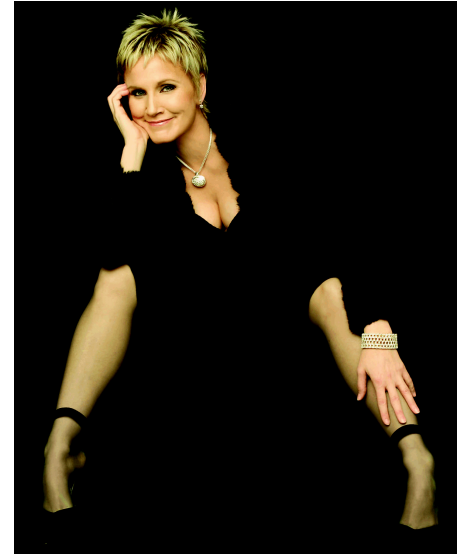


## **Broadway singer does cabaret show at Wolf Trap**

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By Alexandra Greeley - Special to The Examiner



Broadway diva Jeri Sager returns to her roots with an intimate evening of songs that have illuminated her career and her special favorites from the great American songbook.

Since debuting on Broadway in the 25th-anniversary production of "Fiddler on the Roof," she has starred in "Les Miserables," "Evita," "Pippin," "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" and "City of Angels," among many other musicals, and performed her signature role as Grizabella in "Cats"...

Her appearances as Fruma Sarah in "Fiddler" at both the Filene Center and National Theatre and as Grizabella in the touring production of "Cats" at National Theatre in 1997 brought friends from West Springfield High School and Harlequin Theater and fans alike. Backed by her music director, Scot Woolley, she looks forward to greeting them again in this, her Barns debut, rescheduled because of the snowy February.

By the time Sager entered Catholic University as an opera major, she had developed stage presence singing in church and reigning as a Junior Miss. Every chance she got, she stole across to the theater department, but was not permitted to take advanced classes because the two departments were territorial.

Finally certain that she did not want to pursue an operatic career, she dropped out in her junior year... Her first role was as chorus member with a single line in "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers." It was followed by meatier local roles until Broadway beckoned.

"When I went to New York, my interest was pop opera," she said. "My first...act is of music from shows I did, and I have a good time in the second act going back to Rodgers and Hart, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Gershwin and so many other musical geniuses of their time. My main thing about a song is the lyrics combined with hummable and singable melodies. As much as I like Sondheim, he's not a singer's writer. I look for songs that soar. That's why I never get tired of singing 'Memory.' "

Sager's versatile career has taken her to Japan, Europe, Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean, a USO tour with Bob Hope and the Grand Ole Opry.

In September, her three popular CDs will be joined by a fourth, "This One," based on her concert repertoire. She just completed the most recent addition to her film credits, "Love Don't Let Me Down" starring Gwyneth Paltrow, and will soon head to England for a concert. Next season, she will tour throughout the Midwest.

"A successful performance is when you can soar... I've loved Wolf Trap all my life and the great friendships I've made there, so I'm excited about singing my favorite music in the Barns.