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**For Immediate Release**

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## **SIGNATURE THEATRE OPENS ITS 2005/06 SEASON**

- **Only three shows left in the current space**
- **Signature to move into new two-theatre complex in May 2006**

Arlington, VA — Signature Theatre opened its 16<sup>th</sup> season with sold-out previews of *Urinetown*. The first regional production since the Broadway run, *Urinetown* won three Tony® Awards in 2002 including Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical. The **2005/06 Season** is a landmark year with Signature moving from its converted garage space into a new \$12.5 million two-theatre complex in the Village at Shirlington. The season is densely packed with everything that makes Signature unique — original shows, loads of laughter, gut-wrenching emotion, and music, music, music. Following the run of *Urinetown*, Signature continues to break new ground with two innovative works: *Yemaya's Belly* is a beautifully woven story of a rich, foreign culture and a young man's pursuit of the American Dream, and the world premiere musical *Nevermore* provides a mysterious, lyrical exploration into the life of Edgar Allan Poe. The first three shows of next season are scheduled to be in Signature's current space on South Four Mile Run Drive. For the show marking the Grand Opening of Signature's new mainstage theatre there was no question that it could only be Sondheim. Signature brings to the stage his tangled, twisted telling of Grimm's classic fairy tales, *Into the Woods*. The new stage two theatre opens with an East Coast premiere offering a hilarious peek into *The Sex Habits of American Women*.

### **THE 2005/2006 SEASON**

#### **3 Shows in the Garage on South Four Mile Run Drive...**

*Washington Premiere Musical*

### **URINETOWN**

Music and Lyrics by Mark Hollmann

Book and Lyrics by Greg Kotis

Directed by Joe Calarco

**Featuring** Anthony Aloise, Christopher Bloch, Michael Bunce, Evan Casey, Steven Cupo, Erin Driscoll, Sherri L. Edelen, Eleasha Gamble, Will Gartshore, Amy McWilliams, Donna Migliaccio, Phil Olejack, Jeffery L. Peterson, Stephen F. Schmidt, Thomas Adrian Simpson, Jenna Sokolowski

**"Inventive and inspired. A full-scale riot."** — Peter Marks, *The Washington Post*

**"A fantastic musical. ★★★★★!"** — Jayne Blanchard, *Washington Times*

You've never experienced anything like the Tony® Award-winning *Urinetown*. This original, zany musical is a wild mix of biting satire and loving parody. A terrible water shortage cripples

— **MORE** —

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the sewer system of a Gotham-like town in this wonderfully imaginative dark comedy. In a mad attempt to regulate water consumption, the government forces residents to use public, pay-per-use amenities. Anyone refusing to pay for the privilege to pee is immediately hauled off to Urinetown — a mysterious place where people go but never return.

***August 16 – October 9, 2005***

*Exciting New Drama*

## **YEMAYA'S BELLY**

By Quiara Alegría Hudes

Directed by Rick DesRochers

**Featuring** Jose Aranda, Saskia de Vries, Clifton A. Duncan, Tuyet Thi Pham, and Fred Strother

Feel the heat and infectious vibrations of the Caribbean in this enthralling coming-of-age story. An up-and-coming voice in the theatre, Hudes weaves a tragicomic journey about a boy, a bottle of coke, and the boat that sails him toward his dreams of the Promised Land. The inclusion of poetry, songs, and movement drawn from Santería — a religion in which the central deity Yemaya rules over the sea — creates a landscape where the characters and audience move effortlessly between the real and the surreal. *Yemaya's Belly* is a tapestry that is at once wonderfully simple and highly complex — you will delight in the exquisite language and striking visual style of this award winning new play.

***November 8 – December 18, 2005***

**Quiara Alegría Hudes'** playwriting honors include the Clauder Prize, Paula Vogel Award in Playwriting, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Latina Playwriting Award, Weston Prize, and first and second prizes in the Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival.

*World Premiere Musical*

## **NEVERMORE**

Music by Matt Conner

Lyrics adapted from the writings of Edgar Allan Poe

Book by Grace Barnes

Directed by Eric Schaeffer

Take a dark and mysterious journey into the life of Edgar Allan Poe. This imaginative world premiere musical uses Poe's poetry and short stories as its base and his shifting obsessions with the women in his life as its catalyst. With hauntingly beautiful melodies, *Nevermore* breathes new life into Poe's work and explores a twisted true-life tale that is as bizarre as his classic stories of the macabre.

