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Virginia's Signature Theatre Premieres Musical *Sycamore Trees* by Ricky Ian Gordon, May 18 – June 13, 2010

Directed by Tina Landau, the Broadway cast includes Farah Alvin, Marc Kudisch, Judy Kuhn, Jessica Molaskey, Matthew Risch, Diane Sutherland, and Tony Yazbeck

Sycamore Trees is Part Two of the largest single musical theater commissioning and producing initiative at a U.S. theater, Signature's "American Musical Voices Project," sponsored by The Shen Family Foundation

Arlington, VA, May 18, 2010 – Signature Theatre, through its ground-breaking "American Musical Voices Project," this month premieres the musical *Sycamore Trees* written by **Ricky Ian Gordon**, the award-winning composer of the opera *The Grapes of Wrath* and the musicals *Dream True* and *My Life with Albertine*. A starry Broadway cast portrays Gordon's own family story – complete with a tough Bronx-born father and former "Borscht Belt" singer/comedian mother – in a tale of two generations' struggles and triumphs in the decades from World War II through the 1990s. The production runs from May 18 through June 13, with the official opening on June 1.

Sycamore Trees is directed by Steppenwolf Theatre member and acclaimed director **Tina Landau** and features seven outstanding Broadway actors: **Farah Alvin** (*Nine*, *The Look of Love*, *Kuni-Leml*), **Marc Kudisch** (*9 to 5*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Bells Are Ringing*, Signature's *Witches of Eastwick*, *The Highest Yellow*), **Judy Kuhn** (*Les Misérables*, *Rags*, *She Loves Me*; Signature's *The Highest Yellow*), **Jessica Molaskey** (*Parade*, *A Man of No Importance*), **Matthew Risch** (*Pal Joey*, *Legally Blonde*), **Diane Sutherland** (*She Loves Me*, *1776*, *Cats*), and **Tony Yazbeck** (*Gypsy*, *A Chorus Line*, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*). Tony Award winner **Bruce Coughlin** will provide orchestrations, with musical direction by **Fred Lassen** of Broadway's *South Pacific* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*.

The Tony-Award® winning Signature Theatre is nationally known for its world premiere musicals and dramas, having produced 26 new works in its twenty-year history. *Sycamore Trees* is the second part of Signature's "American Musical Voices Project" sponsored by The Shen Family Foundation. The American Musical Voices Project is the largest single musical theater commissioning and producing initiative of any U.S. theater.

Composer Ricky Ian Gordon says of his new work, "When my father came home from World War II in 1945, my family lived in a crowded tenement in the Bronx, poor and with bed bugs. Then my parents got the idea to move to the suburbs where the dream of life flowering in a clean and spacious environment promised to be the answer. It wasn't. This is the story of a family and what happened to them ... and music is its heartbeat and inner life." Dramaturg **Nina Mankin** collaborated with Gordon on the book.

Director Tina Landau stated, "In *Sycamore Trees*, an American family speaks directly to the audience as they tell, and re-live, their stories in the second half of the 20th century. The piece is very intimate, and deeply personal, yet it also has a historical sweep as it places these characters in the tumult of the times—the chaotic 60s, the pressurized 80s, and so on. It's exquisite—in its sense of longing and loss, and the profound ties that bind family together. Above all, the piece has a form which is completely unique—unlike any other show I can think of. It's highly inventive and idiosyncratic in its storytelling—constantly surprising, creating and breaking its own rules. The whole piece feels like a poem—some haunting combination of memory, music, and dream."

Working with **Tina Landau** on the creative team are Scenic Designer **James Schuette**, Costume Designer **Kathleen Geldard**, Lighting Designer **Scott Zielinski**, and Sound Designer **Matt Rowe**.

COMPOSER RICKY IAN GORDON

Composer Ricky Ian Gordon is the second recipient of the "American Musical Voices Project" Award to present a new work of musical theater on Signature's stage. His opera *The Grapes of Wrath*, written with librettist Michael Korie and commissioned by The Minnesota, Utah, and Pittsburgh Operas, premiered February 10, 2007 and was immediately called "The Great American Opera" by *Musical America*. It was recently performed in a concert version at Carnegie Hall in a sold out one-night-only event with an all-star cast and narrated by Jane Fonda. His *Green Sneakers* (Recording, Blue Griffin Records), commissioned by Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, was hailed a "masterpiece" in *Opera Today* and *The American Record Guide*. When *Orpheus and Euridice* (Recording, Sh-k-Boom) premiered at Lincoln Center as part of the Great Performers/New Visions Series, it won an OBIE Award, and the citation read: "One of the year's most moving theatrical events in any genre."

