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SIGNATURE THEATRE PRESENTS ORIGINAL PLAY *AFTERSHOCK* PERFORMED AND TECHED BY STUDENTS FROM ARLINGTON'S WAKEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Arlington Students in *Signature in the Schools* Work with Professional Playwright, Director, and Designers

Public Performances of *Aftershock* Offered at Signature on Monday, February 16 and 23, at 7:30pm

Signature Theatre's Education Program *Signature in the Schools* will present Wakefield High School students performing *Aftershock*, a world premiere work by playwright Joe Calarco. A set of interconnected stories, the play deals with young people forced to rebuild their lives in the "aftershock" of disasters: the Holocaust of World War II, the civil war in the Congo, Hurricane Katrina, and a personal loss suffered by a student in Northern Virginia.

The Wakefield students participating in *Aftershock* include actors Yasmeen Bioragee, Irene Casey, Jamé Jackson, John Morgan, Jocelyn Magsumbol, Dee Mostoasele, and Brenda Nascimento. The stage managers are Kiersten Morgan and Amanda Rodriguez. The stage crew is Leah Buenaventura, Johanna Garay, Maya Giacobbe, Alexis Lodsun, Sarah Peterson, and Diana Valle.

Public performances will take place on Monday, February 16 and 23 at 7:30 pm at Signature's MAX Theatre. For tickets to the February 16 special donor performance please contact Erin Harms in the Development Office at (571) 527-1827 or harmse@signature-theatre.org. For tickets to the free final performance on February 23 please call the Signature Box Office at (703) 820-9971.

The annual production of an original play is one of the *Signature in the Schools* program's key components. Students are given the unique opportunity to be part of the process of developing a new play with a professional playwright. They are able to work with a professional director and professional designers on the production. In addition to their public performances, the student actors also perform five matinees at Signature for their peers from high schools across the region. Each student attending a performance receives an in-depth study guide, researched and

written by Signature's education director / stage director Marcia Gardner. Most also receive classroom visits by Gardner where students explore the worlds of history and theatre and have the chance to rehearse and perform a scene from the play.

For *Aftershock*, the student cast came together last December, spending a week with Joe Calarco working on the original script. Joined by professional actor Michael Grew and Emily Johnson, a Signature Apprentice from Yorktown HS, the cast read through the play offering their responses to the characters, questions about the story, and suggestions for ways to clarify and strengthen the overall theme of the piece. Based on input from the cast, Calarco reworked individual scenes and completely rewrote the ending of the show. In January, the cast was joined by the student stage managers and stage crew to hear a reading of the final version of *Aftershock* and begin rehearsals leading up to February 16 opening. Working with the students are stage director Marcia Gardner, assistant stage director Alexander Strain, costume designer Guy Bailey, lighting designer Mark Lanks, sound designer Matt Rowe, props master Eileen Garcia, and stage manager Kerry Epstein.

Signature Theatre's education program *Signature in the Schools* uses theater to open the minds and broaden the viewpoints of local teens while engaging them in a positive and creative experience. The program also reinforces the Virginia's Standard of Learning curriculum. A recipient of The Washington Post's prestigious Community Service Award, Signature in the Schools reaches approximately 750 students annually through theatre workshops, in-class discussions, an after-school program and the production of an original play.

This season's donors to *Signature in the Schools* include the Arlington Commission for the Arts, Arlington Community Foundation, Clark-Winchcole Foundation, ExxonMobil, John Gunning, William Hooper, Judy Klevins, Mardi Gras Fund, Marpat Foundation, Mars Foundation, Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Northern Virginia Community Foundation, Northrop Grumman, Sprint, STG International, Venable LLP, Virginia Commission for the Arts, Wachovia, and Washington Forrest Foundation.

ABOUT SIGNATURE

Under the leadership of co-founder and Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer and Managing Director Maggie Boland, Signature is a non-profit professional theater company dedicated to producing contemporary musicals and plays, reinventing classic musicals, and developing new work. To date, Signature has presented over 25 world premiere productions and is renowned for combining Broadway-quality productions with intimate playing spaces. In addition to the finest talent from the DC metropolitan area and New York, Signature has been a home to such theater luminaries as John Kander and Fred Ebb, Cameron Mackintosh, Terrence McNally, and the company's signature, Stephen Sondheim. Signature has been nominated for 234 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater and has been honored with 59 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, and 2006, and Outstanding Play in 1999.

Directions

Signature Theatre is just 12 minutes from downtown Washington, DC in Arlington's Shirlington Village. The new theater complex is located at 4200 Campbell Avenue (22206) off I-395 at the Shirlington exit. After the exit, blue Signature signs mark the way to the Theatre. Free parking is available in two adjacent public garages. Please note that Campbell Avenue is a new street and some GPS online mapping systems do not yet recognize Signature Theatre's address. For directions visit www.signature-theatre.org.

Contact Information

Ticketmaster (703) 573-SEAT (7328)
Signature Administration (571) 527-1860
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