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## signaturenews

For Immediate Release  
April 21, 2007  
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**SIGNATURE PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL**  
**SAVING AIMEE**  
**WITH BOOK AND LYRICS BY KATHIE LEE GIFFORD**  
**Music by David Pomeranz and David Friedman**

**Two-time Tony® nominee Carolee Carmello stars  
as Aimee Semple McPherson**

**Arlington, VA** — Long before Gloria Steinem there was a feminist who stood up against a male-dominated religious society. Long before O.J. Simpson there was a famous defendant in the trial of the century. Long before Madonna there was a free spirit who ignored the sexual mores of her day and married three times. And long before Marilyn Monroe there was a beloved American treasure who mysteriously died from an overdose of barbiturates. Based on the life of Aimee Semple McPherson, *Saving Aimee* is the story of one woman's life from her humble upbringing in a Salvation Army family to her ascension as charismatic founder of the Four Square Gospel Church. She changed the face of the pulpit. But was she a true woman of God or just one hell of a woman?

Signature's Artistic Director **Eric Schaeffer** directs the world premiere production of *Saving Aimee* starring two-time Tony® nominee **Carolee Carmello** as Aimee Semple McPherson, with book and lyrics by **Kathie Lee Gifford** and music by **David Pomeranz** and **David Friedman**. *Saving Aimee* runs April 10 – May 13, 2007 (with the Press Opening on April 22) at Signature's new \$16 million building in The MAX Theatre. Tickets are priced from \$37 to \$63 and are on sale through Tickets.com (800) 955-5566 and online at [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).

Joining Carmello are **E. Faye Butler** as Emma Jo Schaeffer, **Florence Lacey** as Minnie Kennedy, **Ed Dixon** as James Kennedy/Brother Bob, **Andrew Long** as Asa Keyes, **Adam Monley** as Harold "Mac" McPherson/Kenneth Ormiston, and **Steve Wilson** as Robert Semple/David Hutton. Michael Bannigan, Doug Bowles, Priscilla Cuellar, James Gardiner, Evan Hoffman, Jennifer Irons, Carrie A. Johnson, Diego Preto, Tammy Roberts, Margo Seibert, Corrieanne Stein, and Harry A. Winter round out the company.

"I'm thrilled Signature's doing the world premiere of *Saving Aimee*," said **Eric Schaeffer**. "The story and music are enthralling and it's a project close to my heart — one I've been helping Kathie Lee Gifford develop for a couple of years now. In 2005, we were lucky enough to do a workshop production in New York with Carolee Carmello and she's truly phenomenal in this role. She plays Aimee Semple McPherson from the age of 17 until her early 50s. Carolee's ability to do this is a director's dream. Her voice combined with **Florence Lacey** and **E. Faye Butler's** blows the roof off of the theater!"

"I'm so excited to do *Saving Aimee*," said **Carolee Carmello**. "This woman's life was unbelievable... she was so brave, so strong, so passionate, so tortured. It's a fascinating story and I'm thrilled to bring some of her life to the stage."

## CAST

**Carolee Carmello** (Aimee Semple McPherson) comes to *Saving Aimee* directly from Broadway where she starred as Donna Sheridan in *Mamma Mia!* Other Broadway roles include Gabrielle in *Lestat* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations); Lucille Frank in *Parade* (Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award); Kate in *Kiss Me, Kate*; Marguerite in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*; Abigail Adams in *1776*; Oolie in *City of Angels*; Cordelia in *Falsettos*; and Ms. Pennywise in *Urinetown*. She's appeared Off-Broadway in *Elegies*, *A Class Act*, *John and Jen*, *Das Barbecü*, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, *Vagina Monologues*, and *Hello Again* (Obie Award for Outstanding Performance) and in the national tours of *Chess*, *Big River*, *Falsettos*, and *Les Misérables*. TV credits include Maple La Marsh on "Remember W.E.N.N." (SAG Award nomination), "Frasier," "Ed," and "Law & Order." *Saving Aimee* marks her Signature debut.

