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FALL PREVIEW & CALENDAR LISTING INFO RECAPPING PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SIGNATURE THEATRE'S 20th ANNIVERSARY SEASON AUGUST 11, 2009 – JUNE 20, 2010

Productions include *Dirty Blonde*, the world premiere of
"First You Dream": The Music of Kander & Ebb,
Show Boat, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Sweeney Todd*,
[title of show], and *Sycamore Trees*

Arlington, VA – Signature Theatre, winner of the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award®, celebrates its 20th anniversary this season from August 11, 2009 through June 20, 2010. The season begins with the Broadway hit *Dirty Blonde*, a comedy with music about the notorious film legend Mae West starring Tony Award®-nominee Emily Skinner. Called the "best new American play of the [2000] season" by *The New York Times*, *Dirty Blonde* runs in The ARK Theatre from August 11 through October 4, 2009. Starting September 10 and running through September 27 in The MAX Theatre, Signature next offers a world premiere theatrical event "*First You Dream": The Music of Kander & Ebb*. Signature's nationally acclaimed Kander & Ebb Celebration continues with Broadway stars performing selections from 15 of the great duo's shows from *Flora the Red Menace* to *Curtains*, accompanied by a 19-piece orchestra.

From November 10 through January 17 in The MAX, Signature will present Kern and Hammerstein's *Show Boat*, with Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer reinventing the classic 1927 musical in a bold new production with a new overture and orchestrations. From January 12 through March 7, 2010 in The ARK, Signature presents *I Am My Own Wife*, winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award® for Best Play, starring Helen Hayes Award-winner Andrew Long. Renowned for its interpretation of Sondheim works, Signature Theatre this season takes on *Sweeney Todd* running from February 9 through April 4, 2010 in The MAX, directed by Eric Schaeffer. From March 30 through June 20, 2010 in The ARK, the hilariously inventive Obie Award-winning musical *[title of show]* will have its Washington

premiere in The ARK Theatre, directed by Matthew Gardiner. The season will end with the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *Sycamore Trees*, directed by Tina Landau in The MAX from May 18 through June 20, 2010, part of Signature's American Musical Voices Project.

Signature's popular cabaret evenings throughout the season will feature highlights of the Theatre's 20 years of musical theater offerings. Performances are "Signature Sings 1989 - 1994" running from October 13 through 18; "Signature Sings: 1985 - 1999" running from November 17 through 22; "Signature Sings: 2000-2004" from March 9 through 14, and "Signature Sings: 2005 - 2009" from June 22 through 27, 2010. Other performances include Signature's popular Christmas Cabaret from December 15 through 20, 2009, this year featuring all male "*Swingin' Santas*."

EDITORS: Some photos from Signature's 20th Anniversary season are available for downloading from http://www.signature-theatre.org/photo_downloads.htm. (Link for press only: please do not publish).

Signature Theatre's 20th Season

**Tony Award®-Nominee Emily Skinner is Mae West in
DIRTY BLONDE
A Play with Music by Claudia Shear
Directed by Signature Artistic Associate Jeremy Skidmore
August 11 – October 4, 2009 in The ARK**

A funny, bawdy New York hit penned by Claudia Shear, Signature's production of *Dirty Blonde* will star Tony Award®-nominee and Signature favorite Emily Skinner in the two roles she was born to play – cinematic legend Mae West and West's most fixated fan Jo. Skinner says, "I have long been an admirer of both West and Shear, and can't wait to take a bite out of this juicy, funny, moving material!" *Dirty Blonde* is a "smart, tough, and tenderhearted comedy" (*New York Times*), revealing the individual behind Mae West's sexy celluloid façade and examining why lost souls like Jo are so mesmerized by the provocative sex goddess. Nominated for five Tony Awards® in 2000, *Dirty Blonde* will be directed by Signature Artistic Associate Jeremy Skidmore. The cast also includes J. Fred Shiffman and Hugh Nees.

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- There are no *Dirty Blonde* performances Saturday, August 15 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, August 18 at 7:30 pm.
- Ticket prices range from \$47 - \$71.

**A World Premiere Theatrical Event
"First You Dream": The Music of Kander & Ebb
September 10 – 27, 2009 in The MAX**

Signature Theatre continues its nationally acclaimed 2008 *Kander & Ebb Celebration* with the world premiere theater event “*First You Dream*”: *The Music of Kander & Ebb*. Six outstanding Broadway singer/actors Heidi Blickenstaff, James Clow, Eleasha Gamble, Norm Lewis, Julia Murney, and Matthew Scott, assemble at Signature for a fresh take on songs from all 17 of the great songwriting team’s shows and some of their movies, performed with an onstage 19-piece orchestra. From their 1965 musical *Flora, the Red Menace* through hits like *Cabaret* and *Chicago* to their most recent show, *Curtains*, this original Kander and Ebb concert performance will be a revelation.

