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Signature Theatre's Season Takes Off with the East Coast Premiere of the Musical *ACE*, Playing August 27 – September 28 in The MAX

Cast features Broadway stars Jill Paice, Emily Skinner, Christiane Noll, and Florence Lacey

Arlington, VA – Signature Theatre's 2008-2009 season takes off with *ACE*, the East Coast premiere of a new musical about a boy's flight through his family's past, running August 27 through September 28 in The MAX Theatre. With music by **Richard Oberacker** and book and lyrics by **Robert Taylor** and **Oberacker**, *ACE* stars Broadway's **Jill Paice** (*Curtains*), **Emily Skinner** (*The Full Monty*, *Side Show*), **Christiane Noll** (*Jekyll & Hyde*), and **Florence Lacey** (*Evita*, *Hello, Dolly!*). *ACE* is directed by Signature's Artistic Director **Eric Schaeffer** with choreography by **Karma Camp**.

Appealing to all ages, *ACE* explores the heroic lives and unforeseen legacies of the men and women of America's Greatest Generation. Set in the 1950s, a fatherless 10-year-old boy receives a toy plane as an unexpected gift, and he's launched on an epic adventure – flying into the gathering storm over Europe during the aerial dogfights of WWI and soaring with the daring Flying Tigers of WWII in the skies above Southeast Asia. As Danny travels back in time, he is an eyewitness to romance, sacrifice, and triumph, unlocking the secrets of his past and finding the strength at last to fly.

11-year old newcomer **Dalton Harrod** will play the role of Danny. **Paice**, lauded for her performances in London's *Gone with the Wind*, will play Danny's mother Elizabeth. The character Ace is performed by **Matthew Scott** of Broadway's *Jersey Boys* and *A Catered Affair*. Danny's foster parents are played by **Skinner** and **Duke Lafoon** from the original production of *ACE*. Broadway regular and *Witches of Eastwick* star **Christiane Noll** is Ruth and **Jim Stanek** of Broadway's *Lestat* and *Little Women* is John Robert. The social worker Mrs. Crandall is played by Broadway's **Florence Lacey** and remembered in Washington for Signature's *Saving Aimee*. Danny's friend Emily is played by **Angelina Kelly**. Performing in the ensemble are **Richard Barth**, **William Beech**, **Brooke Bloomquist**, **George Dvorsky**, **Ari Goldbloom**-

Helzner, Tracy Lynn Olivera, Jason Reiff, Danny Rothman, Elizabeth Share, and Gabrielle Stravelli.

The production features scenic design by **Walt Spangler**, costume design by **Robert Perdziola**, lighting design by **Ken Billington** and **Jason Kantrowitz**, projection design by **Michael Clark**, orchestrations by **Jonathan Tunick**, and musical direction by **David Kreppel**. The production stage manager is **Kerry Epstein**.

ACE will play in The MAX Theatre August 27 through September 28. Tickets, ranging in price from \$49 to \$77 are on sale by calling Ticketmaster at (703) 573-7328 or visiting www.signature-theatre.org. 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. Free educational events for *ACE* include a Brown Bag Thursday discussion on September 4 and a Page to Stage program at the Shirlington Library on September 8.

EDITORS: PHOTOS ARE AVAILABLE for ACE by downloading from http://www.signature-theatre.org/photo_downloads.htm (Link for press only: please do not publish).

ACE was originally produced by The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. *ACE* was presented at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals in 2005. *ACE* is presented in association with Tom Smedes and Nancy Nagel Gibbs.

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.

FACTS

ACE

Music by Richard Oberacker
Book and Lyrics by Robert Taylor and Richard Oberacker

Ace	Matthew Scott
Mrs. Crandall	Florence Lacey
Danny	Dalton Harrod
Edward	Duke Lafoon
Elizabeth	Jill Paice
Emily	Angelina Kelly
John Robert	Jim Stanek
Louise	Emily Skinner
Ruth	Christiane Noll
Ensemble	Richard Barth
	William Beech
	George Dvorsky
	Tracy Lynn Olivera
	Jason Reiff
	Danny Rothman

Elizabeth Share
Gabrielle Stravelli

Scenic Designer	Walt Spangler
Costume Designer	Robert Perdziola
Lighting Designers	Ken Billington, Jason Kantrowitz
Projection Designer	Michael Clark
Production Stage Manager	Kerry Epstein
Orchestrator	Jonathan Tunick
Music Director	David Kreppell
Choreographer	Karma Camp
Director	Eric Schaeffer

BIOS

CAST

Florence Lacey (Mrs. Crandell) SIGNATURE: *Saving Aimee, Nevermore, The Rhythm Club, The Gospel According to Fishman, Follies, One Red Flower*. BROADWAY: *Evita, The Grand Tour, Hello, Dolly!, Les Misérables, An Evening with Jerry Herman*. OFF-BROADWAY: *Sweet Feet, Elizabeth and Essex, Styne After Styne, Under the Bridge*. REGIONAL: Kennedy Center: *Sunday in the Park with George*; Goodspeed: *Pal Joey*; Connecticut Rep: *A Little Night Music, Wings*. AWARDS: Theater World, MAC, Drama Logue, Critics Outer Circle.

