



## **Bloomberg, Quinn, Signature Theatre and Related Companies launch \$60 million partnership**

January 11, 2010 - Front Section

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, council speaker Christine Quinn, Signature Theatre Company founding artistic director James Houghton, and Related Companies executive VP Bruce A Beal Jr. unveiled a \$60 million partnership to create a new home for the theater company. The Frank Gehry-designed Signature Center will be part of Related Companies' \$800 million, 59-story, residential building and hotel on 42nd St. and 10th Ave. in the theater district. The building will provide more than 800 new housing units, including more than 160 that will be targeted to low-income families. The performing arts center will feature three intimate and distinct theatres, rehearsal studios, a café, bookstore and administrative offices, and will allow Signature to more than double its audience, with anticipated attendance of more than 80,000. The LEED-Silver building will create 700 construction jobs and is expected to be completed in 2011, with the Signature Center expected to be completed in 2012. Bloomberg was joined by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs commissioner Kate Levin, and Signature Theatre Company playwright-in-residence in 2010-11 Tony Kushner, executive director Erika Mallin and artists-in-residence Bill Irwin, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Hallie Foote, John Guare and Edward Albee.

"Signature Theatre Company is one of New York City's most successful and fastest growing cultural groups, and its spectacular new home will allow it to continue to expand," said Bloomberg. "The \$25 million commitment, combined with a \$35 million private investment, will result in a new, world-class performance venue in the heart of the city's theater district. The fact that Related Companies is moving forward with the major development project now is great news and will have a profound impact, not only on the cultural industry and the city's skyline, but also on the local economy. There was a period when the future of the project was in question - as were its 700 construction jobs and hundreds of units of much-needed housing. But the construction unions, contractors, architects and engineers worked together to reduce costs, and today it's serving as a prime example that - despite the national economic downturn - large-scale projects are still happening."

"The council has a long standing commitment to the visual and performing arts of this city," said Quinn. "We recognize that in order for the city's theatres to thrive we need to invest in them. I am very happy the city was able to participate in this public private partnership. With the incredible new space that the Signature Theatre Company is acquiring, I look forward to not only the many exciting projects that are sure to come, but the jobs it is creating for our city particularly during this difficult time."

"It is thrilling to watch our future home materialize in front of us, and we are honored to have mayor Bloomberg, speaker Christine Quinn, our board of trustees and so many of Signature's artists here to celebrate the progress we have made," said Signature Theatre Company founding artistic director James Houghton. "Since its founding, Signature Theatre Company has been making an extended

commitment to a playwrights' body of work, championing the playwright's singular vision, and involving the playwright in every aspect of the creative process. The Signature Center will be a home for many diverse writers to create work that engages even more artists and audiences. The collision and interaction of multiple distinct voices reveals the greater power of our collective stories. We are honored to have the extraordinary support of the City of New York and the Related Companies as we bring Signature's artistic vision to life on an even larger scale."

"The American playwriting community has never been more thriving with talent and interest, and no theater serves our community better than Signature does," said Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Kushner, who will be Signature's Playwright-in-Residence in 2010-11. "It's one of the very few essential institutions in the American theater."

"Related has a long-standing commitment to supporting the arts from our partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center to Symphony Space and we are incredibly proud of the public-private partnership we have formed with the Signature Theatre Company, a great New York arts institution, to create a world-class theatre complex on 42nd Street in the heart of the theatre district," said Beal. "We are also grateful to our entire development team, contractors, architects, consultants and members of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York who are working hard to ensure that this large scale development project can continue to move forward in challenging economic times and as many other development projects remain stalled."

"We are happy to be part of creating a new home in the New York City theatre district for the Signature Theatre Company," said architect Frank Gehry. "I believe in Jim Houghton's mission of creating innovative theater and our goal was to design the spaces to support that mission. We're all very excited about the direction we've taken and are looking forward to watching the first performance."

"This new home for Signature will build on the company's success, expands its commitment to public accessibility, and serves both the local neighborhood and the city's entire cultural community," said Levin. "By bringing together artists and audiences in a wonderful new space, Signature will enhance its contribution to the city's identity, economy and quality of life."

"I don't expect in my lifetime to run into too many opportunities where I have the ability to participate in something that will be a lasting legacy for my community," said Signature Theatre Trustee and co-chair of Capital Campaign Edward Norton. "I strongly believe that the Signature Center is one such opportunity where we can make a significant contribution to the future landscape of the arts in New York City."

The city is contributing \$25 million to the Signature Center. The theater company has raised \$16 million for the project and plans to raise an additional \$19 million. The Signature Center will feature three unique programs: the continuation of the Master Playwright Residency, which explores the works of playwrights with major bodies of work; the expansion of the Legacy Program, which celebrates the lifetime achievements of the artists who have previously worked at Signature, and the introduction of a new Emerging Playwrights Residency, which will feature early and mid-career playwrights, and guarantee them three full productions over the course of a four-year residency.

The entire 59-story complex will be built to LEED Silver standards. The building will incorporate smart design measures and premium efficiency systems that will save over \$800,000 worth of energy each year, resulting in less of a draw on the city's energy infrastructure and lower energy bills for each of its tenants and over 1,800 anticipated residents. The project also anticipates another \$100,000 worth of electricity savings by using fluorescent lamps instead of incandescent bulbs for

the building's temporary lighting during construction. While Frank Gehry is designing the theater center, Arquitectonica and Ismael Leyva are designing the rest of the building.

Founded in 1991 by James Houghton, Signature is the first theatre company to devote an entire season to the work of a single playwright, providing audiences with re-examinations of past writings, as well as New York and world premieres. Since 2005, Signature has been committed to presenting its world-class programming at an affordable price: the Signature Ticket Initiative, with major support from Time Warner, offers subsidized \$20 tickets to all performances. Signature's initiative has become a model in breaking down price barriers to theatre, helping to attract younger and more diverse audiences.

Signature is currently running the critically acclaimed, sold-out *The Orphans' Home Cycle* by Horton Foote, a nine hour, three-part theatrical event and the company's most ambitious programming to date (22 actors, multiple set locations). Signature will celebrate its 20th anniversary in the 2010-11 season by presenting a season of works by Pulitzer-Prize winner Tony Kushner, including the first New York revival of *Angels in America*. Signature, its productions and its resident writers have been recognized with a Pulitzer Prize, eleven Lucille Lortel Awards, fifteen Obie Awards, five Drama Desk Awards, and nineteen AUDELCO Awards, among many other distinctions. The National Theatre Conference recognized the company as the 2003 Outstanding National Theatre of the Year.

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