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**signature**news

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## Signature Theatre Announces its 2011-2012 Season

### 5 World Premiere Works plus Tony Award®-Winning *God of Carnage*, *Hairspray* and the Washington premiere of *Xanadu*

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Arlington, VA, April 4, 2011 – **Eric Schaeffer**, Artistic Director of the Tony Award®-winning **Signature Theatre**, today announced the company’s 2011-2012 season, with the visionary company producing two regional premieres and an unprecedented five world premiere works. The Theatre’s 22<sup>nd</sup> season further cements the ground-breaking Theatre’s standing as an innovative leader in mounting daring new works by rising new artists.

**Schaeffer** stated, “Signature’s season is filled with extraordinary surprises, exceptional music, and exciting re-interpretations. With five fascinating world premieres, we once again show our commitment to showcasing bold new works by some of the best artists working today.” Schaeffer continued, “With *Hairspray*, *God of Carnage*, and *Xanadu* also on tap, we continue to bring audiences reinventions of theatrical experiences that can’t be found anywhere else.”

**Maggie Boland**, Signature’s Managing Director, said, “With an extraordinary combination of artists well known to our stages alongside some important emerging talents, the 2011-12 line-up will provide audiences with a remarkably broad spectrum of projects through which to experience Signature’s mission. We hope the whole community will join us for our **Target Open House on July 23** to experience a special preview of the season as part of a day packed with free performances. Like the season itself, our Open House will be bigger and better than ever.”

Subscription packages for mainstage shows are now on sale by calling Signature’s Box Office at (703) 820-9771. Single tickets will go on sale July 5<sup>th</sup>. Limited engagements can be added to a mainstage subscription. The cabaret 4-show subscription and Holiday Follies Cabaret are also available for purchase.

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## **SIGNATURE THEATRE'S 2011 – 2012 SEASON**

### **American Musical Voices Project Repertory Series (AMVP Rep)**

Signature Theatre's 2011-2012 season launches with the pioneering **AMVP Rep**: a pair of world premiere musicals that make theatre history by running full productions in rotating repertory.

#### **THE HOLLOW**

**Book by Hunter Foster**

**Music & Lyrics by Matt Conner**

**Based on *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving**

**Directed by Eric Schaeffer**

**August – October 2011**

**The MAX**

**"Matt Conner will be heard of many times in the future." -- *BroadwayWorld.com***

From the composer of *Nevermore* and *Partial Eclipse*, **The Hollow** is a chilling musical reinterpretation of the classic thriller *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. In a devout 18<sup>th</sup> century village, a mysterious stranger spreading radically new ideas challenges the traditional order. However, when rumors spread of a headless horseman murdering friends and neighbors, the townsfolk blame the outsider for this demonic curse.

#### **THE BOY DETECTIVE FAILS**

**Book by Joe Meno**

**Music & Lyrics by Adam Gwon**

**Based on novel *The Boy Detective Fails* by Joe Meno**

**Directed by Joe Calarco**

**August – October 2011**

**The MAX**

**"An extremely talented composer and lyricist" who "is seriously going places." -- *The New York Sun, StageSpace.com***

**The Boy Detective Fails**, based on Joe Meno's acclaimed novel, tells the story of Billy Argo, "boy detective." In the twilight of a childhood full of wonder, a broken-hearted Billy faces a mystery he can't comprehend - the shocking death of his young sister and crime-solving partner, Caroline. Ten years later, a 30-year old Billy returns to his quiet New Jersey town after an extended stay at St. Vitus' Hospital for the Mentally III. Although determined to solve the mystery of Caroline's death and right old wrongs, he instead discovers a world full of unimaginable strangeness, beauty and love.

#### **HAIRSPRAY**

**Book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan**

**Music by Marc Shaiman**

**Lyrics by Scott Wittman and Marc Shaiman**

**Based on the 1988 John Waters film *Hairspray***

**Directed by Eric Schaeffer**

**November 2011 – January 2012**

**The MAX**

**The 2003 Tony Award® Winner for Best Musical -- *You can't stop the beat.***

The world is spinning out of control...but all Tracy Turnblad wants to do is dance.

When she wins a coveted spot on “The Corny Collins Show,” Baltimore’s most popular teen dance program, the high school loser with the big heart, big personality and big hair proves everyone wrong and becomes a local TV celebrity. It seems like Tracy will have it all – the eye of heartthrob Link Larkin, the Miss Teenage Hairspray crown, even a modeling gig with *Mr. Pinky’s Hefty Hideaway*.

But is segregated Baltimore ready to embrace her demand for racial integration? And will her larger-than-life mother ever leave the house?

**“Stocked with deliriously tuneful songs...*Hairspray* is as sweet as a show can be without promoting tooth decay.” – *The New York Times***

**World Premiere**

**REALLY REALLY**

**A New Drama by Paul Downs Colaizzo**

**Directed by Matthew Gardiner**

**January – March 2012**

**The ARK**

**“The gem of this generation, and the upside to our selfishness, is the invincibility we espouse.”**

From one of the country’s most promising new voices comes this contemporary drama that pushes the edges and embraces the harsh reality of today’s youth.

At an elite university, when the party of the year results in the regret of a lifetime, one person will stop at nothing to salvage her suddenly evaporating future. In this quick-witted and gripping comic tragedy about “Generation Me,” it’s every man for himself.