**Florence Lacey** (Emma Jo Schaeffer) makes her sixth appearance at Signature where she's appeared in *The Rhythm Club*, *The Gospel According to Fishman*, *Follies*, *One Red Flower* and *Nevermore*. She worked with Schaeffer and Gifford on the Off-Broadway opening of *Under the Bridge* as well as the workshop production of *Saving Aimee*. She starred as Fantine in the Broadway company of *Les Misérables* and also performed the title role of *Evita* over 3,000 times on Broadway and in touring companies around the world. She won the Theater World Award for her Broadway debut as Irene Malloy in *Hello, Dolly!*, and starred opposite Joel Grey in the Jerry Herman musical *The Grand Tour*. Off-Broadway, she played the title role in *Sweet Feet*, Penelope in *Elizabeth and Essex* with Estelle Parsons, and starred in the Manhattan Theater Club production of *Styne After Styne*, a tribute to composer Jule Styne. She toured nationally in the John Houseman production of *John Brown's Body* starring Rock Hudson, and in regional theaters played Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Julie Jordan in *Carousel*, and Gypsy Rose Lee in *Gypsy*. Lacey also won the Hollywood Drama-Logue Award for her performance of *Evita* in Los Angeles, the Pittsburgh Drama League Award for her work at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, and the New York MAC Award for her performance at Rainbow and Stars with Jerry Herman.

**E. Faye Butler** (Minnie Kennedy) returns to Signature where she starred in *The Gospel According to Fishman*. Other credits include *Nunsense* Off-Broadway and tours of *Mamma Mia!*, *Nunsense*, *Nunsense 2*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Hair*, *Dinah Was*, and *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*. Regionally she's been seen at Arena Stage in *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Polk County*; at Centerstage in *Once on this Island*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Dinah Was*; at The Goodman Theatre and Pasadena Playhouse in *Purlie*; at Victory Gardens in *Blue Sonata*; and at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, among numerous others. She's performed blues and jazz songs with Washington Ballet at Teatro de Mayo in Havana, Cuba. Butler is the recipient of five Jefferson Awards, After Dark Award, Excellence in the Arts Award, two BTAA Awards, John Barrymore Award, RAMI Award, three Helen Hayes nominations, and an Ovation Award nomination.

**Ed Dixon** (James Kennedy/Brother Bob) has Broadway credits including General Wetjoen in *The Iceman Cometh*, Thenardier in *Les Misérables*, Rageneau in *Cyrano*, Cardinal Richelieu in *The Three Musketeers*, and Ozzy in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. He's been seen Off-Broadway as the lead in *Shylock* (Drama Desk nomination) and as Max in the tour of *Sunset Boulevard* (Joseph Jefferson Nomination). *Saving Aimee* is his Signature debut.

**Andrew Long** (Asa Keyes) returns to Signature after his critically acclaimed role of Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*. His recent credits include *Frozen* at Studio Theatre (for which he recently won the Helen Hayes Award for Best Leading Actor), *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Coriolanus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hamlet*, all for the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Regionally, he has been seen at the Guthrie theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

**Adam Monley** (Harold "Mac" McPherson/Kenneth Ormiston) was an original cast member in Broadway's *Mamma Mia!* His Off-Broadway credits include York Theatre's *Fanny Hill* and Playwright's Horizons' *A Gingerbread House*. He was recently seen in the national tour of Deaf West's *Big River* as the voice of Huck and was Raoul in the national tour of *Phantom of the Opera*.

**Steve Wilson** (Robert Semple/David Hutton) comes to Signature from the Broadway production and national tour of *Sweet Charity*. Other Broadway credits include *By Jeeves*, *The Frogs*, and *Lestat*. Regional credits include *The Philadelphia Story* at Walnut Street Theatre, *Victor/Victoria* at North Shore Musical Theatre, and *The Kentucky Cycle* at Asolo Theatre Company.

The ensemble includes **Michael Bannigan, Doug Bowles, Priscilla Cuellar, James Gardiner, Evan Hoffmann, Jennifer Irons, Carrie A. Johnson, Diego Prieto, Tammy Roberts, Margo Seibert, Corrieanne Stein, and Harry A. Winter.**

## DESIGN & DIRECTION

The MAX, Signature's new mainstage theater, accommodates up to 260 seats and enhances Signature's ability to amaze and delight audiences with seamless, high-quality production elements.

