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**signature**news

## Tony Award®-winning Musical *Sunset Boulevard* Makes its Washington Premiere Tonight at Signature Theatre

Andrew Lloyd Webber Musical headlined by Broadway's  
Florence Lacey, D.B. Bonds, Susan Derry, & Ed Dixon

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Arlington, VA, December 7, 2010 – Virginia's Tony Award-winning **Signature Theatre** begins its run of the legendary Hollywood musical *Sunset Boulevard* this evening, December 7<sup>th</sup> – and runs through February 13, 2011. Headlining the production – the area's first staging of the Tony Award-winning musical – is Broadway's **Florence Lacey** (*Evita; Hello Dolly!; Signature's Follies*) as the tragic silent film star Norma Desmond. Ms. Lacey is complemented by **D.B. Bonds** (*The Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables, Signature's The Visit*) as Joe, **Susan Derry** (*Wonderful Town*) as Betty, and **Ed Dixon** (*The Iceman Cometh, The Three Musketeers*) as Max von Mayerling. Three time Helen Hayes Award winner **J. Fred Shiffman** is Sheldrake and Washington favorite **Harry A. Winter** is Cecil B. DeMille.

The new production is directed by Artistic Director **Eric Schaeffer** (*Million Dollar Quartet*) and music director and conductor **Jon Kalbflesich** leads the 20-member orchestra. The creative team that masterminded Signature's hit production of *Chess* has collaborated here on *Sunset Boulevard: Karma Camp* (choreography), **Daniel Conway** (sets), **Kathleen Geldard** (costumes), and **Matt Rowe** (sound). **Howard Binkley** is the lighting designer.

The *Sunset Boulevard* ensemble features **Sandy Bainum, Madeline Botteri, Matt Conner, William Diggie, Rebecca Fale, Gia Mora, Jake Odmark, Kirsten Riegler, Stephen Gregory Smith, Sean Thompson, Matthew Wojtal, and Kara Tameika Watkins.**

Director Eric Schaeffer stated, "I'm thrilled to have Flo Lacey and D.B. Bonds leading this amazing group of actors bringing Signature's intimate *Sunset Boulevard* to life. This terrific company along with our 20-piece orchestra in our 276-seat MAX Theatre promises to be a musical theater experience like no other. This will be a *Sunset Boulevard* not to miss!"

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Single tickets range in price from \$59 - \$85 and are available by calling Ticketmaster at (703) 573-SEAT (7328) or visiting [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org). Group discounts are available for parties of ten or more by contacting Bethany Shannon at [shannonb@signature-theatre.org](mailto:shannonb@signature-theatre.org) or by calling (571) 527-1831. For more information please visit [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).

Based on the 1950s film noir directed by **Billy Wilder**, with book and lyrics by Don Black and Christopher Hampton, **Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard*** is one of the greatest Hollywood tales ever told on the musical stage. Silent film star Norma Desmond's infamous line "All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up" is the stuff of Hollywood legend. In the glamorous film world of Los Angeles where youth and beauty were all, what happens when the lights dim and the audiences disappear? With such stunning songs as "With One Look," "As If We Never Said Goodbye" and "Perfect Year," Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* is a lush romantic tragedy of Hollywood proportions.

### **PERFORMANCE DATES**

Performances of *Sunset Boulevard* run from December 7, 2010 to February 13, 2011. Show times are Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 pm, Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00 pm, Saturdays at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sundays at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm. There are no performances of *Sunset Boulevard* on Saturday, December 11 at 2:00 pm, Tuesday, December 14, or on Christmas Day. Signature is presenting special 2:00 pm performances on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **SPECIAL NEW YEARS EVE EXTRAGANZA**

Signature will bring in the New Year with a special *Sunset Boulevard* New Year's Eve Extravaganza including an 8:00 pm performance followed by a party with dancing and a midnight champagne toast. Tickets for New Year's Eve range from \$76 - \$81 each plus \$100 per person for the party. (Subscribers can add the party to their ticket for only \$75 each).

### **SPONSORSHIP**

*Sunset Boulevard* is sponsored by Jaylee Mead. Additional support from the Altria Group, Ltd.

### **MEDIA SPONSORSHIPS**

*ABC7, 97.1 WASH FM, BIG 100.3, and Metro Weekly* are media sponsors for *Sunset Boulevard*.

