

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 9, 2005**

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**SIGNATURE THEATRE PRODUCES FIRST REGIONAL PRODUCTION OF THE TONY® AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY HIT *URINETOWN: THE MUSICAL***

**“What kind of musical is this? An original one.”**

— Bruce Weber, *The New York Times*

**“A fresh, unique, original, impudent, colorful, exciting, irreverent, surprising and wonderful musical.”** — Rex Reed, *New York Observer*

Arlington, VA — **Winner of three Tony® Awards**, including Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical, *Urinetown* is a hilarious mix of biting satire and loving parody. In this innovative, zany musical, the sewer system of a Gotham-like town is crippled by a 20-year drought with no end in sight. The government forces residents to use public, pay-per-use amenities, in a mad attempt to regulate water consumption. Anyone refusing to pay for the privilege to pee is immediately hauled off to Urinetown — a mysterious place where people go but never return. Written by fringe writer **Greg Kotis** and composer **Mark Hollmann**, *Urinetown* is a bold, spirited musical that springs from Chicago’s storefront sketch comedy roots. It was the surprise hit of New York’s 1999 Fringe Festival before going on to win three Tony’s in 2002. Helen Hayes Award-winner **Joe Calarco** directs the first regional production since the smash-hit Broadway run. ***Urinetown* runs August 16 – October 9, 2005**, at Signature Theatre, 3806 S. Four Mile Run Dr., Arlington, VA 22206. **Tickets are now on sale through Tickets.com (703) 218-6500 or online at [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).**

“The first of only three more shows in our current home, *Urinetown* is a perfect match for Signature Theatre and a fitting opening for our 16th season,” explains **Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer**. “I slated it to run in our current theatre, because it’s dark and gritty, and I just feel like it belongs at the garage — the space sets the right tone. Similar to *Urinetown* — an edgy, fringe show ultimately taking Broadway by storm — Signature remains committed to our garage-at-heart spirit while preparing to move into our new two-theatre complex at the Village at Shirlington.”

While backpacking through Europe with barely any money, **Greg Kotis** found he often had to forgo public restrooms, since most of these facilities were pay toilets — an amenity he literally couldn’t afford. Through this experience, *Urinetown* was born:

“...The notion of a city where all the public amenities in town were controlled by a single, malevolent, monopolizing corporation came to me... The notion seemed like a patently awful one, grand and ridiculous, a career (such as it was) ending embarrassment. And yet, at its core, it would also be a grand, ridiculous reflection of the world as we know it to be, complete with rich and poor, the powerful and the powerless, a government controlled by industry and an industry that exists apart

— MORE —

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eric schaeffer  
artistic director

sam sweet  
managing director

from and above us all. And driving it all would be the disaster, in this case the drought, a fact that trumped all the other facts: the love, the rage, the greed, everything. It would be a musical, yes, a very big musical, and it would be called *Urinetown*. It might not be performed, perhaps should not be performed, but it would be called *Urinetown*, and it would take place in a town where everybody had to pay to pee.” (Greg Kotis, from the *Urinetown* introduction, Faber and Faber edition.)

### **DIRECTION & DESIGN**

Early in the design process, director **Joe Calarco** sent his team an article about Bertolt Brecht’s Epic Theatre. Calarco explains the creative connection, “When you listen to the music, it sounds so much like *Threepenny Opera* that you can’t help but think about Brecht’s staging ideas. Overall, *Urinetown* spoofs the style of Epic Theatre within its own style: It calls for breaking the fourth wall, dealing with a socially conscious subject matter, over the top characters — the way it’s written the show tells you what to do. It just screams out for a Brechtian approach.” Calarco received Helen Hayes Awards for his direction of Signature’s productions of *Side Show* and the world premiere of *Nijinsky’s Last Dance*, where he also directed the 2005 Helen Hayes Award nominated *Elegies: A Song Cycle*.