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- Ticket prices are \$60 and \$65.

Reinventing the classic American musical

SHOW BOAT

Music by Jerome Kern

Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Based on the novel *Show Boat* by Edna Ferber

Directed by Eric Schaeffer

November 10, 2009 – January 17, 2010 in The MAX

Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer reinvents the classic 1927 American musical *Show Boat* in an intimate new staging for our times. The production will feature new orchestrations — and a new overture — by the renowned Jonathan Tunick, winner of all four show business awards: the Tony®, Oscar, Emmy, and Grammy. Spanning the years 1880 to 1927, this lyrical masterpiece concerns the lives, loves, and heartbreaks of three generations of show folk on the Mississippi. *Show Boat* is a sweeping tale of enduring love and devastating hatred, illuminating through unforgettable music the cruelty of prejudice – and the beauty of romance. Among its many beloved songs are *Make Believe*, *Bill*, *Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man*, and *Ol’ Man River*. Ted Chapin, President of the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization, stated, “Signature has explored the repertoire of the modern musical theater with such expertise that mounting *Show Boat* — the granddaddy of them all — is a perfect fit, especially for an anniversary year. The Hammerstein/Kern/Ferber classic was remarkable in its time, and the Signature audiences will see that its boldness, romance, courage, and sheer beauty have lost none of their impact.”

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- Added performances for *Show Boat* are Monday, November 23 at 7:30 pm; Monday, December 21 at 7:30 pm; and Monday, December 28 at 7:30 pm.
- There are no *Show Boat* performances Saturday, November 11 at 2:00 pm; Tuesday, November 14 at 7:30; Thursday, December 24 at 8:00 pm; Friday, December 25 at 8:00 pm; and Friday, January 1 at 8:00 pm.
- Ticket prices range from \$52 - \$76.

Winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize and the 2004 Tony Award® for Best Play

I AM MY OWN WIFE

By Doug Wright

Starring Helen Hayes Award-Winner Andrew Long

Directed by Alan Paul

January 12 – March 7, 2010 in The ARK

Inspired by interviews conducted by the playwright over several years, *I Am My Own Wife* tells the fascinating real-life story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, a German transvestite who managed to survive both Nazi rule and the repressive East German Communist regime. Von Mahlsdorf created a safe-space in the bowels of her antiques museum for East Berlin's "undesirables" – homosexuals, cross-dressers, and prostitutes. But in order to survive, she sacrificed her ideals, becoming an informer for the East German secret police, the Stasi. In this "brilliant" (*New Yorker*) one-man show, the award-winning Andrew Long (*My Fair Lady* and *Saving Aimee*) portrays Charlotte's complexity – a non-conformist shrouded in an image of conformity, a protector of minorities who ultimately becomes their betrayer. *I Am My Own Wife* was the winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize and the 2004 Tony Award® for Best Play.

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- There are no performances of *I Am My Own Wife* on Saturday, January 16 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, January 19 at 7:30 pm.
- Ticket prices range from \$47 - \$71.

A new environmental production

SWEENEY TODD

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by Hugh Wheeler

Based on the play by Christopher Bond

Directed by Eric Schaeffer

February 9 – April 4, 2010 in The MAX

The first musical ever presented at Signature, *Sweeney Todd* gets a brand new environmental staging in the MAX Theatre as part of the 20th anniversary season. "When trying to pick which Sondheim musical would be in our 20th Anniversary season, I had many titles floating in my head – but I thought what was best was rediscovering the musical that started it all for us. It had to be *Sweeney Todd* and I'm thrilled to bring Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett to our new Theatre," stated Eric Schaeffer. Since that first production, Sondheim has become Signature's signature composer. And *Sweeney Todd* is Sondheim's masterpiece – with all its gothic gore, lush songs, and romantic melodrama. It's a grand musical that has all the stuff of a classic horror story – betrayal, revenge, madness, and murder. The "meat" pies will be baking and the blood will be flowing in this thriller musical comedy featuring a celebrated cast of Signature Theatre favorites.

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- There are no performances of *Sweeney Todd* on Saturday, February 13 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, February 16 at 7:30 pm.
- Ticket prices range from \$52 to \$76.

The Washington Premiere of
[title of show]
Music and Lyrics by Jeff Bowen
Book by Hunter Bell
Directed by Matthew Gardiner
March 30 – June 20, 2010 in The ARK

“Hilarious! A fresh new musical worth cheering!” – *The New York Times*

[title of show] puts the audience right in the middle of the creative process — dizzy, unpredictable, and uproarious. When faced with a festival’s submission deadline for their new musical, Jeff and Hunter can’t decide what to write about. With friends Susan and Heidi (and Larry on the piano), they come up with a solution — write about what to write about. Helen Hayes Award-winner Matthew Gardiner directs this love letter to the musical theater — a uniquely American art form — and to the joy of collaboration.