Born in Oceanside, New York and raised on Long Island, Gordon was in love with poetry and fascinated from an early age by all forms of opera and musical theater. He attended Carnegie Mellon University as a piano major, but soon realized that his true vocation was as a composer. After college he settled in New York City and quickly emerged as one of the most successful writers of a kind of vocal music that straddles the world of theater and art song. His unusual ability to find the musical

core of a poem or lyric and express that essence in an appropriate musical style, has given his songs great appeal to singers of all styles and persuasions. Gordon's songs have been performed and/or recorded by such internationally renowned singers as Renee Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Andrea Marcovicci, Harolyn Blackwell, Betty Buckley, and many others.

On March 13, 2001, Gordon's music was presented at Lincoln Center as part of the American Songbook Series in a concert entitled "Bright Eyed Joy: The Music of Ricky Ian Gordon." In *The New York Times* Stephen Holden wrote, "If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon had to be defined by a single quality, it would be the bursting effervescence infusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim...It's caviar for a world gorging on pizza."

Gordon's accomplishments in musical theater are also notable, with shows such as *My Life with Albertine*, written with Richard Nelson for Playwrights Horizons (recorded on PS Classics); *Dream True*, written with Tina Landau for The Vineyard Theater (Recording, PS Classics); *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, written with Jean Claude Van Itallie for Houston Grand Opera; *Only Heaven*, which uses poems by Langston Hughes, for Encompass Opera, (Recording, PS Classics); and *Morning Star*, with librettist William Hoffman, for the Lyric Opera Of Chicago's Opera Studio.

Gordon's current projects include commissions with librettist Michael Korie from the Minnesota Opera for a work to be based on the novel *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* and from the Metropolitan Opera for a work about Victor Hugo's daughter, *Adele in Nova Scotia*. For Virginia Opera and The Virginia Arts Festival he has been commissioned to write *Rappahannock County* with librettist Mark Stephen Campbell. His awards include an OBIE, the National Institute for Music Theater Award, the Stephen Sondheim Award, The Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla Music Theater Foundation Award, the Jonathan Larson Foundation Award, the Constance Klinsky Award, The Shen Family Foundation Award, a National Institute For Music Theater Award, A Carnegie-Mellon Alumni Award, and several awards from ASCAP and The American Music Center.

Ricky Ian Gordon's music is widely recorded, and is published by Carl Fischer Music, Presser Music and Rodgers and Hammerstein/Williamson Music. For more information about the composer and his works go to <http://www.rickyiangordon.com>.

SPONSORSHIP

Sycamore Trees is sponsored by The Shen Family Foundation and supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. It is a recipient of the [Edgerton Foundation New American Plays Award](#).

Sycamore Trees is offered as part of *Minds Wide Open: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*, a program that includes thousands of special events and programs offered between March and June 2010. For a list of events and more information about *Minds Wide Open: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts*, visit www.vamindswideopen.com.

PHOTOS

Editors: Images from *Sycamore Trees* are available for downloading from http://www.signature-theatre.org/photo_downloads.htm. (Link for press only: please do not publish).

TICKETS

Tickets for *Sycamore Trees* range from \$52 - \$76 and are available by calling Ticketmaster at (703) 573-SEAT (7328) or visiting www.signature-theatre.org. Group discounts are available for parties of ten or more by contacting Jackie Carl at carlj@signature-theatre.org.

PERFORMANCE DATES

Performances of *Sycamore Trees* run from May 18 through June 13, 2010. The press performance is Sunday, May 30 at 7:00 pm. 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. There are no performances of *Sycamore Trees* on Saturday, May 22 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, June 1 at 7:30 pm.

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.

