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SIGNATURE INAUGURATES NEW 99-SEAT ARK THEATRE WITH PRODUCTION OF SARAH KANE'S CRAVE DIRECTED BY JEREMY SKIDMORE

*Arlington, VA — Signature inaugurates its new 99-seat ARK Theatre with a production of Sarah Kane's **Crave**. 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, visceral theater experience, **Crave's** powerful — and often 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. Making his Signature directing debut is **Jeremy Skidmore**. **Crave** runs **January 30 – April 1, 2007, at the new Signature building in The ARK Theatre. Tickets are on sale now at Tickets.com (800) 955-5566 or online at www.signature-theatre.org.***

*"I was drawn to Sarah Kane's script for its poetic lyricism and I selected Jeremy to direct this production because he head's one of the most exciting young theater company's in town," explained **Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer**. "Theater Alliance, of which Jeremy is the Artistic Director, reminds me of a young Signature — they are brash and bold with a strong aesthetic. He was the perfect match for this script — a play dealing with subject matters such as pain, death, love, sexual identity — and it's written with no setting or stage directions."*

Playwright **Sarah Kane** was born in Essex on February 3, 1971. As a teenager she became involved with local drama groups and directed Chekhov and Shakespeare while still in school. She went on to Bristol University to pursue a degree in drama, with all intentions of becoming an actress. Sarah stood out as a talented actress and director, but somewhere down the line she began writing instead. The first substantial work she produced was *Sick*, a series of three monologues concerning rape, eating disorders, and sexual identity. After graduating from Bristol University, Kane went to Birmingham University to take a playwriting course during which time she started writing *Blasted*, a

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complex play about violence from the perspective of both victim and perpetrator. British newspapers called *Blasted* “a disgusting feast of filth” and a work “devoid of intellectual and artistic merit.” However, established dramatists such as Harold Pinter turned on the reviewers, telling them they were “out of their depth” and that *Blasted* was simply too complex for them. Kane went on to write four more plays — *Cleansed*, *Phaedra’s Love*, *Skin*, and *Crave*. After completing *Crave*, Kane admitted herself for depression to the Maudsley Hospital in south London. After a brief treatment, she recovered in time to enjoy *Crave*’s critical triumph. Her recovery was short-lived and the depression returned. In January 1999, after completing *4.48 Psychosis*, she swallowed 150 anti-depressants and 50 sleeping pills. Her flat-mate found her in time and rushed her to King’s College Hospital. Two days later she was left alone for 90 minutes and was later discovered hanging from her shoelaces in a nearby bathroom. She was just 28 years old.

Today Kane has become one of the most widely produced playwrights in Europe. In Germany alone there were 17 productions of Kane’s plays being mounted in 2003 — a remarkable number for a playwright who had written only five plays.

DIRECTION & DESIGN

“As much as I tried in preparation for rehearsal to begin, I could not find a linear framework to make this script work in my mind,” said Jeremy Skidmore. “But upon hearing it read aloud by the cast for the first time it became clear to me that the experience was the moment when a person’s standing on the edge of a building and all the thoughts, bits of conversations, life moments that would be rushing through their minds before deciding to jump.”

Jeremy Skidmore makes his Signature directorial debut with *Crave*. He is the Artistic Director of Theater Alliance in Washington, DC where he’s directed *Gross Indecency*, *Mary’s Wedding*, *Tales from Ovid*, *Slaughter City*, and *Painted Alice*. Other local credits include *After the Flood* for Rorschach Theatre’s *The Learned Ladies* for Catalyst Theater Company’ and *The Gingham Dog* for African Continuum Theatre Company. Regionally he’s worked on *Speed the Plow* for The Magellan Project in LA, *The Indian Wants the Bronx* for the 14th Street Playhouse in Atlanta, and the workshop of *Painted Alice* for Sonnet Rep in New York.

*Joining Skidmore are four-time Helen Hayes Award-winning Scenic Designer **Tony Cisek** (Signature: *Donna Q.*, *Otabenga*; Ford’s Theatre: *Jitney*; Round House: *A Murder*, *A Mystery*, and *A Marriage*), Costume Designer **Kate Turner-Walker** (Round House: *The Little Prince*, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*; Folger Theatre: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Studio: *This is How it Goes*, *Red Light Winter*, *Fat Pig*); Helen Hayes Award-winning Lighting Designer **Dan Covey** (Signature: *Donna Q.*; Theater Alliance: *_ of a Mass for St. Vivian*, *The Monument*; Folger: *Much Ado About Nothing*; Rep Stage: *Hamlet*), and Helen Hayes Award-winning Sound Designer **Mark Anduss** (Signature: *Shooting in Madrid*, *No Way to Treat a Lady*; Woolly Mammoth: *Starving*, *Our Lady of 121st Street*; Theater Alliance: *_ of a Mass for St. Vivian*, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, *Mary’s Wedding*, *Painted Alice*).*

CAST

The nameless characters are denoted as “A,” “B,” “C,” and “M” in the script. The four-person cast are **Kathleen Coons** (Theater Alliance: *Mary’s Wedding* (Helen Hayes nomination), *Two Rooms*, *You are Here*, *Painted Alice*, *Tales from Ovid*, *The Dispute*; Olney: *Therese Raquin*, *The Rivals*, *Tartuffe*, *Light Up The Sky*), **Deborah Hazlett** (Signature: *The Blue Room*; Everyman Theatre: *Candida*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Sideman*, *Proof*; Woolly Mammoth: the US premiere of *Bug*), **Joe Isenberg** (Marts Festival: *Twelfth Night*; Open Stage Theater: *Camino Real*), and **John Lescault** (Signature: *Angels in America* (Parts 1 & 2), *Available Light*, *Shooting in Madrid*, *Melville Slept Here*; Round House: *A Prayer for Owen Meany*; Shakespeare: *The Winter’s Tale*, *Richard II*, *Don Carlos*).

DETAILS

CRAVE

By Sarah Kane

Cast

A	John Lescault
B	Joe Isenberg
C	Kathleen Coons
M	Deborah Hazlett

Direction & Design

Director	Jeremy Skidmore	Lighting Designer	Dan Covey
Scenic Designer	Tony Cisek	Sound Designer	Mark Anduss
Costume Designer	Kate Turner-Walker	Production Stage Manager	Roy A. Gross

Schedule

January 30 – April 1, 2007

Press Date: Sunday, February 4, 2007

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 February 6.

Tickets

Tickets are \$33 to \$55 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 DC 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 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 in 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, DC 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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www.signature-theatre.org