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Signature Theatre Celebrates Sondheim's 80th Birthday with a Weekend of Free Events, March 20 and 21

Arlington, VA – Join Signature Theatre on March 20 and 21 in celebrating the life and work of composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim, the man who has transformed the face of American musical theater with works such as *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *Follies*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*. Sondheim turns 80 on March 22, and since he's Signature's "signature" composer, the theater company will honor him with a full weekend of free events including lobby performances, backstage tours, films, lectures, actor discussions, a critic forum, a sing-along, and a birthday cake. The schedule for the Signature's Sondheim Birthday Weekend is Saturday, March 20 from 12 – 7pm and Sunday, March 21 from 12:45 – 10pm.

For the Sondheim Birthday Weekend, Signature's performances of *Sweeney Todd* continue Saturday at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday at 2pm and 7pm. In honor of Sondheim's 80th birthday, Signature has joined with sponsor Target to give away 80 tickets to students and young professionals (30 and under) to the Saturday evening performance of *Sweeney Todd*. *Sweeney Todd* runs through April 4.

Other Special Sondheim Offerings:

Sweeney Experience Auction Be a part of the show! Participate during Signature's online auction for a chance to be onstage during a performance of *Sweeney Todd*. The winner of the Sweeney Experience auction will have a walk-on role in costume during the Sunday matinee performance on March 21. Bidding for this begins March 4 and ends on March 14 at 9pm PST. The highest bidder wins the chance to buy some Pirelli's Miracle Elixir! Bidding begins at \$500.

Sondheim Award Gala Raffle Purchase a \$20 raffle ticket for the opportunity to win a pair of tickets to the Sondheim Award Gala at the Embassy of Italy on April 12, 2010. The evening of cocktails, dinner and performances will pay tribute to stage, screen, and television legend Angela Lansbury, the first recipient of the Sondheim Award. Raffle tickets will be available at the Signature gift shop in the Mead Lobby before performances and during

intermissions or through the Box Office at 703 820-9771. The winner of a pair of Gala tickets will be drawn at Signature on March 21 but need not be present to win. Winners will be contacted by phone on March 22.

FREE SONDHEIM BIRTHDAY EVENTS ON SATURDAY, MARCH 20:

- **BACKSTAGE SONDHEIM: Noon at the Mead Lobby**
Get an exclusive 30-minute backstage tour of the *Sweeney Todd* set by Production Stage Manager Kerry Epstein.
- **THE SONDHEIM INFLUENCE: 12:30pm in the ARK**
A short film on Sondheim followed by a discussion on Sondheim with *Washington Post* critic Peter Marks and NPR's Bob Mondello, moderated by Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer.
- **ISN'T IT RICH?: 1pm in the Mead Lobby**
Signature favorites sing Sondheim in the Mead Lobby before the 2pm performance of *Sweeney Todd*.
- **SONDHEIM CINEMA: In the Shirlington Library**
Noon – *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*
2pm – *Gypsy*
- **BEHIND SONDHEIM: 5pm in the ARK**
A post-show discussion with the cast of *Sweeney Todd*
- **ISN'T IT RICH?: 7pm in the Mead Lobby**
Signature favorites sing Sondheim in the Mead Lobby before the 8pm performance of *Sweeney Todd*.

FREE SONDHEIM EVENTS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 21:

- **WHAT IS IT ABOUT SONDHEIM?: 12:45pm in the ARK**
Signature actors discuss what it is about Sondheim's music that they love to perform.
- **ISN'T IT RICH?: 1pm in the Mead Lobby**
Signature favorites sing Sondheim in the Mead Lobby before the 2pm performance.
- **SONDHEIM CINEMA: In the Shirlington Library**
2pm – *West Side Story*
- **MUSICALLY SONDHEIM: 5pm in the ARK**
Mark Horowitz, Music Specialist from the Library of Congress, discusses the Sondheim collection and its surprises.

- **ISN'T IT RICH?: 6pm in the Mead Lobby**
Signature favorites sing Sondheim in the Mead Lobby before the 7pm performance.
- **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, STEVE!: 10pm in the Mead Lobby**
Join in singing and celebrating as we cut the birthday cake and celebrate the great works of Sondheim with a lobby sing-along. Cash bar.
- **Signature's Gallery** will be presenting a special exhibition on Stephen Sondheim in the Mead Lobby through the run of *Sweeney Todd*.

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 presented 26 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 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 69 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

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