SYCAMORE TREES

Music by Ricky Ian Gordon
Direction by Tina Landau
Book by Ricky Ian Gordon and Nina Mankin
May 18 – June 13, 2010

Music Director/Conductor Fred Lassen
Orchestrations..... Bruce Coughlin
Set Designer..... James Schuette
Costume Designer Kathleen Geldard
Lighting Designer Scott Zielinski
Sound Designer..... Matt Rowe
Co-writer of Book/Dramaturg..... Nina Mankin
Production Stage Manager Kerry Epstein

CAST

Ginnie/The Youngest Daughter Farah Alvin
Sidney/The Father..... Marc Kudisch
Theresa/The Middle Daughter..... Judy Kuhn
Myrna/The Oldest Daughter Jessica Molaskey
David/The Man..... Matthew Risch
Edie/The Mother Diane Sutherland
Andrew/The Son Tony Yazbeck

ACTOR BIOS

Farah Alvin (Ginny) BROADWAY: *Nine*, *The Look of Love*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Grease!* (and Nat'l Tour), *A Christmas Carol*. OFF-BROADWAY: *The Marvelous Wonderettes* (Drama Desk nomination), *I Love You Because*, *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie...*, *Cam Jansen*, *Kuni-Leml*. REGIONAL: Goodspeed, Papermill, Huntington: *Pirates of Penzance*, White Plains: *Ragtime*; New Theatre Kansas City: *I Do! I Do!*, *Funny Girl*, soloist with numerous symphonies including The National (Kennedy Center). RECORDINGS: *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, *I Love You Because*, *Hallway: The Songs of Carol Hall*, *Jekyll And Hyde* Concept Album, and an album of original music entitled *someday*.

Marc Kudisch (Sidney) SIGNATURE: *The Witches Of Eastwick* (Helen Hayes Award), *The Highest Yellow* (Helen Hayes nomination). BROADWAY: *9 to 5* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations), *The Apple Tree*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle nominations), *Assassins* (Drama Desk nomination), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominations), *Bells Are Ringing*, *The Wild Party*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *High Society*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. OFF-BROADWAY: Lincoln Center: *The Glorious Ones*; Public Theatre: *See What I Wanna See* (Drama Desk nomination); New York City Opera: *Pirates of Penzance*, *A Little Night Music*; City Center Encores!: *Girl Crazy*, *Broadway Bash*, *No Strings* (Mike Robinson); *The Thing About Men*. REGIONAL: Los Angeles Opera: *A Little Night Music*. NATIONAL TOUR: *Bye Bye Birdie*. TV: Lifetime Network: *Break It*; ABC: *Bye Bye Birdie*; HBO: *Sex & the City*. Directorial credits include *The Broadway Musicals of 1959* (2007), *The Broadway Musicals of 1930* (2006), and *The Broadway Musicals of 1963* (2004) in Scott Siegel's *Broadway by the Year* concert. EDUCATION: BFA in Theatre, Florida Atlantic University.

Judy Kuhn (Theresa) SIGNATURE: *The Highest Yellow*. BROADWAY: *She Loves Me* (Tony Nom.); *Chess* (Tony/Drama Desk Nom.); *Les Miserables* (Tony/Drama Desk Nom.); *Rags* (Drama Desk Nom), *Two Shakespearean Actors*, *King David*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. LONDON: *Metropolis* (Olivier Award Nom.). REGIONAL: *Sunset Boulevard* (LA/U.S. premiere); *Three Sisters* (Intiman); *Passion* (Kennedy Center's Sondheim Celebration); *The Ballad of Little Jo* directed by Tina Landau (Jefferson Award Nom./Steppenwolf Theatre Co.); *The Glass Menagerie*; *Martin Guerre*. OFF-BROADWAY: Ricky Ian Gordon & Tina Landau's *Deam True*, *As Thousand's Cheer*; *Eli's Comin'* (Obie Award); Martha Clarke's *Endangered Species*. FILM/TELEVISION: *Pocahontas* (title role); *Enchanted*, *Hope & Faith*, *Law & Order*, *The Secret Life of Mary Margaret* (HBO), *My Favorite Broadway: The Leading Ladies*, *The Kennedy Center Honors*, *Les Miserables 10th Anniversary Concert*, *In Performance At The White House*. CDs: *Just In Time: Judy Kuhn sings Jule Styne*, *Serious Playground: The Songs of Laura Nyro*. judykuhn.net

