

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Olivia F. Haas, Director of PR & Marketing
haaso@signature-theatre.org
(703) 820-9771 ext 103

**SIGNATURE THEATRE ANNOUNCES ITS 2006/2007 SEASON,
THE FIRST IN ITS NEW TWO-THEATRE COMPLEX IN THE
VILLAGE AT SHIRLINGTON**

- **Sondheim — Signature’s signature**
- **Classic musical**
- **World premiere musical**
- **Female British Invasion play festival**
- **Four-part Cabaret series**
- **Two Special Events and Symphonic Concert series**
- **Signature moves into new \$12.5 million complex**
- **Names unveiled for the building’s two new theater spaces**

eric schaeffer
artistic director

sam sweet
managing director

Arlington, VA — Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer is pleased to announce Signature Theatre’s **2006/2007 Season** — an ambitious and moving, passionate and playful year of reinvented classic musicals, world premieres, and innovative plays. As audiences have been anxiously anticipating, the season opens with *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim’s delightfully twisted version of Grimm’s fairy tales. The standard by which all other musicals are measured, Lerner and Loewe’s *My Fair Lady*, follows Sondheim’s contemporary classic. The third musical of the season is the world premiere of *Saving Aimee* based on the astonishing epic life of evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. Signature continues to break new ground with *The Female British Invasion* play festival — two innovative new works from Britain’s brightest young playwrights: the emotionally-charged *Crave* by Sarah Kane and the world premiere of a Signature Theatre commission by Bathsheba Doran based on the life of *Susanna Cox*, the first woman sentenced to death in Pennsylvania.

Also being presented during the 2006/2007 Season is a **four-part Cabaret series** and **two Special Events**: Martin Moran’s heart-wrenching one-man show, *The Tricky Part* based on his critically-acclaimed biography of the same title, and as part of the city-wide Shakespeare Festival in 2007 a presentation of the internationally-acclaimed Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv’s production of *Hamlet*, a strikingly contemporary version performed in Hebrew with simultaneous English translation. Signature also introduces **Symphonic Signature**, a series of limited engagement concerts around the DC-area.

This summer Signature’s staff moves into the new \$12.5 million two-theater complex in the Village at Shirlington, and in September the doors open to audiences. “I can hardly believe it’s almost here — our first season in the new building,” said Eric Schaeffer. “The **2006/2007 Season** opens our new home in true Signature fashion, with the first show of course being Sondheim. I’m excited to get my hands on *Into the Woods*. Perhaps what I’m most excited about is what the new space allows us to do with the production that we couldn’t do in the old garage. *My Fair Lady* is an undeniable classic that will be done in distinct Signature-style like audiences have never experienced. I’m thrilled that Signature’s doing the world premiere of *Saving Aimee* — a musical I’ve been helping Kathie Lee Gifford develop. We did a workshop production in New

3806 s. four mile run dr.
arlington, va 22206

administration
703.820.9771

box office/tickets.com
800.955.5566

fax
703.820.7790

ww.signature-theatre.org

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York last fall, and the story and music are enthralling. I'm also proud to introduce the *Female British Invasion* play festival to DC audiences. *Crave* by Sarah Kane, currently one of Europe's most widely produced contemporary playwrights, coupled with the world premiere of Bathsheba's *Susanna Cox* is a powerful literary combo. With all the excitement surrounding the opening of the new building, it's sure to be an unforgettable season!"

The new building, with two flexible black box theater spaces, gives Signature the ability to add unique presentations by artists that would normally not be seen in the D.C. area, such as *The Tricky Part* and Cameri Theatre's production of *Hamlet*. Signature is also able to move the Cabaret series, currently held in the lobby, into the new, even more intimate, 99-seat theater so shows can be experienced in true cabaret-style. Cabaret table-seating, drinks, and food from Signature's expanded full-service bar creates a night-club atmosphere.

In addition to the season announcement, Signature also unveils the names of the two new theater spaces: the 299-seat mainstage has been named **THE MAX** in honor of donors **Maxine Isaacs and James A. Johnson**, and the more intimate secondstage space is **THE ARK** in honor of donors **Arlene R. and Robert P. Kogod**. "We're especially grateful to the lead donors to our \$7.5 million capital campaign," said Managing Director **Sam Sweet**, "and we're honored that the two theaters in the new complex will bear their names in recognition of their generous support."

