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January 31, 2007

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SIGNATURE ANNOUNCES PARTIAL CASTING FOR THE WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL *SAVING AIMEE* WITH BOOK AND LYRICS BY KATHIE LEE GIFFORD

- Two time Tony® nominee Carolee Carmello stars as Aimee Semple McPherson

*Arlington, VA — 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? Signature's Artistic Director*

*Eric Schaeffer directs the world premiere production of **Saving Aimee** starring two-time Tony® nominee **Carolee Carmello** as Aimee Semple McPherson. **Saving Aimee** runs April 10 – May 13, 2007, at Signature's new \$16 million building in **The MAX Theatre**. Tickets are on sale now at **Tickets.com** (800) 955-5566 or online at **www.signature-theatre.org**.*

*"I'm thrilled Signature's doing the world premiere of **Saving Aimee**," said **Eric Schaeffer**. "The story and music are enthralling and it's a project close to my heart — one I've been helping **Kathie Lee Gifford** develop for a couple of years now. In 2005, we were lucky enough to do a workshop production in New York with **Carolee Carmello** and she's truly phenomenal in this role. She plays Aimee Semple McPherson from the age of 17 until about her late 30's. **Carolee's** ability to do this is a director's dream. Her voice combined with **Florence Lacey** and **E. Faye Butler's** are going to blow the roof off of the theater!"*

"I'm so excited to have another chance to work on Saving Aimee," said Carolee Carmello. "This woman's life was unbelievable... she was so brave, so strong, so passionate, so tortured. It's a fascinating story and I'm thrilled to bring some of her life to the stage."

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Carolee Carmello is currently starring as Donna Sheridan in *Mamma Mia!* on Broadway. Other Broadway roles include Gabrielle in *Lestat* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations); Lucille Frank in *Parade* (Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award); Kate in *Kiss Me, Kate*; Marguerite in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*; Abigail Adams in *1776*; Oolie in *City of Angels*; Cordelia in *Falsettos*; and Ms. Pennywise in *Urinetown*. She's appeared Off-Broadway in *Elegies*, *A Class Act*, *John and Jen*, *Das Barbecü*, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, *Vagina Monologues*, and *Hello Again* (Obie Award for Outstanding Performance) and in the national tours of *Chess*, *Big River*, *Falsettos*, and *Les Misérables*. TV credits include *Maple La Marsh* on "Remember W.E.N.N." (SAG Award nomination), "Frasier," "Ed," and "Law & Order." *Saving Aimee* marks her Signature debut.

Joining Carmello are **Florence Lacey** as Mrs. Kennedy, **E. Faye Butler** as Emma Jo, and **Ed Dixon** as Brother Bob/Mr. Kennedy.

Florence Lacey makes her sixth appearance at Signature where she's appeared in *The Rhythm Club*, *The Gospel According to Fishman*, *Follies*, *One Red Flower* and *Nevermore*. She worked with Schaeffer and Gifford on the Off-Broadway opening of *Under the Bridge* as well as the workshop production of *Saving Aimee*. She starred as Fantine in the Broadway company of *Les Misérables* and also performed the title role of *Evita* over 3,000 times on Broadway and in touring companies around the world. She won the Theater World Award for her Broadway debut as Irene Malloy in *Hello, Dolly!*, and starred opposite Joel Grey in the Jerry Herman musical *The Grand Tour*. Off-Broadway, she played the title role in *Sweet Feet*, Penelope in *Elizabeth and Essex* with Estelle Parsons, and starred in the Manhattan Theater Club production of *Styne After Styne*, a tribute to composer Jule Styne. She toured nationally in the John Houseman production of *John Brown's Body* starring Rock Hudson, and in regional theaters played Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Julie Jordan in *Carousel*, and Gypsy Rose Lee in *Gypsy*. Lacey also won the Hollywood Drama-Logue Award for her performance of *Evita* in Los Angeles, the Pittsburgh Drama League Award for her work at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, and the New York MAC Award for her performance at *Rainbow and Stars* with Jerry Herman.