Jessica Molaskey (Myrna) BROADWAY: *Sunday in the Park With George* (Yvonne), *A Man of No Importance* (Mrs. Patrick), *Parade*, *Dream*, *The Who's Tommy* (Mrs. Walker), *Crazy For You*, *Chess*, *Les Misérables*, *Cats*, *Oklahoma!*. OFF-BROADWAY: WPA Theater: *Songs For a New World*, *Weird Romance*; Vineyard Theater: Ricky Ian Gordon's *Dream True* (directed by Tina Landau); New York Theater Workshop:

Stephen Sondheim's *Wise Guys* (directed by Sam Mendes). REGIONAL: Prince Theater: *Three* (directed by Hal Prince); Goodman Theater: *Another Mid-Summer Night's Dream* (Helena), *The Book of the Night* (directed by Robert Falls). SOLO RECORDINGS: *Pentimento*, *A Good Day*, *Make Believe*, *Sitting in Limbo*, *A Kiss to Build a Dream On*. IN CONCERT: Carnegie, Alice Tully, Avery Fisher Halls, Jazz At Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Tanglewood, Montreal, JVC, Jazz Festivals, Algonquin Oak Room, the Café Carlyle in New York. CO-HOST: Nationally, syndicated weekly show called Radio Deluxe (WMET in DC).

Matthew Risch (David) BROADWAY: *Pal Joey* (Joey Evans), *Legally Blonde* (Carlos), *Chicago* (Sgt. Fogarty). FILM/TV: *Sex and the City 2*, *Gossip Girl*, *Lipstick Jungle*. TOUR/REGIONAL: *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Levi), *Hair* (Woof), *A Chorus Line* (Greg).

Diane Sutherland (Edie) BROADWAY: *The Light in the Piazza*, *She Loves Me* (Amalia-1994 Revival), *1776*, *Three Sisters*, *Song and Dance*, *Cats* (original company), *A Chorus Line*. OFF-BROADWAY: Transport Group: *First Ladies Suite*, *Requiem for William*, *The Waves*. NATIONAL TOURS: *The Light in the Piazza*, *Guys & Dolls* (50th Anniversary Tour), *Cabaret*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*, (First National Tour) *Cats* (Helen Hayes Award). REGIONAL: *A Civil War Christmas*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Enter the Guardsman*, *Edwin Drood*, *Into the Woods*, *A Little Night Music*, *American Vaudeville*. RECORDINGS: *She Loves Me* (1994), *Guys & Dolls* (50th Anniversary), Gershwin's *Tell Me More*, *Man with a Load of Mischief* (2004).

Tony Yazbeck (Andrew) BROADWAY: *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* (Phil Davis), *Gypsy* w/Patti LuPone (Tulsa) (Outer Critics Circle nomination.), *A Chorus Line* (Al), *Oklahoma!*, *Never Gonna Dance*, *Gypsy* w/Tyne Daly. OFF-BROADWAY: Encores!: *On The Town* (Gabey), *Gypsy* (Tulsa), *Pardon My English*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *The Apple Tree*; York Theatre Co: *Fanny Hill*. REGIONAL: Goodman: *Animal Crackers* (Wally Winston/Doucet); Trinity Rep: *West Side Story* (Tony); Toronto: *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* (Phil); Maine State: *Crazy for You* (Bobby); Pittsburgh CLO: *Copacabana* (Tony). NATIONAL TOURS: *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Doctor Dolittle*. FILM/TV: *All My Children*, *As the World Turns*, *Every Little Step* (feature documentary), PBS *South Pacific* concert w/Reba McIntyre.
www.tonyyazbeck.net.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

Tina Landau (Director) Tina's recent directing credits include Tracy Letts' *Superior Donuts* (Broadway), Tarell McCraney's *The Brother Sister Plays* (Steppenwolf), *In the Red and Brown Water* (Public Theater, McCarter), *Wig Out!* (Vineyard Theater), Chuck Mee's *Iphigenia 2.0* (Signature Theatre Company, NY), *Mary Rose* (Vineyard), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (McCarter/Papermill), and *Bells are Ringing* (Broadway). She has directed many productions at Steppenwolf in Chicago where she is an ensemble member including *The Tempest*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Time of Your Life* (also Seattle Rep., A.C.T.), *Ballad of Little Jo*, *Berlin Circle*, and *Space* (which she wrote, also at Mark Taper Forum and NY'S Public Theater), among others. Landau wrote and directed the musicals *Floyd Collins* (composer Adam Guettel; Playwrights Horizons, Goodman, Old Globe, Prince)

and *Dream True* (composer Ricky Ian Gordon; Vineyard), and is currently at work on a musical of her own play *Beauty* (originally produced at La Jolla Playhouse), for which she is writing the book, with music by Regina Spektor and lyrics by Michael Korie. Landau is a US Artist Fellow, teaches at Yale and, with Anne Bogart, co-authored *The Viewpoints Book*.