Book writer and lyricist **Kathie Lee Gifford** was nominated for the Emmy award 11 times during her 15 years on *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee*. She has recorded 12 CDs and, as an actress, has appeared in numerous TV, film, and stage productions. Mrs. Gifford made her Broadway debut in 1999 in Stephen Sondheim's *Putting it Together* directed by Eric Schaeffer. She originated the role of Marta Dunhill in Rupert Holmes' *Thumbs*. Her Off-Broadway musical, *Under the Bridge*, starring Ed Dixon, opened successfully at the Zipper Theatre early in 2004.

Composer **David Pomeranz's** songs and recordings have sold over 30 million copies worldwide and have been performed by such artists as Bette Midler, Barry Manilow, Kenny Rogers, Richie Sambora (of Bon Jovi), Freddie Mercury, Phoebe Snow, The Carpenters, Kathie Lee Gifford, and more. His stage musicals include *Little Tramp* (Music/Lyrics and Co-Book), *Time* (West End), *A Tale Of Two Cities* (Birmingham/Windsor, England), and *Under The Bridge* (co-written with Kathie Lee Gifford) which premiered Off-Broadway at the Zipper Theater in 2005.

Composer **David Friedman** has worked on such films as *Beauty & the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *Pocahontas*, *Hunchback*, the *Aladdin* sequel, *Trick*, *Lizzie McGuire* (platinum), and the *Bambi* sequel.

Signature Artistic Director and co-founder **Eric Schaeffer**'s national and international directing credits include: on Broadway, *Putting It Together* and *big* (first national tour); Off-Broadway, *Sweet Adeline* for City Center's Encores series and *Under the Bridge* by Kathie Lee Gifford and David Pomeranz; and in London at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, *The Witches of Eastwick*. A four-time Helen Hayes winner for Outstanding Director, Eric's artistic leadership has been recognized by the Kennedy Center, who selected Schaeffer as the artistic leader of their highly-successful Sondheim Celebration. Eric's directing credits at Signature include: *My Fair Lady*, *Nevermore*, *The Highest Yellow*, *One Red Flower*, *Allegro* (2005 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical and Director), *Twentieth Century*, *110 In The Shade*, *The Christmas Carol Rag*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *The Gospel According to Fishman*, *Grand Hotel*, *Putting It Together*, *The Rhythm Club*, *Over & Over*, *You're Going to Love Tomorrow: A Stephen Sondheim Evening*, *The Fix* (American premiere), *Working*, *Taking My Life in Your Hands*, *Cabaret*, *First Lady Suite*, *Wings*, *Poor Superman*, *Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love*, and the Sondheim musicals *Pacific Overtures*, *Follies*, *Sunday in the Park with George* (Arena Stage co-production), *Passion* (1997 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical and Director), *Into the Woods* (1995 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical), *Company*, *Assassins* (1993 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical and Director), and *Sweeney Todd* (1992 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical and Director). In addition, Eric has created and directed concert productions of *Company*, *The Rink* and *Mack & Mabel* for Signature's free outdoor concert series.

**Christopher d'Amboise** created the musical staging for *Saving Aimee*. A former Principal Dancer at the New York Ballet, Christopher has worked extensively as a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and director. His choreography for theater includes *Romeo and Juliet – the Musical*, *High Society*, and Charles Strouse's *You Never Know*.

**Michael Rice** returns to Signature where he musical directed *Working* and *Mack and Mabel*. His Broadway and national tour credits include *Peter Pan*, *Cats*, *Joseph...*, *Me & My Girl* and *Grand Hotel*.

Music Supervisor **Paul Raiman** returns to Signature after the revival of Broadway's *Les Misérables*, *Oklahoma*, and the revival of *The Three-Penny Opera*. For Signature, Paul has worked on *The Rhythm Club*, *The Gospel According to the Fishman*, and *Company*.