**World Premiere**

**BROTHER RUSSIA**

**Book & Lyrics by John Dempsey**

**Music by Dana Rowe**

**Directed by Eric Schaeffer**

**February – March 2012**

**The MAX**

**A world premiere rock musical from the award-winning creators of *The Fix* and *The Witches of Eastwick*.**

In a desolate potato field north of Omsk, a comically fourth-rate Russian theatre troupe sets up its tents and wows the local farmers with rock-fueled adaptations of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Tonight, however, the company will toss classic literature aside to showcase the life story of their impresario and star, the seemingly immortal Brother Russia – more commonly known as Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin. Yes, *that* Rasputin: the hypnotic mystic who seduced and ruled the Tsar and Tsarina in the waning days of Imperial Russia.

**“Dempsey’s lyrics are exceptionally witty, and Rowe’s music jaunty and tuneful, yet with the sophisticated sweep of a Sondheim.” – *TIME* Magazine**

**GOD OF CARNAGE**

**by Yasmina Reza**

**Translated by Christopher Hampton**

**April – June 2012**

**The ARK**

**The three-time 2009 Tony Award® Winner, including Best Play**

From the award-winning author of *Art* comes this shrewd and vicious comedy that gleefully flouts the perception of human “civility.”

Two upper-middle-class Brooklyn couples meet to discuss an incident of playground violence between their sons. Though the evening begins with polite pleasantries, it quickly descends into primal madness as tempers flare, loyalties shift and the parents devolve into children. Like last season’s *Art*, Reza ferociously and hilariously strips her affluent, over-achieving characters down to their savage core.

**“An expert piece of stagecraft, and savagely funny.” - *International Herald Tribune***

**Washington Premiere**

**XANADU**

**Book by Douglas Carter Beane**

**Music & Lyrics by Jeff Lynne**

**Based on the 1980 Universal Pictures film**

**Directed & Choreographed by Matthew Gardiner**

**April – May 2012**

**The MAX**

**The award-winning instant cult classic musical comedy – featuring the hit songs “Magic,” “Suddenly” and “I’m Alive”**

Grab your loved ones and glow sticks – as Signature turns the MAX Theatre into one big disco-heaven ball!

1980. Venice, California. Legwarmers are in and roller skates are way sexy.

*Xanadu*, the zany send-up to the cult film starring Olivia Newton-John, delivers rock-star hilarity in an electrifying tale of forbidden love. Kira, one of seven quirky Greek muses, is sworn to three things: to inspire mortals, never reveal her identity and never, *ever* fall in love. However, when she emboldens struggling artist Sonny to create the first roller disco, Kira feels the artistic pull of her own.

**“Heaven on wheels...outlandishly enjoyable.” – *The New York Times***

**Special Events for the 2011 – 2012 Season**

In addition to the mainstage productions, Signature will also be presenting three shows with limited engagements, including one world premiere:

**Washington DC premiere**

**SWEET TEA: BLACK GAY MEN OF THE SOUTH**

**Written and performed by E. Patrick Johnson**

**September – October 2011**

**The ARK**

Based on his award-winning and critically acclaimed book, **E. Patrick Johnson** stars in this new one-man exploration into the southern black gay community. A fascinating, validating oral history inspired by the author’s personal journey, *Sweet Tea* explores the perceptions, angst, triumphs and vulnerabilities of this minority within a minority. With passion and insight, **Johnson** reinforces the spoken-word tradition while challenging stereotypes – and finding humor, humanity and hope within.

*Sweet Tea* is presented in association with the **Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media**, at Columbia College, Chicago.

## **SATURDAY NIGHT**

**Book by Julius and Philip Epstein**

**Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim**

**October 2011**

**The MAX**

Sondheim. Signature's Signature. **Stephen Sondheim's** hidden gem *Saturday Night* (1953) is a Signature special concert event that will play for four performances only. Unproduced for almost 45 years, *Saturday Night* is the first musical Mr. Sondheim ever wrote. This romantic comedy surges with the composer's unique musical voice and sophisticated lyrics. On the eve of the 1929 stock market crash, a group of Brooklyn boys despair their dateless Saturday nights. One of them dreams of Manhattan society life and hatches a get rich quick scheme which ultimately backfires. Features gems such as "Saturday Night," "So Many People" and "What More Do I Need?"

## **World Premiere**

### **A SECOND CHANCE**

**Book, Music & Lyrics by Ted Shen**

**Directed by Jonathan Butterell**

**November 2011**

**The ARK**

From the director of Signature's *Giant* comes this intimate new musical about unexpectedly finding love when you are least looking for it. Two savvy New Yorkers are seated next each other at a dinner party – he is mourning the recent loss of his wife; she is newly divorced. They share a passion for art. Neither wants nor feels that they deserve to find love – and yet they are irresistibly drawn to the other. This lyrical duet showcases their journey towards happiness against all odds.

## **Cabaret Series**

Signature Theatre will also continue its special **Cabaret Performances** in the coming season. The cabarets remain an extension of the company's commitment to musical theater and presented in true Signature style – with a mix of traditional and cabaret-table seating, plus drinks and light fare from Ali's Bar. Evoking a genuine and lively night-club atmosphere, the cabaret performances are presented in the intimate setting of the ARK Theatre. Part of the cabaret season for 2011-12 will be 13 performances of *Holiday Follies*. Signature's annual holiday celebration will feature holiday favorites – and buckets of cheer – with special guest performers to liven up the festivities. Audiences will want to grab the tinsel, fill their flasks with eggnog and celebrate this special time of year in grand Signature style.

## **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 70 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: (703) 820-9771

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

Signature Administration (571) 527-1860

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