Fred Lassen (Music Director/Conductor) has just finished a yearlong run as the conductor of *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center Theater. Some other shows he has conducted on Broadway include *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* with John Lithgow, *Spamalot*, *Cabaret* starring Natasha Richardson and Alan Cumming, *42nd Street*, and *Once Upon a Mattress*. Other theatrical credits include Christopher Durang's musical *Adrift in Macao* (Off-Broadway), *Judas & Me* (NYMF), *The Last Smoker in America* (NYMF), *notes to MariAnne* (O'Neill, NY Stage & Film), and *Pride & Prejudice* (Eastman Theatre). Fred is active in the developmental process of new musical theater works, and in the past year he music directed readings and workshops of new pieces by Jason Robert Brown, Gabriel Kahane, and Harry Connick, Jr., among others. He has arranged and orchestrated for performers including Paulo Szot, Lauren Kennedy, Stephanie Block, Philip Chaffin, and Jeremy Schonfeld, and currently concertizes with Metropolitan Opera bass-baritone David Pittsinger. Lassen has a degree in Organ Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory.

Bruce Coughlin (Orchestrator) has created the orchestrations for many shows on Broadway and off including Dolly Parton's *9-to-5* and *Grey Gardens*. He co-orchestrated *The Light in the Piazza*, orchestrated the memorable *Floyd Collins*, the Broadway hit *Urinetown*, and the Grammy Award-winning revival of *Annie Get Your Gun*. His other Broadway shows include *Guys and Dolls* (2009 Broadway revival; Des McAnuff, dir.), *The Wild Party*, *On the Town*, *The Sound of Music*, *Triumph of Love*, *Once Upon A Mattress*, and *The King and I*. Other credits include *Candide* (National Theatre, London), *Martin Guerre* (Chicago; Leslie Arden, composer), *Children of Eden* (Papermill Playhouse and BMG recording), and many others. He was principal arranger for the Disney epic *Fantasia 2000* and has worked with singers such as Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Patti LuPone, Darius de Haas, and others. He has won a Tony Award, a Drama Desk Award and an OBIE. He has also received two additional Tony nominations and four additional Drama Desk nominations. Other recent productions include *Giant* (Michael John LaChiusa, Signature Theatre, VA), *Pop!* (Yale Rep), *Happiness* (Lincoln Center Theater; Susan Stroman, dir.), *Hairspray* (the movie) ("Miss Baltimore Crabs" with Marc Shaiman), and *The Grapes of Wrath* (opera; Ricky Ian Gordon/Michael Korie). Coming up: *The Burnt Part Boys* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Johnny Baseball* (A.R.T, directed by Diane Paulus).

James Schuette (Set Designer) is a set and costume designer based in New York City. Recent work includes Tarrell Alvin McCraney's *Brother/Sister Plays* directed by Tina Landau (McCarter Theatre, Public Theatre and Steppenwolf), *The Ghosts of Versailles* directed by James Robinson (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and the Wexford Festival), *Endgame* directed by Frank Galati (Steppenwolf) and Tracy Letts' *Superior Donuts* directed by Tina Landau (Broadway/Music Box). His work has been seen at the American Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, American Conservatory Theatre, Arena Stage, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Berkeley Rep,

Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Long Wharf, La Jolla Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theatre, Papermill Playhouse, Seattle Rep, Trinity Rep, Vineyard Theatre, Yale Rep, Boston Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Colorado and internationally. Upcoming projects include *La Cenerentola* (Minnesota Opera), *La Fille du Regiment* and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (Opera Theatre of St Louis), *Nixon in China* (Canadian Opera Company), and *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Washington National Opera).

