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MEDIA RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR THE SUMMERTIME RUN OF *3 MO' DIVAS!*

***** Six talented stage veterans, including Tony Award-winner Gretha Boston and two time Tony Award-nominee Vivian Reed, fill the bill for the Arena production of Marion J. Caffey's musical sensation *****



(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage announces its "double-the-diva" cast for Broadway writer/director Marion J. Caffey's *3 Mo' Divas!*, a musical celebration of class, sass and style. Due to the extraordinary vocal demands of the production, Caffey has assembled a double cast. "It's not just three divas, it's actually six incredible divas for an eight-show week," said Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith. The divas, whose versatility and experience make a powerful combination in this D.C. area premiere, are **Gretha Boston, Andrea Jones-Sojola, N'Kenge, Nina Negri, Jamet Pittman and Vivian Reed.**

Caffey, who directed the 2005 Arena Stage revival of *Crowns* and created the international hit *Three Mo' Tenors*, will direct and choreograph *3 Mo' Divas!*, collaborating with his musical partner Joseph Joubert (*Three Mo' Tenors*, *The Color Purple*). The production had its successful world premiere at San Diego Repertory Theatre in March 2004, where N'Kenge, Pittman and Reed were part of the original cast. Supported by an onstage orchestra, *3 Mo' Divas!*, a 2004 *Los Angeles Times'* Critics Choice, spans eight musical forms and features 400 years of music in a single evening – everything a music lover could want, from Bach to Cole Porter, Gershwin to Cab Calloway and Ellington to The Supremes.

Performances begin Wednesday, July 12, with two Press Openings for an opportunity to see both casts: Saturday, July 15 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, July 16 at 7:00 p.m. Performances run through Sunday, August 13 in the Kreeger Theater. Tickets are available now by calling the Arena Stage Sales Office at (202) 488-3300 or visiting www.arenastage.org.

The Talented Divas (Complete bios available upon request):

Gretha Boston starred in Caffey's *Cookin' at the Cookery* at the Citadel Theatre; twice Tony-nominated, she received a Tony Award for *Show Boat* and was also seen in *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, *South Pacific*, *Aida*, *Rigoletto* and as a Carnegie Hall soloist.

Andrea Jones-Sojola has sung in *Carmen* and *Die Zauberflöte* for Dayton Opera; *Muhammad Ali: Outside the Ring* for Kentucky Opera; *Don Giovanni* in Italy; *Cosí fan tutte* in Cairo, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates; and *Porgy and Bess* in Poland.

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N'Kenge has given more than 100 solo concerts worldwide and has sung with the San Diego Chamber Orchestra Summer Pops. She has appeared in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in the Czech Republic, *The Fantasticks* in Cleveland, and was a featured soloist for the Library of Congress' *Centennial of Aaron Copland*.

Nina Negri is originally from Annandale, VA. Ms. Negri was in the National Tour of *Les Miserables*; *The House of Seven Gables*, *West Side Story*, *Kismet*, *Of Thee I Sing* and *Good Vibrations* in New York; *The King and I* in Canada; and her operatic credits include *Don Giovanni*, *Werther* and *Dido and Aeneas*.

Jamet Pittman is a native of Washington, D.C. Ms. Pittman has appeared in *La Boheme* on Broadway; *Master Class* in Arlington, VA; and *Porgy and Bess* for New York City Opera. Ms. Pittman has directed many choirs and played organ and piano for several D.C.-area churches including Israel Baptist, Metropolitan Baptist and Zion Methodist. She received her Masters of Music degree from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Vivian Reed received Tony nominations for Broadway's *High Rollers* and *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, which she toured across the United States and Europe. Ms. Reed also starred in *Marie Christine* and the European tour of *Sophisticated Ladies*. Her film credits include *Heading for Broadway*, *L'Africaine* and *Le Rumba*.

The Creative Team:

Marion J. Caffey (Creator/Director/Choreographer) has written, directed, choreographed and performed on and for Broadway, where his *Street Corner Symphony* ran in 1997. He directed *Crowns* at Arena Stage in the summer of 2005. His direction of *Cookin' at the Cookery* at Studio Arena in Buffalo, NY garnered many awards and nominations including New York's Drama Desk and Drama League and most recently, four NAACP theater awards in Los Angeles. Caffey's *Three Mo' Tenors* has performed at the White House, NBC's "Today Show" and has been broadcast as a PBS television special. His credits also include *Bowfire*, *Blackbirds of Broadway*, *Chicago*, *Forever Plaid*, *Jelly Roll: The Music and the Man*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Tintypes*, *The All Night Strut*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Ruthless*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *Spunk and the Colored Museum* and *1940s Radio Hour*.