***January 10 – February 26, 2006***

**Matt Conner** is a recipient of the Marian Park Lewis Scholarship and a graduate of the prestigious Conservatory of Music at Shenandoah University where he received a BFA in musical theatre and a minor in piano performance.

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## 2 Shows in the New Theatre at the Village at Shirlington...

*Sondheim: Signature's "Signature."*

### **INTO THE WOODS**

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by James Lapine

Directed by Eric Schaeffer

**"Into the Woods simply sings ... you float into an enchanted world."** — *The New York Times*

**"Tirelessly inventive score ... rich material, juicy characters."** — *Time Out, New York*

The Sondheim classic is back! As only Signature can, we bring you this tangled, twisted telling of Grimm's fairy tales featuring a cast of Signature favorites. As the cast of characters work towards the goal of living "Happily Ever After," they face the consequences traditional fairy tales conveniently ignore. Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer directs his twelfth Sondheim musical to bring the grandest opening to our new home.

**May – June 2006 (Exact dates TBA)**

*East Coast Premiere Comedy*

### **THE SEX HABITS OF AMERICAN WOMEN**

By Julie Marie Myatt

Directed by Rick DesRochers

**Starring** Tony nominee Helen Carey and Rick Foucheux

**"Smart and edgy."** — *San Francisco Weekly*

**"A clever new comedy."** — *San Francisco Chronicle*

*The Kinsey Report* meets *Desperate Housewives* in this voyeuristic peep into the sex lives of American women during the era of pointy bras and pompadours. A respected male psychotherapist in the '50s is writing a handbook on female sexuality. Meanwhile 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 50 years between these moments in social history, these intertwined stories ask provocative questions and take a hard and hilarious look at the unexpected repercussions of the sexual revolution.

**June – July 2006 (Exact dates TBA)**

**Julie Marie Myatt** received Walt Disney Studios Screenwriting Fellowship in 1992-1993, Jerome Fellowship at the Playwrights' Center in 1999-2000, McKnight Advancement Grant for 2001-2002, and is a participant in the Guthrie Theater New Play Project.

### **THE 2005/06 CABARET**

An extension of Signature's commitment to musical theatre, the Cabaret series provides a truly distinctive entertainment experience. This four-part series is held in the lobby of Signature's current space, which is

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transformed into a fabulous nightclub setting. Signature’s Cabaret provides the rare opportunity to enjoy performers away from the larger stage in an even more intimate personal interaction. The brightest artists from Washington and beyond entertain with a special evening of popular show tunes, jazz numbers, and powerful ballads intertwined with storytelling.

Featured performers for the upcoming season include:

**EBONY & IVORY: THE SECOND COMING**

Back by popular demand! Helen Hayes Award-winner Stephen Gregory Smith and Eleasha Gamble bring you another enjoyable round of their cabaret on love and friendship.

*November 4 and 5, 2005*

**SHERRI & TY: TOGETHER AGAIN**

Sherri L. Edelen and Ty Hreben return with an evening of unconventional solo and duet styling. Together they present a tender, delightful, hilarious performance you won’t want to miss.

*January 6 and 7, 2006*

**MASS TRANSITS**

This trio of Broadway’s hottest performers team up for the first time to make their Cabaret debut at Signature Theatre. Dan Cooney recently appeared in the world premiere musical *Under the Bridge*, Tamryn Hayden has been seen in *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Misérables*, and Greg Stone starred in the national touring companies of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*.

*Date TBA*

**THE LAST GARAGE HURRAH!**

What better way to say good-bye to the garage we’ve called home all these years than a night of song? Held in the current theatre, this special limited-engagement Cabaret performance features a cast of Signature’s brightest and best singing their personal favorites. This last hurrah will be the final blowout show held in the current building — the perfect send off before we pullout of the garage and rev it up in our brand new home in the Village at Shirlington.

*Dates and more details TBA*

*All shows, performers and dates are subject to change.*

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**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.

**Contact Info**

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