THE 2006/2007 SEASON

Sondheim: Signature's Signature

INTO THE WOODS

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by James Lapine

Directed by Eric Schaeffer

September 5 – October 8, 2006 in THE MAX

The show audiences have been anxiously anticipating! The well-known tales of Cinderella, Rapunzel, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Little Red Ridinghood are combined with an original story of a Baker and his Wife who desperately want a child, but must remove the curse standing in their way. As the characters work to live "Happily Ever After," they face consequences traditionally ignored in fairy tales. "*Into the Woods* simply sings ... you float into an enchanted world" (*The New York Times*). Presented in distinct Signature-style with a cast of Signature favorites, *Into the Woods* will entrance audiences with its delightfully tangled telling of Grimm's fairy tales. Eric Schaeffer directs his twelfth Sondheim musical to bring the grandest opening to Signature's new home.

Classic Musical

MY FAIR LADY

Book and Lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner

Music by Frederick Loewe

Adapted from George Bernard Shaw's play and Gabriel Pascal's motion picture *Pygmalion*

November 7 – December 10, 2006 in THE MAX

"Probably the greatest musical of all time" (*Daily Telegraph*), *My Fair Lady* is the standard by which all others are measured. Henry Higgins, an opinionated linguistics professor and confirmed bachelor, makes a wager with a colleague that within six months he can transform a cockney flower seller, Eliza Doolittle, into

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a high society lady. He wins the bet, but doesn't bargain on the profound effect she has on his life. With such musical favorites as "Rain in Spain," "I Could Have Danced All Night," and "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" it's no wonder everyone, not just Higgins, falls in love with Eliza. Signature Theatre brings new life and a unique vision to this Lerner and Loewe classic.

World Premiere Musical

SAVING AIMEE

Book and Lyrics by Kathie Lee Gifford
 Music by David Pomeranz and David Friedman
 Directed by Eric Schaeffer

January 23 – February 25, 2007 in THE MAX

Long before Gloria Steinem there was a feminist who stood up against a male-dominated religious society. Long before O.J. Simpson there was a famous defendant in the trial of the century. Long before Madonna there was a free spirit who ignored the sexual mores of her day and married three times. And long before Marilyn Monroe there was a beloved American treasure who mysteriously died from an overdose of barbiturates. Based on the life of Aimee Semple McPherson, *Saving Aimee* is the story of one woman's life from her humble upbringing in a "Salvation Army" family to her ascension as charismatic founder of the Four Square Gospel Church. She changed the face of the pulpit. But was she a true woman of God or just one hell of a woman?

THE FEMALE BRITISH INVASION:

Contemporary Drama

CRAVE

By Sarah Kane
October 3 – December 3, 2006 in THE ARK

Set in an unidentifiable city from which voices and images spring, *Crave* is a dramatized deconstruction of the human mind under the pressures of love, loss, and longing. Four nameless characters tell their tales of disintegration and isolation. "Their dialogues meet, converge and move apart with balletic grace, with caustically humorous as well as distressing consequences" (*Time Out*). A stunningly poetic and visceral theater experience, *Crave*'s powerful — and often times shocking — language forges an immediate, intense bond between audience and performer. British playwright Sarah Kane was hailed as a potential heir to such existential playwrights as Samuel Beckett and Edward Bond prior to her untimely death at the age of 28.

World Premiere Commission

SUSANNA COX

By Bathsheba Doran
 Directed by Eric Schaeffer
April 3 – 29, 2007 in THE MAX

Susanna Cox, a Mennonite accused of infanticide in 1809, was the first woman to be hanged in the state of Pennsylvania. In this new play based on the events surrounding her hanging, nineteenth century America comes to life, and looks surprisingly familiar. British playwright Bathsheba Doran moved to New York on a Fulbright Scholarship and is currently a writer-in-residence at Juilliard.