Orchestrator **Bruce Coughlin**'s Broadway credits include *Grey Gardens*, *The Light in the Piazza* (Tony® Award), *Urinetown*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Wild Party*, *On the Town*, *The Sound of Music*, *Triumph of Love*, and *The King & I*. Off-Broadway, he worked on *Floyd Collins* (Obie Award) and *See What I Wanna See*.

Scenic Designer **Walt Spangler**'s Signature credits include *The Highest Yellow*. Other regional credits include *Mame* at The Kennedy Center, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Hamlet* all for Shakespeare Theatre Company. On Broadway, his designs were featured in *Hollywood Arms*.

As Costume Designer, Signature Artistic Associate **Anne Kennedy**'s work for Signature includes *Assassins*, *Urinetown*, *Pacific Overtures*, *The Highest Yellow*, *Twentieth Century*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Side Show*. Off-Broadway, Anne has designed for Playwright's Horizons, Lucille Lortel Theatre, Zipper Theatre, and Primary Stages.

Three-time Helen Hayes Award nominee, Lighting Designer **Chris Lee** returns to Signature where his previous work includes *Into the Woods*, *Urinetown*, *Elegies*, *One Red Flower*, *Follies*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Grand Hotel*, and *Side Show*.

Sound Designer **Robert Kaplowitz** has designed for Broadway's *An Almost Unholy Picture*, Off-Broadway's *Five Course Love*, *imPerfect Chemisty*, and *I Will Come Back*.

The design team is rounded out by Projection Designer **Michael Clark**. For Signature, Michael has designed *Allegro*, *One Red Flower*, and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. Other credits include Broadway's *Jersey Boys*, *Ring of Fire*, *700 Sundays*, *Dracula the Musical* and *The Elephant Man*.

## PHOTOS

Photos of *Saving Aimee* are available online at [http://www.signature-theatre.org/photo\\_downloads.htm](http://www.signature-theatre.org/photo_downloads.htm)

## DETAILS

### SAVING AIMEE

Book and Lyrics by Kathie Lee Gifford

Music by David Pomeranz and David Friedman

### Direction & Design

Director **Eric Schaeffer**

Musical Staging by **Christopher d'Amboise**

Musical Director **Michael Rice**

Music Supervisor **Paul Raiman**

Orchestrations **Bruce Coughlin**

Set Designer **Walt Spangler**

Costume Designer **Anne Kennedy**

Lighting Designer **Chris Lee**

Sound Designer **Robert Kaplowitz**

Production Stage Manager **Kerry Epstein**

### Schedule

**April 10 – May 13, 2007**

*Press Date:* Sunday, April 22, 2007

*Show Times:* Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 pm, Thursday and Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 2 pm and 8 pm, and Sunday at 2 pm and 7 pm

*Exceptions:* There is no performance on April 24 and no matinee on April 28.

### Tickets

Tickets are **\$37 to \$63** and are sold through Tickets.com (800) 955-5566 and online at [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org). 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 am to 6 pm, and during performances.

## ABOUT SIGNATURE

Signature is a non-profit professional theater company dedicated to producing contemporary plays and musicals, reinventing classic musicals, and developing new work. To date, Signature has presented more than 20 world premiere productions and commissions. The works of Stephen Sondheim, however, are the Theatre's "signature." Signature is renowned for combining Broadway-quality productions with an intimate playing space, and using live orchestras with unamplified performers. In addition to the finest talent from the D.C. metropolitan area as well as New York, Signature has been a home to such theater luminaries as Cameron Mackintosh, Terrence McNally, John Kander and Fred Ebb, and, of course, Stephen Sondheim.

In January 2007, Signature moved into its new \$16 million two-theater complex in the Shirlington Village area of Arlington, Virginia.

In its 17 years under Co-Founder and Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer, Signature has been nominated for 209 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater and has been honored with 54 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, and 2006, and Outstanding Play in 1999.

### **Directions**

Signature Theatre's new location is just five miles from downtown Washington, DC at 2800 S. Stafford St. in Arlington, Virginia's Shirlington Village immediately off I-395 at the Shirlington exit.

### **Contact Info**

Tickets.com (800) 955-5566  
Box Office (703) 820-9771  
Administration (571) 527-1860  
[www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org)

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