E. Faye Butler returns to Signature where she starred in *The Gospel According to Fishman*. Other credits include *Nunsense* Off-Broadway and tours of *Mamma Mia!*, *Nunsense*, *Nunsense 2*, *Ain't*

Misbehavin', Hair, Dinah Was, and Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope. Regionally she's been seen at Arena Stage in Ain't Misbehavin' and Polk County; Centerstage in Once on this Island, Ain't Misbehavin' and Dinah Was; The Goodman Theatre and Pasadena Playhouse in Purlie; Victory Gardens in Blue Sonata; and Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Crumbs from the Table of Joy, among numerous others. She's performed blues and jazz songs with Washington Ballet at Teatro de Mayo in Havana, Cuba. Butler is the recipient of five Jefferson Awards, After Dark Award, Excellence in the Arts Award, two BTAA Awards, John Barrymore Award, RAMI Award, three Helen Hayes nominations, and an Ovation Award nomination.

Ed Dixon's Broadway credits include General Wetjoen in *The Iceman Cometh*, Thenardier in *Les Misérables*, Rageneau in *Cyrano*, Cardinal Richelieu in *The Three Musketeers*, and Ozzy in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. He's been seen Off-Broadway as the lead in *Shylock* (Drama Desk nomination) and as Max in the tour of *Sunset Boulevard* (Joseph Jefferson Nomination). *Saving Aimee* is his Signature debut.

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The ensemble includes Doug Bowles, James Gardiner, Larry Hylton, Ellen Marsh, Diego Prieto, Tammy Roberts, Meghan Touey and Harry A. Winter.

Complete casting announcement is still to be released.

DETAILS

SAVING AIMEE

Book and Lyrics by Kathie Lee Gifford

Music by David Pomeranz and David Friedman

Direction & Design

<i>Director</i>	Eric Schaeffer	<i>Set Designer</i>	Walt Spangler
<i>Choreographer</i>	Christopher d'Amboise	<i>Costume Designer</i>	Anne Kennedy
<i>Musical Director</i>	Michael Rice	<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Chris Lee
<i>Music Supervisor</i>	Paul Raiman	<i>Sound Designer</i>	TBA
<i>Orchestrations</i>	Bruce Coughlin	<i>Stage Manager</i>	Kerry Epstein

Schedule

April 10 – May 13, 2007

Press Date: Sunday, April 22

Show Times: Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday and Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Exceptions: There is no performance on April 24 and no matinee on April 28.

Tickets

Tickets are \$37 to \$63 and are sold through Tickets.com (800) 955-5566 and online at www.signature-theatre.org. Discounts are available for students, seniors (60+), military and

groups of ten or more. The Signature Box Office is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and during performances.

ABOUT SIGNATURE

Signature is a non-profit professional theater dedicated to producing contemporary plays and musicals, reinventing classic musicals, and developing new work. To date, Signature has presented over 20 world premiere productions. The works of Stephen Sondheim, however, remain Signature's signature. Signature is renowned for combining Broadway-quality productions with an intimate playing space, and using live orchestras with unamplified performers. In addition to the finest talent from the D.C. metro-area, Signature has been a home to such luminaries as Cameron Mackintosh, Stephen Sondheim, Terrence McNally, John Kander and Fred Ebb. Now in its 17th season under Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer, Signature has been nominated for 209 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater (18 nominations in 2006) and has been honored with 50 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2006, and Outstanding Play in 1999. Signature was also recognized by the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation for "its artistic vision and commitment to the support and development of musical theatre artists." Signature was recently awarded a \$1 million grant from

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The Shen Family Foundation for the creation of The American Musical Voices Project, a two-pronged program consisting of Musical Theatre Composer Grants and Musical Theatre Leadership Awards. The Composer Grants support the commissioning and presentation of three emerging composers' new musicals over the course of the next four theater seasons. Commissions were awarded to Ricky Ian Gordon, Michael John LaChiusa, and Joseph Thalken. The Leadership Awards, presented in May 2006, recognized Bruce Coughlin, Adam Guettel, Audra McDonald, and Ted Sperling for their extraordinary influence on and contribution to the advancement of new musical theater. In November, Signature moved into its new \$16 million two-theater complex in Shirlington Village with the grand opening scheduled for January 2007. Signature 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, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Washington, DC Convention and Tourism Corporation.

Directions

Signature Theatre is located just five miles from downtown Washington, D.C. at 2800 South Stafford Street in Arlington, VA, immediately off I-395 at the Shirlington exit.

Contact Info

Tickets.com (800) 955-5566

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Administration (571) 527-1860

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www.signature-theatre.org

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