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**signature**news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 20, 2011

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## National Radio Personality Robert Aubry Davis to Star in Signature Theatre's Production of the Tony Award®-Winning Musical *Hairspray*

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Arlington, VA, July 20, 2011 – The Tony Award®-winning **Signature Theatre** has announced that national radio host **Robert Aubry Davis** (WETA's "Around Town" and Sirius/XM Radio) will be making his musical theater stage debut, playing the iconic role of Edna in its upcoming production of the celebrated musical *Hairspray*. Directed by Signature Artistic Director **Eric Schaeffer**, *Hairspray* will run from November 21<sup>st</sup> through January 29<sup>th</sup>. Based on the 1988 cult film directed by **John Waters**, *Hairspray* features music by **Marc Shaiman**, lyrics by **Scott Wittman** and **Marc Shaiman**, and a book by **Mark O'Donnell** and **Thomas Meehan**. The musical, which played on Broadway for 6 ½ years, took home eight 2003 Tony Awards, including "Best Musical."

In speaking about the casting of **Mr. Davis**, Schaeffer said, "When I decided to bring *Hairspray* to Signature and began to think of the perfect Edna -- one name sprung to mind -- **Robert Aubry Davis**. I thought how perfect for him to make his stage debut in this splashy, wonderful story in the role of Edna Turnblad. With Robert leading the company, *Hairspray* at Signature promises to be a delight for everyone for this holiday season!"

**Mr. Davis** produces and hosts *Millennium of Music* (now in its 33<sup>rd</sup> season), heard on public radio stations, satellite radio, and broadcast internationally. Speaking about his much-anticipated stage debut, Davis stated, "Eric Schaeffer has, like a tomb raider of old, decided to wake the sleeping thespian long-buried in my breast. I only hope I can do justice to mothers everywhere, to those who fought so valiantly in the civil rights movement, to the good people of Baltimore, and to John Waters and the amazing creative team who brought this story -- one that I personally lived through -- to life."

## **ABOUT ROBERT AUBRY DAVIS**

Robert Aubry Davis is a frequent lecturer and commentator for arts institutions throughout Washington D.C. and hosts the Emmy Award®-winning weekly arts discussion program ***Around Town*** for **WETA-TV**, now in its 26<sup>th</sup> season. He is a contributing writer to newspapers, journals and cultural publications both nationally and internationally.

After working in public radio for over 25 years, Davis has spent a decade at **XM Satellite Radio**, where he created two channels: “**VOX**,” dedicated to vocal classical music from Gregorian chant through opera, and “**The Village**,” modeled after the public radio program *Songs for Aging Children*, a celebration of ‘60s folk music that Davis co-hosted for nearly 15 years. He currently is a host for Sirius/XM’s Symphony Hall and the classical Pops channel.

Davis was a founding member of the Recording Academy’s Washington Chapter, where he has served as President and a national elected trustee. He has served on and chaired a number of national committees, and is currently a trustee of the Grammy Foundation. For his work in the arts, he was made a Chevalier de L’ordre des Arts et Lettres by the Republic of France, and in 2006, he was made a Chevalier of the Order of Leopold on decree of King Albert II of Belgium.

## **SIGNATURE’S 2011-12 SEASON TICKETS & *Hairspray* Information**

Signature Theatre’s 2011-2012 line-up features the Tony Award®-winning shows *Hairspray* and *God of Carnage* and the Washington DC premiere of the cult classic musical *Xanadu*. The season also features an unprecedented five world premiere works, including *The Hollow*, *The Boy Detective Fails* (both in repertory), *Brother Russia*, and *Really Really*. In addition to the mainstage shows, Signature presents three productions with limited engagements, including the world premiere of *A Second Chance* and *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South*, based on the award-winning book. Stephen Sondheim’s first musical *Saturday Night* will be a special concert event that will play for four performances only.

Single tickets will go on sale July 5<sup>th</sup>. Assorted subscription packages are available by calling Signature’s Box Office at (703) 820-9771. For more information on the 2011-12 season, please visit [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).

*Hairspray* will play in our MAX Theatre from November 21, 2011 – January 29, 2012

## **ABOUT SIGNATURE**

Recipient of the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award®, Signature Theatre is a non-profit professional theater company in Arlington, Virginia dedicated to producing contemporary musicals and plays, reinventing classic musicals, and developing new work. Under the leadership of co-founder and Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer and Managing Director Maggie Boland, Signature has presented 32 world premiere productions and is renowned for combining Broadway-quality productions with intimate playing spaces.

In addition to hosting the finest talent from the DC metropolitan area and New York, Signature has been home to such theatre luminaries as Chita Rivera, George Hearn, Hunter Foster, Emily Skinner, Marc Kudisch, Judy Kuhn, John Kander and Fred Ebb, Cameron Mackintosh, Terrence McNally, and the company’s signature composer, Stephen Sondheim. Since its founding in 1989, Signature has won 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the Washington, DC region’s professional theater and has been honored with 293 nominations.

Signature is partially supported by a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts and by a gift from Arlington County through the Arlington Commission for the Arts and the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources.

## **DIRECTIONS**

Signature Theatre 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 <http://signature-theatre.org/map.htm>.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Subscriptions/Groups: (703) 820-9771

Single Tickets: Ticketmaster (703) 573-SEAT (7328)

Signature Administration (571) 527-1860

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<http://www.signature-theatre.org>

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