Kathleen Geldard (Costume Designer) has designed costumes at Signature Theatre for *Sweeney Todd*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Show Boat*, *See What I Wanna See*, *Les Misérables*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and *The Happy Time*. In the Washington, DC area she was costume designer at Woolly Mammoth Theatre for *Eclipsed*, at Round House Theatre for *Permanent Collection*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Eurydice*, *Orson's Shadow*, and *Life x 3*; and for Imagination Stage, *The Neverending Story* (2008 Helen Hayes nomination), *Twice Upon a Time*, *The Hundred Dresses*, *Huck Finn's Story*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Liang and the Magic Paintbrush*. At the Olney Theatre Center she designed costumes for *Da, Is He Dead?*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Elephant Man*, and *Having Our Say*; for Studio-Arena Theatre *Batboy*; and at the Folger Theatre *Comedy of Errors* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. She has also been costume designer for productions at the Studio Theatre Secondstage, Everyman Theatre, Vineyard Playhouse, Theater J, Rep Stage, Catalyst Theater, and Theater Alliance. For the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Geldard designed costumes for *Nocturnes*, *The Farthest Earth From Thee*, *613 Radical Acts of Prayer*, *Funny Uncles*, and *Imprints on a Landscape: The Mining Project*.

Scott Zielinski (Lighting Designer) Scott's New York credits include *Topdog/Underdog* on Broadway, Classic Stage Company, Joseph Papp Public Theater, Lincoln Center Festival, Manhattan Theater Club, New York Theater Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theater, and Theater for a New Audience, among others. Scott has also worked extensively at many regional theaters throughout the United States. He has designed internationally in Adelaide, Amsterdam, Berlin, Edinburgh, Fukuoka, Goteborg, Hamburg, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Linz, London, Luang Prabang, Lyon, Orleans, Oslo, Ottawa, Paris, Reykjavik, Rotterdam, Singapore, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Tokyo, Toronto, Vienna, Vilnius, and Zurich. Highlights of his dance lighting include American Dance Festival, Joyce Theater, Kennedy Center (all with Twyla Tharp), American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, Centre National de la Danse, Houston Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, and San Francisco Ballet. His opera designs include Arizona Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, English National Opera, Gotham Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Lithuanian National Opera, Minnesota Opera, Nederlandse Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Colorado, Pittsburgh Opera, San Francisco Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, and Toronto Opera. Upcoming projects include *The White Snake* for Edinburgh International Festival, Lincoln Center Festival, New Visions Festival (Hong Kong), Singapore Esplanade Festival, and Sydney Festival, *The Magic Flute* for Canadian Opera Company (Toronto), and *Achterbahn*, a new Judith Weir opera for Bregenz Festival (Austria) and the Royal Opera House (London).

Matt Rowe (Sound Designer) is Signature Theatre's resident sound designer where he has worked on *Sweeney Todd*, *Show Boat*, *First You Dream: The Music of Kander & Ebb*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Giant*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Les Misérables*, *Anyone Can Whistle* in Concert, *The Visit*, *The Happy Time*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Glory Days*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and *The Witches of Eastwick*. He was also the sound designer for the Kennedy Center's *Nobody's Perfect*.

Nina Mankin (Co-writer of the *Sycamore Trees* book and Dramaturg) is a dramaturg, writer and performer. As a dramaturg she has worked at the American Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop and The Public Theatre, among others. She has worked as a dramaturg and performer with artists as diverse as Anne Bogart, Tony Kushner, Holly Hughes, David Levine, Kristin Marting and John Zorn. She created the original *Patriot Act* with Joe Shahadi and The Lovely and Talented Miss Tony Silver and has developed three shows with Taylor Mac: *Red Tide Blooming*, *The Young Ladies Of...*, and the recent five-hour epic *The Lily's Revenge* which is noted on numerous "Best Of" lists for 2009. Taylor was featured in Nina's original political satire *Kultur Kamp*, presented by Dixon Place and developed through Voice and Vision Theatre. Her other original theatre works include the musical *Two Orphans* (Nina Mankin, lyricist and co-composer with Mark Bennett) for which she and Mark Bennett were awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, an adaptation of the 17th century *The Convent of Pleasure*, and an upcoming chamber opera about the painter Frederic Church entitled *Church*.

