered top-notch performances, *She Stoops to Conquer* kept the members of the audience tied to their seats and laughing into stitches at the same time. The production also served as a wonderful occasion to bring together people who are specifically interested in British culture or involved in its community and newcomers who were desirous to learn more about it. Let us hope that this remarkable production will open the way for many more of the same quality in the near future.