### **LOCATION – PROXIMITY TO WASHINGTON, DC**

Located in Arlington, Virginia and complete with free parking, Signature Theatre is just 5.2 miles from the D.C.'s landmark, the Washington Monument, an estimated 10 – 15 minute drive according to [googlemaps.com](http://googlemaps.com). Using public transportation, Signature is a \$12 taxi ride from the Pentagon City Metro stop (on both the Blue & Yellow lines) with a taxi stand located in front of the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

## **SEASON SUBSCRIPTION TICKETS**

The remaining shows in Signature's 2010-11 season include Yasmina Reza's Tony Award-winning play *Art*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, Joe Calarco's *Walter Cronkite Is Dead.*, and Joseph Thalken's musical *Wheatley's Folly*. Subscriptions for three or more productions are available by calling Signature's box office at (703) 820-9771.

## **AMENITIES – ALI'S BAR**

Starting one hour before and extending for one hour after performances, patrons can visit Ali's Bar for outstanding wine, beer, mixed drinks, and chef-prepared light fare. The theater's much praised source of refreshment overlooking a tree-lined boulevard has been masterminded by wine expert Suzanne McGrath, the proprietor of Shirlington's gourmet wine store, The Curious Grape. Ticket purchase is not required to eat or drink at Ali's Bar.

## **SUNSET BOULEVARD**

**Book and Lyrics by Don Black and Christopher Hampton**

**Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber**

**Based on the Billy Wilder film *Sunset Boulevard***

**December 7, 2010 – February 13, 2011**

**The MAX**

|                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Director</b>                 | <b>Eric Schaeffer</b>        |
| <b>Choreographer</b>            | <b>Karma Camp</b>            |
| <b>Music Director/Conductor</b> | <b>Jon Kalbfleisch</b>       |
| <b>Set Designer</b>             | <b>Dan Conway</b>            |
| <b>Costume Designer</b>         | <b>Kathleen Geldard</b>      |
| <b>Lighting Designer</b>        | <b>Howard Binkley</b>        |
| <b>Sound Designer</b>           | <b>Matt Rowe</b>             |
| <b>Production Stage Manager</b> | <b>Kerry Epstein</b>         |
| <b>Norma Desmond</b>            | <b>Florence Lacey</b>        |
| <b>Joe Gillis</b>               | <b>D.B. Bonds</b>            |
| <b>Betty Schaefer</b>           | <b>Susan Derry</b>           |
| <b>Max von Mayerling</b>        | <b>Ed Dixon</b>              |
| <b>Sheldrake</b>                | <b>J. Fred Shiffman</b>      |
| <b>Cecil B. DeMille</b>         | <b>Harry A. Winter</b>       |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Sandy Bainum</b>          |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Madeline Botteri</b>      |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Matt Conner</b>           |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>William Diggle</b>        |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Rebecca Fale Chiu</b>     |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Gia Mora</b>              |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Jake Odmark</b>           |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Kirsten Riegler</b>       |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Stephen Gregory Smith</b> |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Sean Thompson</b>         |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Matthew Wojtal</b>        |
| <b>Ensemble</b>                 | <b>Kara Tameika Watkins</b>  |

### Principal Actor Bios

**Florence Lacey (*Norma Desmond*)** starred in the title role in *Evita* on Broadway and in touring companies in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. She received the Hollywood Drama Logue Award for her performance in *Evita* and won the Theatre World Award for her Broadway debut as Irene Malloy in *Hello Dolly!* Her other Broadway credits include *The Grand Tour*, *Les Misérables*, and *An Evening with Jerry Herman*. Off-Broadway Flo starred in *Sweetfeet*, *Elizabeth and Essex*, *Styne after Styne*, and *Under the Bridge*.

She toured nationally in *John Browns' Body* starring Rock Hudson and directed by John Houseman. Her regional theatre credits include *Sunday in the Park with George* at the Kennedy Center) and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Carousel*, and *Gypsy* at the Pittsburgh Playhouse where she earned the Pittsburgh Drama League Award; *Pal Joey* at Goodspeed and *A Little Night Music* and *Wings* at Connecticut Rep. where she won the Connecticut Critics Outer Circle Award. As soloist, she has sung at Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl and on Late Night with David Letterman and the Today Show. Her recordings include *Evita*, *The Grand Tour*, *Hello Dolly!*, and *Under the Bridge*. She has been a proud member of Actors' Equity Association for over 35 years. Flo is married to Broadway conductor Tim Stella.

At Signature Theatre Flo has performed in *Ace*, *Saving Aimee*, *Nevermore*, *The Rhythm Club*, *The Gospel According to Fishman*, *Follies*, *One Red Flower*.