Duke Lafoon (Edward) NEW YORK: Westchester Broadway: *A Wonderful Life, Are We There Yet?*; MTC Theatre 3: *Monica the Musical*; Transport Group: *The Audience*; Queens Theatre in the Park: *I Love My Wife*. REGIONAL: The Old Globe, Rep Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Theatre in the Park: *ACE*; Barksdale Theatre: *Doubt*; Company of Fools: *Sideman*; Theatre Virginia: *A Wonderful Life* (Best Actor Award). TV/FILM: TNT's *Ironclads*; CBS's mini-series, *Sally Hemings*.

Christiane Noll (Ruth) SIGNATURE: *The Witches of Eastwick*. BROADWAY/TOURS: *Urinetown, Mambo Kings, ...Ain't Nothin' But the Blues, Jekyll & Hyde, Grease, Miss Saigon, City of Angels*. OFF-BROADWAY: *A Fine and Private Place, Little By Little, Call the Children Home*; City Center Encores!: *The New Moon*. INTERN'L: *South Pacific* (Australia/Thailand). REGIONAL: *Little Shop of Horrors, Pirates of Penzance, Mack & Mabel, The Baker's Wife, Lizzie Borden, Kept, Into the Woods, Carousel, The Student Prince*. LOCAL: Washington National Opera: *Trilogy - The Merry Widow w/ Placido Domingo*; numerous appearances with The National Symphony Orchestra. FILM: *The King & I* (Singing Anna, Animated Feature). OTHER: Symphony Soloist with Marvin Hamlisch, Eric Kunzel, Don Pippin, Peter Nero and Skitch Henderson. RECORDINGS: *The New Moon, Jekyll & Hyde, The King & I, Little by Little*, several Broadway compilations, *Christiane Noll - A Broadway Love Story, Live at the West Bank Café, The Ira Gershwin Album and My Personal Property*.

Jill Paice BROADWAY: *Curtains* (Niki Harris, original cast recording), *The Woman in White* (Laura Fairlie). WEST END: *Gone with the Wind* (Scarlett O'Hara), *The Woman in White* (Laura Fairlie, original cast recording), *Night of 1000 Voices* (Royal Albert Hall). NATIONAL TOUR: *Mamma Mia* in Las Vegas (Sophie), *Les*

Misérables. REGIONAL: Ahmanson Theater: *Curtains* (Niki Harris). OTHER CREDITS: York Theater: *The Gig* (Lucy, original cast recording), *Weird Romance* (Delphi/Susan); Great Lakes Theater Festival: *Gypsy*. EDUCATION: Baldwin-Wallace College.

Matthew Scott (Ace) BROADWAY: *A Catered Affair*, *Jersey Boys*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Actor's Fund). REGIONAL: Old Globe: *A Catered Affair*, Paper Mill Playhouse: *Ragtime* (Houdini), *My Fair Lady*, *Carousel*, Alliance Theater: *tick, tick... BOOM!* (Jonathan); The Muny: *West Side Story* (Tony) *Side by Side by Sondheim*; Pittsburgh CLO: 1776 (Courier); PMT: *Bat Boy* (Bat Boy); York Theater: *Greenwillow*. TV: *All My Children*. WORKSHOPS: *Catch Me if You Can*, *The Flamingo Kid*. EDUCATION: BFA, Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama.

Emily Skinner (Louise) SIGNATURE: *The Witches of Eastwick*. BROADWAY: *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Actor's Fund), *Side Show* (Tony® nomination, Drama League Award), *Jekyll & Hyde*, *James Joyce's The Dead*, *The Full Monty*, *Dinner at Eight* (Outer Critics Circle nomination). NATIONAL TOUR: Disney's *On the Record*. OFF-BROADWAY: City Center's Encores: *No Strings*, *Pardon My English*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Broadway Bash*; leading roles at the WPA Theater, Playwright's Horizons, Manhattan Theater Club, York Theater, The Paramount Theater at Madison Square Garden. REGIONAL: The Kennedy Center, McCarter, Long Wharf, The Old Globe, Ford's Theater, St. Louis MUNY, TheaterVirginia. IN CONCERT: *Broadway By The Year* (director and performer), New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, Pittsburgh Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony, Merkin Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Symphony Space. RECORDINGS: countless cast albums and audio books, *Duets*, *Unsuspecting Hearts*, *Skinner/Ripley Raw at Town Hall* (all with Alice Ripley), *Elegies for Angels*, *Punks and Raging Queens*, *The Stephen Sondheim Album*, *Wall to Wall Sondheim*, *Believe: The Songs of The Sherman Brothers*, *The Stephen Schwartz Album*, animated feature *Anastasia*, and her self-titled solo CD fynsworthalley.com).

Jim Stanek (John Robert) BROADWAY: *Jacques Brel...*, *Lestat*, *Little Women*, *The Rivals*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Indiscretions*. OFF-BROADWAY: *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *Slut*, *Saturday Night* (by Stephen Sondheim), *Captain Courageous: The Musical*. REGIONAL: York Theatre: *Cyrano de Bergerac*; San Jose Center: *Damn Yankees*, *The 3hree Musketeers*; La Jolla: *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, LOCAL: Kennedy Center, *Carnival*.

