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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 8, 2006**

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**SIGNATURE PRESENTS EAST COAST PREMIERE  
OF *THE SEX HABITS OF AMERICAN WOMEN*  
BY JULIE MARIE MYATT**

**“A clever new comedy.” — *San Francisco Chronicle***

Arlington, VA — *The Kinsey Report* meets *Desperate Housewives* in this voyeuristic peep during the era of pointy bras and pompadours. While a respected male psychotherapist in the ‘50s is writing a handbook on female sexuality, his wife of 47 years and their unmarried daughter are conducting their own “research.” Juxtaposed against this mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century story is a videotaped interview with a contemporary single mom — a feisty product of women’s lib. Bridging the 50 years between these moments in social history, these intertwined stories take a hard and hilarious look at the unexpected repercussions of the sexual revolution. ***The Sex Habits of American Women* by Julie Marie Myatt runs March 28 – May 7, 2006, at Signature Theatre. Tickets are on sale now! Call Tickets.com at (800) 955-5566 or visit [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).**

*The Sex Habits of American Women* was inspired by a real study of the same title published in 1951 by Fritz Wittels, M.D. Playwright **Julie Marie Myatt** came across the book in a used bookstore in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and immediately knew she wanted to do something with it, just not what, exactly. In an interview with the Guthrie Theater she further described the impetus for the script, “I held onto [the book] — originally I thought I’d create some kind of weird documentary, or mockumentary, because it was so ridiculous. The book is just *absurd*. It wasn’t *trying* to be absurd — but it was so serious in its attitude that this was a tell-all analysis of what the American woman thinks, needs, and feels about sex. It made no sense, but was so certain of its own validity. So it just sat on my desk for about two years, until I finally got the idea for Agnes Tittels, the woman married to the author, and thought: what if she was having a sexual awakening while he was writing the book? And I gave them a daughter, to make things more complicated. Once I found Agnes, I had a way into the story. The play contains a lot of my questions about the longevity of marriage, and love, and how complicated it is. We still have a culture that feeds us this idea that love can be perfect forever, and yet we have facts that prove that wrong. For me, it’s all about engaging the audience by way of questions; I hope that the play keeps those alive and doesn’t try to answer them.”

*The Sex Habits of American Women* first premiered at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco in October, 2003, and received productions at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and with Synchronicity Performance Group in Atlanta. Myatt’s work has also been seen at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Cherry Lane, LAByrinth Theater Co., and A.S.K Theater Projects, among others. Her published scripts include her ten-minute play *Lift and Bang* in “30 Ten-Minute Plays by 2 Actors from Actors Theatre of Louisville,” *What He Sent* in “The Best American Short Plays, 2000-2001,” and *Cowbird* in the anthology “Breaking Ground.” She received a Walt Disney Studios Screenwriting Fellowship, a Jerome Fellowship at the Playwrights’ Center, and a McKnight Advancement Grant. As a participant in the Guthrie New Play Project funded by the Bush Foundation, she traveled to Cambodia and was commissioned to write the play *Boats on a River*. Additional plays include *August is a Thin Girl*, *The Pink Factor*, *Alice in the Badlands*, *49 Days to the Sun*, and *My Wandering Boy*.

— MORE —

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## DIRECTION & DESIGN

New to the Signature stage is director **Michael Baron**, who has directed over 35 productions across the country. Most recently he wrote and directed the world premiere comedy *The Whore of Sheridan Square* at La MaMa E.T.C. in New York based on the life and works of legendary Ridiculous Theatrical Company founder, Charles Ludlam (to be published in the anthology “Plays and Playwrights 2006”). He directs and writes material for performer Miss Richfield 1981’s current show *High Hair, High Hopes, Hygiene*. Other directing credits include *The School for Scandal* and *A Christmas Carol* for Trinity Repertory Company, world premieres of *Lamarck* by Dan O’Brien for Perishable Theatre, the rock-musical *Hot Star, Nebraska* by Paul Grellong for SpeakEasy Stage, and *Give Me Space* by Leslie Kramer for Ensemble Studio Theatre. As a 2003-2005 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Directors recipient he has worked at Arena Stage, Hartford Stage, City Center Encores, and the Magic Theatre of San Francisco. He has taught theater at Brown University, Holy Cross College, and Rhode Island College, and served as a theater grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts in 2005 and the Massachusetts Council on the Arts in 2003. He is currently developing a new musical based on Brownie Wise, the fabulous, yet unfairly fired, founder of Tupperware Home Parties. He received a M.F.A. in directing from the Trinity Rep Conservatory and a B.A. from Wake Forest University.