Joseph Joubert (Musical Supervisor/Orchestrator/Arranger) is known for his versatility and ability as a pianist/orchestrator to arrange and perform in many musical styles including classical, pop, jazz, Broadway, gospel, spiritual or R&B. Most recently he was one of the orchestrators for Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change* at the Public Theatre and on Broadway. He was the orchestrator/Musical Director for the PBS special *Three Mo' Tenors*. He collaborated with artists including Patti LaBelle, Kathleen Battle, Judy Collins, Ashford and Simpson, Diana Ross, George Benson, Nnenna Freelon and Jennifer Holliday. He was co-orchestrator for *Violet* which received a Drama Desk nomination.

e'Marcus Harper (Musical Director/Arranger) studied Music Composition and Theory at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He is a 1998 Grammy nominee as a conductor on *Love*

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Alive V: Bishop Walter L. Hawkins and the Love Center Choir 25th Reunion Project. He has directed numerous ensemble choirs including the Washington, D.C. Youth Choir and currently conducts the Washington, D.C. Voices of Peoples Gospel Choir. The late Rev. James Cleveland, the late Dr. Mattie Moss Clark, the Hawkins family, Shirley Ceaser and the Rev. Donald Vails are a few of the gospel giants Mr. Harper has collaborated with. Mr. Harper has worked with Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Little Richard, Billy Preston, Aretha Franklin, David Murray, Patti LaBelle, Carlos Santana and MC Hammer. He is currently the Artistic Director/Founder for The Performing Arts Program (TPAP) in Washington D.C.

Aubrey Dan's (Co-Producer) most recent producing credits include *The Wedding Singer* on Broadway. Mr. Dan also co-produced three musicals with CanStage in Toronto, Canada. These include *Urinetown: The Musical* (2004), winner of six Dora Mavor Awards including Best Production; *Ain't Misbehavin'* (2005), directed and choreographed by Mr. Caffey, nominated for 10 Dora Mavor Awards; and most recently, *Hair* (2006). Mr. Dan is President and sole owner of Dancap Private Equity Inc.

Dale F. Jordan (Set Design) has designed for many regional theaters; his work was most recently seen at Arena Stage for the 2005 revival of *Crowns*. His opera affiliations include San Francisco Opera, Opera Colorado, Colorado Opera Festival and Opera Florida State. Mr. Jordan's New York City credits include *Cookin' at the Cookery*, *Three Mo' Tenors*, *Bowfire*, *Sea Marks*, *Sargeant Ola and His Followers*, *Hidden Parts*, *Alice and Fred*, *Death of a Miner*, *China Fish*, *Season's Greetings* and *Wilderness of Shur*.

Toni Leslie-James (Costume Designer) has designed at Lincoln Center for *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Dessa Rose*, *Elegies*, *Marie Christine*, *A New Brain*, *God's Heart*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *Hello Again*. Broadway credits include *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *One Mo' Time*, *King Hedley II*, *Footloose*, *The Tempest* (Drama Desk nomination), *Twilight Los Angeles 1992*, *Angels in America*, *Jelly's Last Jam* (American Theatre Wing Award, Tony and Drama Desk nominations). Ms James' costume designs have also been created for productions at numerous regional theaters, television and film.

Washington audiences have enjoyed **Richard Winkler's** (Lighting Design) designs at The Kennedy Center in productions including *Carmen*, *Country Salutes Country*, *String Masters* and *A Tribute to Jazz Legend Shirley Horn*. He was resident lighting designer at the Dallas Opera, and designed the notable premiere of *The Aspern Papers*, also seen on PBS. He recently designed the revival of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* for the New York City Opera. Mr. Winkler has designed for more than 30 national Broadway tours and numerous regional theaters.

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3 Mo' Divas Special Events, Ticket Information and Performance Calendar

Southwest Night

Friday, July 28 at 8:00 p.m.

Arena Stage offers its neighbors \$20 tickets for one designated Friday performance per production. Those who live or work in Southwest D.C. may purchase up to four of these deeply-discounted tickets, based on availability. Proof of residency or employment must be presented at the time of purchase. Southwest Nights are sponsored by Waterfront Associates.

Cool Night, Hot Divas

Tuesday, August 1 at 7:30 p.m.

For this special night in association with Cultural Tourism DC, *3 Mo' Divas!* audiences will cool off with iced tea and free souvenir fans. Following the show, Arena Stage tickets will be awarded to the audience members with the Zaniest Summer Outfits! From funky shades and Aloha shirts to flip-flops and board shorts, let your imagination run wild and join in August 1st for a special Culture Cool summer event. (Shirt and shoes required.)

TICKETS: Tickets range from \$55 to \$74, with discounts available for students, groups, persons with disabilities and senior citizens. **HOTTIX**, a limited number of half-price, day-of-performance tickets, are available from 90-30 minutes before curtain prior to every performance. **FIVETWENTYFIVE TICKETS**, a limited number of \$10 tickets for patrons aged 5-25, are available for purchase until 5:25 on the day of performance. (For matinee weekend performances, tickets can be purchased on the day before the performance.)

Box Office	(202) 488-3300
Group Sales Hotline	(202) 488-4380
Subscriptions	(202) 488-4377
TTY for patrons hard of hearing	(202) 484-0247
Info for patrons with disabilities	(202) 554-9066

PERFORMANCE TIMES:

Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Weekday matinees at 12:00 p.m. July 21 & 26

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