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Signature Theatre Presents Sondheim's Rarely Performed Cult Favorite *Anyone Can Whistle* In Concert at Schlesinger Concert Hall on October 6 at 8:00 pm

Arlington, VA -- Signature Theatre, nationally renowned for its interpretation of Sondheim musicals, takes on the Sondheim cult favorite *Anyone Can Whistle* in a special one night only concert, Monday, October 6, 2008 at 8:00 pm at the Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center in Alexandria. Artistic Director **Eric Schaeffer** will direct the performance, a rare opportunity to experience Sondheim's wacky, intelligent, and highly unconventional 1964 work. The company's Second Annual Great American Musicals Concert, *Anyone Can Whistle* stars two-time Helen Hayes Award winner **Will Gartshore**, Signature favorite **Tracy Lynn Olivera**, and **Karlah Hamilton**, who received a Helen Hayes Award for her comic turn as the town battle-ax in Signature's *The Witches of Eastwick*. WJLA-TV anchor **Maureen Bunyan** will narrate. The 19 singers in the cast and the Signature Theatre Orchestra will be conducted by Signature's Resident Musical Director **Jon Kalbfleisch**. Tickets range from \$40 to \$150 and are on sale by calling Ticketmaster at (703) 573-7328 or visiting www.signature-theatre.org.

An absurdist fantasy-cum-political satire, *Anyone Can Whistle* is the story of a corrupt mayoress (Karlah Hamilton) who fakes a miracle to revitalize her bankrupt town, a rational nurse (Tracy Lynn Olivera) who's determined to expose the fraud, and a patient mistaken for a psychiatrist (Will Gartshore) who intends to sit back and enjoy the chaos. With a book by Arthur Laurents, *Anyone Can Whistle* contains a strong message about the role of the individual in conformist society, with still-relevant barbs aimed at government, religion, and science.

This early work "immediately marked Sondheim as the most distinctive theatre composer of his time," and includes "fascinating extended musical scenes, with extended choral work" (Steven Suskin). Angela Lansbury made her stage musical debut as the mayoress Cora Hoover Hooper in the original production.

Director Eric Schaeffer stated, "Continuing the Signature tradition, this Sondheim musical is the nineteenth produced by our company. We have a terrific Washington cast and orchestra and we're looking forward to giving many Sondheim fans their first opportunity to experience *Anyone Can Whistle* live," stated Eric Schaeffer.

The cast of *Anyone Can Whistle* also includes **Christopher Bloch, Steven Cupo, Sherri L. Edelen, Kathryn Fuller, James Gardiner, Katie Keyser, Bob McDonald, Patrick McMahan, Jobari Parker-Namdar, Kimberly Sherbach, Chris Sizemore, Stephen Gregory Smith, Laura Wehmeyer, Hannah Willman, Weslie Woodley, and Rachel Zampelli.** **Matthew Gardiner** serves as Associate Director and **Michael Baron** is Associate Producer.

The venue for *Anyone Can Whistle*, the Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, is located on the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22311.

Signature Theatre's 2008-2009 season is partially supported by a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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. To date, 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 234 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater and has been honored with 59 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, and 2006, and Outstanding Play in 1999.

Contact Information

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