CREATORS

Richard Oberacker (Composer, Co-lyricist, Co-librettist) is currently the conductor for Cirque Du Soleil's "KA" in Las Vegas. He also served as original conductor and orchestrator for Cirque's *Dralion*. As a composer and co-author, his musicals include *The Gospel According to Fishman* (Signature Theatre), *Journey to the West* (New York Musical Theater Festival), *Don't Make Me Pull This Show Over: Dispatches from the Frontlines of Parenting* (Cincinnati Fringe Festival, Ensemble Theater of Cincinnati April of 2009), *Dracula - The Game of Love* (Cincinnati College - Conservatory of Music), *A Little Theater* (Aurelia Theater) and *In That Valley* (National Alliance for Musical Theater Festival). Upcoming is a new commission for Signature Theatre: *The Sandman*.

Robert Taylor's (Co-lyricist/Co-librettist) other projects with Richard Oberacker include *Journey to the West* and *Southern Cross*. A graduate of Holland's Royal Conservatory, Union College, the University of Bonn, and Princeton University, he has taught foreign languages and ornithology in New York; English and music in China; served as music critic to the *Albany Times Union*; founded and directed several nonprofits; and worked as a freelance musician and writer in Manhattan, a translator in Europe and Asia, and lectured on opera and art history.

Eric Schaeffer (Director) *Kiss of the Spider Woman, Glory Days, The Witches of Eastwick, Saving Aimee, Into the Woods, My Fair Lady, Nevermore, The Highest Yellow, One Red Flower, Allegro, Twentieth Century, 110 in the Shade, Hedwig and the Angry Inch, The Gospel According to Fishman, Grand Hotel, The Rhythm Club, Over & Over, The Fix, Working, The Rink, Cabaret, First Lady Suite, Wings, Poor Superman, Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love*, and Sondheim musicals *Merrily We Roll Along, Sunday in the Park with George* (Arena Stage coproduction), *Passion, Into the Woods, Company, Assassins, Sweeney Todd, Follies*, and *Pacific Overtures*. BROADWAY: *Glory Days, Putting It Together*. NATIONAL TOURS: *big, Barbie™ Live in Fairytopia™*. OFFBROADWAY: *Sweet Adeline* (City Center Encores! Great American Musicals in Concert), *Under the Bridge*. LONDON: Royal Drury Lane & Prince of Wales Theatres: *The Witches of Eastwick*. LOCAL: Ford's Theatre: *Meet John Doe*; Kennedy Center: *Mame* starring Christine Baranski, Sondheim Celebration (artistic director), *Passion, Sunday in the Park with George*. NEW YORK: Avery Fisher Hall: Sondheim Concert. REGIONAL: Mark Taper Forum: *Putting It Together* (w/ Carol Burnett); Chicago: *Elmer Gantry*; Los Angeles: Disney's *Snow White*. TRAINING: BFA, Kutztown University; extended studies, Crewe and Alsager College of Visual Arts, Crewe, England. AWARDS: 2002 Washingtonian of the Year, five Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Direction, six Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Musical, 23 Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding Director; 2007 Arts Founder Award.

Karma Camp (Choreographer) SIGNATURE: *The Happy Time, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Merrily We Roll Along, The Witches of Eastwick* (Helen Hayes nomination), *Into the Woods, My Fair Lady, Assassins, Urinetown* (2006 Helen Hayes Award), *Nijinsky's Last Dance* (Helen Hayes nomination), *Follies, 110 in the Shade, Cabaret* (Helen Hayes nomination). BROADWAY: *The Graduate* w/ Kathleen Turner. OFF-BROADWAY: *Never the Sinner*. NATIONAL TOUR: *big*. REGIONAL: Kennedy Center/Sondheim Celebration: *Merrily We Roll Along*; Arena Stage: *Shakespeare in Hollywood* (Helen Hayes nomination), *Agamemnon*; Round House: *A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage*. Additional Theatres: Shakespeare Theatre, Actors' Theatre of Louisville, McCarter Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, Prince Music Theatre, Tennessee Rep. Opera: *Goya* w/ Placido Domingo; Washington Opera: *Vanessa*; Wolf Trap Opera Co.: Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*. TV: *The Sounds of WWII* (PBS), *All My Children* (ABC), over 22 international commercials. ADDITIONAL CREDITS: Disney: *Snow White, Twice Charmed*; 1992 Inaugural Gala for Al Gore (director/choreographer), *Remember the Children* w/ Kathie Lee Gifford, NSO Pops with Marvin Hamlisch. Ms. Camp is a Signature Theatre Artistic Associate.

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.

Directions

Signature Theatre is just 12 minutes from downtown Washington, DC in Arlington's Shirlington Village. The new 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 GPS online mapping systems such as mapquest.com do not yet recognize Signature Theatre's address. For directions visit www.signature-theatre.org.

Contact Info

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