**D.B. Bonds (*Joe Gillis*)** has performed on Broadway in *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables* and in national tours of *Legally Blonde* as Emmett, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* as Freddy Benson, and in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Off-Broadway he performed in *Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn* and *The Last Five Years* (standby). In regional theatre, he has performed in *Urinetown* and *John and Jen* at the Weston Playhouse, in *Godspell* and in *The Last Five Years* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

At Signature Theatre, D.B. played the role of Young Anton in *The Visit*, part of Signature's Kander & Ebb Celebration.

**Susan Derry (*Betty Schaefer*)** made her Broadway debut in the Tony Award-winning revival of *Wonderful Town*, and played the role of Christine in *The Phantom of the Opera* in Hamburg, Germany. In the Washington area, Susan played Kathleen in the Kennedy Center's recent revival of *Ragtime*, and was featured in their revival of *Mame*, directed by Eric Schaeffer; Susan was a Street Chorus Soloist in the recent revival of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Marin Alsop, at both the Kennedy Center and at Carnegie Hall. Roles include Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Meg in *Crimes of the Heart*, Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Agnes in *I Do! I Do!*, Fiona in *Brigadoon*, Betty Haynes in *White Christmas*, Susan in *Company*, Luisa in *The Fantasticks*, and Maria in *West Side Story*, among others. Susan headlined as a guest soloist for an evening of Frank Loesser's music at Carnegie Hall with the New York Pops, led by Rob Fisher and the late Skitch Henderson, and has appeared in the *Encores!* Series at New York City Center eleven times. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Northwestern University and a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music.

Susan appeared in Signature's production of *Show Boat*.

On Broadway **Ed Dixon** (*Max von Mayerling*) has played Senator Carlin in Gore Vidal's *The Best Man*, 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*. Off-Broadway he has performed the title role of Shylock (Drama Desk nomination) and at National Actor's Theatre he performed in *The Persians*, *Here Lies Jenny*, and *Under the Bridge*. Ed has performed in national tours of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* as the Governor of Texas, in *Pippin* as Charlemagne, and in *Sunset Boulevard* as Max, having received a Joseph Jefferson Nomination. His is the author/composer of *Cather County*, *Richard Cory* (Steinberg Grant, Festival Citation, NYMF Audience Award), and *Fanny Hill* (two Drama Desk nominations, Dramalogue nomination, two Dean's Lists Awards).

For the past thirty-three years, **J. Fred Shiffman** (*Sheldrake*) has performed at Arena Stage (where he is an Affiliated Artist), the Shakespeare Theatre Company, The Studio Theatre, Woolly Mammoth and Theater J. Regionally he has performed at the Old Globe, McCarter Theatre Center, and South Coast Rep. Fred has received 12 Helen Hayes nominations and two Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding Ensemble. He received three Helen Hayes Awards: Outstanding Actor/Resident Play (*Souvenir*); Outstanding Actor/Resident Musical (*Falsettos*); and, Outstanding Supporting Actor/Resident Play (*Lovers and Executioners*). Fred has recorded *Barefoot in the Park* for LA Theatre Works, with Laura Linney and Eric Stoltz. He is a proud member of Actors' Equity.

At Signature, Fred performed in *Show Boat* and *Dirty Blonde*.

**Harry A. Winter** (*Cecil B. DeMille*) has toured nationally in *Gigi* and *Jolson: The Musical*. Harry has been working in the Washington area since 1978 and his local credits include *Show Boat*, *Allegro*, *110 in the Shade*, and 11 other Signature shows.

**Eric Schaeffer** (*Director*) is the artistic director/co-founder of Signature Theatre, recipient of the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award and home to the American Musical Voices Project, the largest musical theatre commissioning program in the country. Schaeffer has just directed the Broadway hit *Million Dollar Quartet* and has also directed *Putting It Together* and *Glory Days* on Broadway. On London's West End he directed *The Witches of Eastwick*. Schaeffer has directed over 40 productions for Signature including the world premieres of *The Hollow*, *First You Dream*, *Saving Aimee*, and *Nevermore*; the American premieres of *The Fix* and *The Witches of Eastwick*, as well as *Chess*, *Les Misérables*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Into the Woods*, among others. Known for his direction of the works of Stephen Sondheim, he has staged nine of the composer's musicals at Signature Theatre and was artistic director for the Kennedy Center's Sondheim Celebration where he directed *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Passion*. Regionally, he has directed at the Mark Taper Forum, the Goodman Theatre, Ford's Theatre, and Arena Stage. His awards include six Helen Hayes Awards for Direction. Schaeffer's production of *Chess* is currently running at Signature and he will direct also direct the world premiere of Joseph Thalken's *Wheatley's Folly*.

## **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 31 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 276 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**

The Signature Theatre 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 theater. 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  
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