As a songwriter and lyricist Nina has worked with Dave Soldier on "The People's Choice: Music," a spin-off of conceptual visual artists Komar and Melamid's global exercise in art and democracy (project produced by Dia Arts.) She wrote the lyrics for the choral piece "Pictures from Rwanda," produced for the United Nations Peace Day (music by Ed Ware). She has written children's songs with writer/producer Gary Pozner and children's artist Bill Gordh with whom she developed "Fruit of Love," turned into an animated short by artist Nadia Roden. Her song "America Mrs. You," (co-written with Bradley Jones) appeared on The Jazz Passenger's Windham Hill/High Street Records album "In Love." She has two cds as a singer/songwriter, "Slow That Pony Down" and "Nina Mankin." She is a recipient of the Abe Olman Prize for emerging songwriters from the Songwriters Guild and The Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Kerry Epstein (Production Stage Manager) has stage managed many shows at Signature Theatre including *Sweeney Todd*, *Show Boat*, *First You Dream: The Music of Kander and Ebb*, *The Hollow* (21/24 Workshop), *See What I Wanna See*, *Les Misérables*, *Ace The Visit*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Studio*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Saving Aimee*, *Into the Woods*, *My Fair Lady*, *Assassins*, *The Sex Habits of American Women*, *Nevermore*, and *Yemaya's Belly*. She has staged managed several cabaret programs for Signature as well, including *Partial Eclipse*, *December Divas*, and *The Last Garage Hurrah*. Regionally she has worked for the Steppenwolf Theatre, The Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and the Rivendell Theatre Ensemble and internationally for the Dublin Theater Festival.

THE AMERICAN MUSICAL VOICES PROJECT (AMVP)

Signature Theatre's "American Musical Voices Project" is the largest single musical theater commissioning and producing initiative of any U.S. theater. Founded in May 2006 and funded by The Shen Family Foundation, the American Musical Voices Project demonstrates Signature's commitment to producing full productions of world premiere musical theatre works. Through the AMVP, Musical Theater Composer Grants have been awarded to **Ricky Ian Gordon**, **Michael John LaChiusa**, and **Joseph Thalken**, providing each composer \$25,000 a year plus health coverage for four years. Each of the grants includes a commission to create a new full-length musical to be produced at Signature Theatre during its 2009-2011 seasons. In April and May 2009 *Giant* by Michael John LaChiusa received its premiere at Signature Theatre. Ricky Ian Gordon's *Sycamore Trees* premieres in May 2010, and Joseph Thalken's musical, *Wheatly's Folly*, will premiere in March 2011. In July 2009, AMVP expanded to add a commission and production of a new musical by **Adam Guettel** to be performed during Signature's 2011-2012 season.

As part of the AMVP, **Musical Theater Leadership Awards** have been made to four individuals in recognition of their extraordinary influence on and contribution to the advancement of new musical theater, orchestrator **Bruce Coughlin**, composer **Adam Guettel**, singer/actress **Audra McDonald**, and director/musical director/orchestrator **Ted Sperling**.

In June 2008, the American Musical Voices Project added **The Next Generation** program. That year emerging composers **Matt Conner**, **Adam Gwon**, and **Gabriel Kahane** each received a commission to write new musicals for Signature Theatre and honorees **Peter Foley** and **Marisa Michelson** were given grants for the development of their musical ideas. In July 2009, the Theater launched "**21/24 Signature Lab**," three weeks of rehearsal and performances of new works by The Next Generation composers. Also announced as part of The Next Generation segment of the AMVP were two additional musical commissions awarded to **Peter Foley** and **Marisa Michelson**, as well as honoree grants given to **Chris Miller** and **Scott Davenport Richards** for the development of future musical ideas.

ABOUT SIGNATURE

Recipient of the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award, Signature Theatre is a non-profit professional theater company 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 become 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 composer, Stephen Sondheim. Since its founding in 1989, Signature has been nominated for 276 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in the professional theater and has been honored with 70 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Musical in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009, and Outstanding Play in 1999.

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 just nine 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 some GPS online mapping systems do not yet recognize Signature Theatre's address. For directions visit <http://signature-theatre.org/map.htm>.

Contact Information

Ticketmaster (703) 573-SEAT (7328)
Signature Administration (571) 527-1860
Signature Theatre
4200 Campbell Avenue
Arlington, VA 22206
<http://www.signature-theatre.org>

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