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- There are no performances of *[title of show]* on Saturday, April 3 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, April 6 at 7:30 pm.
- Ticket prices range from \$52 - \$76.

A World Premiere
American Musical Voices Project: Part Two
SYCAMORE TREES
By Ricky Ian Gordon
Directed by Tina Landau
May 18 – June 20, 2010 in The MAX
Sponsored by The Shen Family Foundation

Composer Ricky Ian Gordon is the second recipient of the American Musical Voices Project Award to present a new work of musical theater on Signature’s stage. *Sycamore Trees* is the moving story of his family’s struggles and their reliance on each other through good and bad. The composer says, “When my father came home from World War II in 1945, my family lived in a crowded tenement in the Bronx, poor and with bed bugs. Then my parents got the idea to move to the suburbs where the dream of life flowering in a clean and spacious environment promised to

be the answer. It wasn't. This is the story of a family and what happened to them ... and music is its heartbeat and inner life." Gordon is the composer of the acclaimed *The Grapes of Wrath*, hailed for its merging of Broadway and opera in "sly... vintage musical Americana." Steppenwolf Theatre Ensemble Member and acclaimed Chicago director Tina Landau (*Iphigenia 2.0*, *The Trojan Women*) comes to the Washington area to direct this world premiere musical.

- Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- There are no performance of *Sycamore Trees* on Saturday, May 22 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, June 1 at 7:30 pm.
- Ticket prices range from \$52 to \$76.

CABARET: Signature's 20 years of musical theater are saluted in a series of four cabaret evenings throughout the season.

- Cabaret show times are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 8:30 pm, Friday at 7:30 pm and 9:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 pm and 9:30 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm.
- Tickets are \$33 each.

Signature Sings: 1989-1994

Performances October 13 – 18, 2009

Select songs performed from the musical productions from 1989-1994 including *Sweeney Todd*, *Assassins*, *Company*, *Wings – The Musical*, and *Into the Woods*.

Signature Sings: 1995-1999

Performances November 17 – 22, 2009

Select songs performed from the musical productions from 1995-1999 including *First Lady Suite*, *Cabaret*, *A Grand Night for Singing*, *Passion*, *The Rink*, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *Working*, *The Fix*, *A Little Night Music*, *Over and Over*, and *Tell Me on a Sunday*.

Signature Sings: 2000-2004

Performances March 9 – 14, 2010

Select songs performed from the musical productions from 2000-2004 including *Floyd Collins*, *Gypsy*, *Putting it Together*, *Grand Hotel*, *Hedwig & the Angry Inch*, *110 in the Shade*, *Follies*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Allegro*, *Elegies: A Song Cycle*, and *The Highest Yellow*.

Signature Sings: 2005-2009

June 22 – 27, 2010

Select songs performed from the musical productions from 2005-2009 including *Pacific Overtures*, *Urinetown*, *Nevermore*, *My Fair Lady*, *Saving Aimee*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Glory Days*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Happy Time*, *The Visit*, *Ace*, *Les Misérables*, and *Giant*.

CHRISTMAS CABARET

December 15 – 20, 2009

Following the past seasons' smash Christmas cabarets, this year Signature offers audiences the chance to enjoy the seasonal favorites with this all-male holiday cabaret — *Swingin' Santas*.

ABOUT SIGNATURE

Under the leadership of co-founder and Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer and Managing Director Maggie Boland, Signature is a non-profit professional theater company dedicated to producing contemporary musicals and plays, reinventing classic musicals, and developing new work. Recipient of the 2009 Regional Theater Tony Award®, Signature has presented over 25 world premiere productions and is renowned for combining Broadway-quality productions with intimate playing spaces. In addition to the finest talent from the DC metropolitan area and New York, Signature has been a home to such theater luminaries as John Kander and Fred Ebb, Cameron Mackintosh, Terrence McNally, and the company's signature, Stephen Sondheim. Signature has been nominated for 276 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater and has been honored with 69 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009, and Outstanding Play in 1999.

Signature Theatre is partially supported by grants from the Arlington Commission for the Arts, Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Directions

Signature Theatre is just nine minutes from downtown Washington, DC in Arlington's Shirlington Village. The theater complex is located at 4200 Campbell Avenue (22206) off I-395 at the Shirlington exit. After the exit, blue Signature signs mark the way to the Theatre. Free parking is available in two adjacent public garages. Please note that Campbell Avenue is a new street and some GPS online mapping systems do not yet recognize Signature Theatre's address. For directions visit www.signature-theatre.org.

Contact Information

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