Joining Calarco are a team of designers he is very familiar with: musical director **Jay Crowder**, choreographer **Karma Camp**, set designer **James Kronzer**, costume designer **Anne Kennedy**, lighting designer **Chris Lee**, and sound designer **Tony Angelini**. “Collaboration with designers is one situation where you need shorthand,” states Calarco. “There can be such disconnect between what one designer is saying and what the other is hearing. It happens all the time. When you find designers who get each other’s aesthetic, that’s a team you want to keep. Luckily, these designers and I are at a point where we speak the same ‘language’ but we still challenge each other.”

### **CAST**

Performed by 16 actors — nine playing a single role and seven doubling up on characters, sometimes in multiple roles — the show is “huge” according to Calarco. “Actually, every number is huge. It’s going to be exhausting for the cast — a real workout.”

The ensemble features numerous Signature favorites: **Christopher Bloch** (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Twentieth Century*), **Michael Bunce** (*Pacific Overtures*), **Evan Casey** (*Ten Unknowns, Allegro*), **Steven Cupo** (*Pacific Overtures, Follies, Grand Hotel, Cabaret*), **Sherri L. Edelen** (*Elegies, Assassins, The Rink, Side Show*), **Eleasha Gamble** (*Follies, Gospel According to Fishman, Grand Hotel*), **Will Gartshore** (*Elegies, Allegro, Twentieth Century, Follies*), **Amy McWilliams** (*Zander’s Boat, In the Garden, The Fix, Working*), **Donna Migliaccio** (*Pacific Overtures, Follies, Gypsy, A Little Night Music, Sweeney Todd*), **Thomas Adrian Simpson** (*Pacific Overtures, Twentieth Century, 110 in the Shade*), and **Jenna Sokolowski** (*Allegro*).

New to the Signature stage are **Anthony Aloise** (Arena Stage: *Camelot*), **Erin Driscoll** (Kennedy Center: *Regina* with Patti Lupone), **Phil Olejack** (National Tour: *Seussical the Musical*), **Jeffrey L. Peterson** (Studio Theatre Secondstage: *Tommy*), and **Stephen F. Schmidt** (Arena: *Camelot* and *Guys and Dolls*; Kennedy Center: *Passion*).

**URINETOWN**

Music and Lyrics by Mark Hollmann

Book and Lyrics by Greg Kotis

**CAST** (in alphabetical order)

<b>Officer Barrel</b>	Anthony Aloise
<b>Caldwell B. Cladwell</b>	Christopher Bloch
<b>Mr. McQueen</b>	Michael Bunce
<b>Tiny Tom/Dr. Billeaux</b>	Evan Casey
<b>Old Man Strong/Hot Blades Harry</b>	Steven Cupo
<b>Hope Cladwell</b>	Erin Driscoll
<b>Little Becky Two Shoes/Mrs. Millennium</b>	Sherri L. Edelen
<b>Soupy Sue/Cladwell's Secretary</b>	Eleasha Gamble
<b>Bobby Strong</b>	Will Gartshore
<b>Josephine Strong/Old Woman</b>	Amy McWilliams
<b>Penelope Pennywise</b>	Donna Migliaccio
<b>Robbie The Stockfish/Businessman</b>	Phil Olejack
<b>Billy Boy Bill/Businessman</b>	Jeffrey L. Peterson
<b>Officer Lockstock</b>	Stephen F. Schmidt
<b>Senator Fipp</b>	Thomas Adrian Simpson
<b>Little Sally</b>	Jenna Sokolowski

**DESIGN AND DIRECTION**

<b>Director</b>	Joe Calarco
<b>Music Direction</b>	Jay Crowder
<b>Choreography</b>	Karma Camp
<b>Set Design</b>	James Kronzer
<b>Costume Design</b>	Anne Kennedy
<b>Lighting Design</b>	Chris Lee
<b>Sound Design</b>	Tony Angelini
<b>Properties</b>	Cathie Gayer
<b>Production Stage Manager</b>	Colleen Martin

**SCHEDULE**

August 16 – October 9, 2005

*Press Date:* Sunday, August 21

*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 \$31 to \$55 and are available by calling Tickets.com at (800) 955-5566 or (703) 218-6500 and can also be purchased online at [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org). Discounts 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 theatre dedicated to producing contemporary plays and musicals and to the development of new work. Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> season under Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer, Signature has been nominated for 191 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theatre 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 downtown 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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