THE 2006/2007 CABARET SERIES

An extension of Signature's commitment to musical theater, the Cabaret series provides a truly distinct entertainment experience. Next season, this four-part series will be performed in true cabaret-style in **THE ARK**. Signature's Cabaret acts allow the rare opportunity to enjoy your favorite performers — the brightest artists from Washington and beyond. Join them for special evenings of popular show tunes, jazz numbers, and powerful ballads intertwined with storytelling.

The upcoming season includes *Holi-Divas* (**December 13 - 23, 2006**), holiday favorites belted out by the area's most popular divas and *Singing Shakespeare* (**March 7- 10, 2007**), an evening of great songs from American musical's based on the writings of Shakespeare, such as *West Side Story*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *The Boys from Syracuse* presented as part of the Shakespeare in Washington Festival. Two more original acts (**September 13 - 16, 2006** and **January 17 - 20, 2007**) are still to be announced.

THE 2006/2007 SPECIAL EVENTS

American Premiere

HAMLET

By William Shakespeare

Hebrew adaptation by T. Carmi

Directed by Omri Nitzan

Produced by Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv

Performed in Hebrew with screened simultaneous English translation

Presented as part of the Shakespeare in Washington Festival

March 6 – 11, 2007 in THE MAX

Hamlet, perhaps the greatest classical play of all time, is seldom produced in Israel — only once a decade on average. A story of a young man facing the world of adults, Hamlet rapidly matures in the course of the play learning the “facts of life” along the way. The production is presented in a unique configuration that enables the action to take place on various stages around and among the audience who are seated on revolving swivel chairs. The actors transform the monologues into a live dialogue with the audience, while maintaining their human, lyrical, Shakespearean depth. Praised in *Plays International*, Cameri Theatre's production was called, “undoubtedly the best thing the Israeli theatre has seen in many years ... Never has there been such a tight, riveting and invigorating production on our stages, a production that takes a classic, turns it into a meaningful contemporary play without stripping it of its real power and meaning.”

Washington, D.C. Premiere

THE TRICKY PART

Written and Performed by Martin Moran

Directed by Seth Barrish

April 10 – May 6, 2007 in THE ARK

A true story of sexuality, spirituality, and the mystery of human experience, *The Tricky Part* is one of the most heralded one-man plays in recent memory. Between the ages of 12 and 15, the author had a sexual relationship with an older man, a counselor he met at a Catholic boys camp. Now 42 and an established New York actor, he has transformed his story into a riveting, often funny, and always surprising journey through the complexities of Catholicism, desire, and human trespass. Called “a translucent memoir of a play...shattering,” by *The New York Times*, the premiere received a 2004 Obie Award and two Drama Desk nominations, including Outstanding Play.

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SYMPHONIC SIGNATURE:

One-Night-Only Event

LOVE NOTES

Concert with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

February 10, 2007 at RACHEL M. SCHLESINGER HALL

In a unique collaboration, Signature presents a one-night-only concert of musical theater love ballads performed by an ensemble of favorites from the Signature stage backed by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. Entering its 60th season, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra is Northern Virginia’s premiere fully-professional orchestra led by Music Director Kim Allen Kluge.

Washington, D.C. Premiere

SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD

By Jason Robert Brown

Directed by Eric Schaeffer

May 16 and 17, 2007 at STRATHMORE CONCERT HALL

For the first time, Signature performs at the new Concert Hall at the Music Center at Strathmore located in Bethesda, MD. Signature presents a limited engagement run of *Songs for a New World*, the revue that launched the career of Tony® Award winner Jason Robert Brown and has since become the stuff of theater legend.

All shows, performers and dates are subject to change.

Signature Theatre

Signature Theatre is a non-profit professional theater dedicated to producing contemporary plays and musicals and to the development of new work. Now in its 16th season under Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer, Signature has been nominated for 209 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater and has been honored with 42 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005 and Outstanding Play in 1999. Signature Theatre is a member of the Theatre Communications Group, The League of Washington Theatres, the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington, the Arlington Arts Alliance, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

Contact Info

Tickets.com (800) 955-5566

Administration (703) 820-9771

Fax (703) 820-7790

Website www.signature-theatre.org

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