Originally scripted to take place in a New York high-rise apartment, Baron is setting Signature’s production of *The Sex Habits of American Women* in a post-war-America, suburban ranch-style house circa 1950. Creating this period specific world are Set Designer **Michael Carnahan** and Costume Designer **Alejo Vietti**, who are also working at Signature for the first time. Carnahan’s credits include August Wilson’s *Gem of the Ocean* at A.C.T. and McCarter Theatre, *Fiddler on the Roof* at Actor’s Playhouse, *Lackawanna Blues* at NJ PAC and Freedom Theatre, and four seasons at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, among others. Vietti’s costumes have been seen in such productions as *Roulette* at Ensemble Studio Theatre, *The Last Sunday in June* at Century Theatre, *16 Wounded* at Cherry Lane, *2 X Tennessee* at Soho Rep, and other numerous regional theaters across the country. Lighting Designer **Mark Lanks** most recently created the lush lighting for the world premiere musical *Nevermore* at Signature. Previous Signature shows include *Urinetown* (assistant) and *Pacific Overtures*. Sound Designer **Tony Angelini**’s Signature credits include, *Nevermore*, *Urinetown*, *One Red Flower*, *Elegies*, *Allegro*, *Twentieth Century*, and *The Rhythm Club*.

## CAST

The cast welcomes many new faces to the Signature stage. *The Sex Habits of American Women* centers on the Tittels family: Dr. Fritz Tittels, a German psychoanalyst who is writing a book entitled “The Sex Habits of American Women,” and his wife Agnes and daughter Daisy. Playing Dr. Tittels is **Ralph Cosham**, who has been seen in numerous productions at the Shakespeare Theatre (*Comedy of Errors*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*), Arena Stage (*Revenge’s Comedies*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *The Cocoanuts*, *Animal Crackers*), and Folger Theatre (*She Stoops to Conquer*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*). **Helen Hedman**, playing Agnes, also appears regularly at the Shakespeare Theatre (*Lady Windermere’s Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *The Country Wife*, *Camino Real*), Arena Stage (*The Women*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*), and in Baltimore at Rep Stage (*The Seagull*) and Everyman Theatre (*The Cripple of Inishmaan*). Their daughter Daisy is being played by **Teresa Castracane**, a recent M.F.A. graduate of the Shakespeare Theatre’s Academy for Classical Acting, who was just seen in *A Christmas Carol* at Ford’s Theatre. Signature regular **Will Gartshore** (*Urinetown*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Elegies*, *Allegro*) and 2006 Helen Hayes Award double-nominee, plays Edgar Green, a young psychoanalyst and former student of Dr. Tittels. **Casie Platt**, a recent Catholic University M.F.A. graduate, plays Daisy’s friend Ruby Lawrence.

In a unique twist, the live action portions of the play are interspersed with film involving a modern-day single mom named Joy, who is being interviewed in her home for a documentary called “The Sex Habits of American Women.” Previously seen this season at Signature in *Nevermore* and *Urinetown*, **Amy McWilliams** plays Joy. At the Kennedy Center she appeared in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*. Playing her teenage daughter Katie is Catholic University student **Megan MacPhee**. Returning to Signature, where he appeared in *Angels in America* and *The Gospel According to Fishman*, is **Paul Morella** as Dan, the documentary film maker.

*East Coast Premiere*

**THE SEX HABITS OF AMERICAN WOMEN**

By Julie Marie Myatt

**Cast** (in alphabetic order)

**1950**

Daisy Tittels	<b>Teresa Castracane</b>
Dr. Fritz Tittels	<b>Ralph Cosham</b>
Edgar Green	<b>Will Gartshore</b>
Agnes Tittels	<b>Helen Hedman</b>
Ruby Lawrence	<b>Casie Platt</b>

**2004**

Katie	<b>Megan MacPhee</b>
Joy	<b>Amy McWilliams</b>
Dan	<b>Paul Morella</b>

**Direction & Design**

Director	<b>Michael Baron</b>
Set Designer	<b>Michael Carnahan</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Alejo Vietti</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Mark Lanks</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Tony Angelini</b>

**Performance Schedule**

**MARCH 28 – MAY 7, 2006**

*Press Date:* Sunday, April 2

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

**Tickets**

Tickets are \$29 to \$49 and are available by calling Tickets.com at (800) 955-5566 or online at [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org). The Signature Box Office is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and during performances. 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.

**Signature Theatre**

Signature Theatre is a non-profit professional theater dedicated to reinventing classic musicals and inventing new voices. Combining Broadway-quality productions with an intimate playing space, Signature provides experiences that are moving and genuine, gutsy and surprising. Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Directions**

Signature Theatre is located just five miles from Washington, DC at 3806 South Four Mile Run Drive in Arlington, VA immediately off I-395 at the Shirlington exit.

**Contact Info**

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