

molly smith
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MEDIA RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE PRESENTS TERENCE MCNALLY'S BITTERSWEET ROMANCE *FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE*

***** Critically acclaimed and locally celebrated director David Muse brings
a background in Shakespeare to this romantic modern fairytale *****

(Washington D.C.) Arena Stage welcomes local director David Muse (Associate Director, Shakespeare Theatre Company) to stage the poignant love story *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* in the Kreeger Theater, February 23 – April 8. Muse departs from his usual Shakespearean repertoire to bring his expertise to this intimate and witty contemporary production. Celebrated playwright Terrence McNally (*Love! Valor! Compassion!*, *Master Class*) delivers a bittersweet play about the forging of a relationship between two lonely mid-life lovers. Johnny, a short-order cook in a diner, goes home with Frankie, a waitress, for a one-night stand. Johnny desperately tries to crack Frankie's hardened heart before she sends him home, and they lose their chance at love. **The press opening night performance is March 1 at 8:00 p.m. *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* contains adult themes, nudity and strong language.**



"Terrence McNally's plays are some of the most compassionate and vibrant works written in the last century," said Artistic Director Molly Smith. "His characters are real people in recognizable situations, and he finds arresting ways to reveal them. One of D.C.'s young directors to watch, David Muse is a real character specialist, which serves *Frankie and Johnny* beautifully."

"These are two very particular people – yes – but this is also a play suffused with what McNally once described as 'fairy tale overtones,'" said Muse. "Frankie and Johnny represent different thoughts and feelings about love that we have all experienced. The trick with this play is to use the very particular to reveal the very universal."

Memorably produced on and off-Broadway, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* earned several Tony nominations and was adapted into a 1991 film starring Michelle Pfeiffer and Al Pacino. It premiered in 1987 at the off-Broadway Manhattan Theatre Club with Kathy Bates and Kenneth Welsh in the title roles, and was revived on Broadway in 2002 with Edie Falco and Stanley Tucci, earning two Tony nominations for Best Revival and Best Actor in a Play.

Playwright Terrence McNally won Tony Awards for best play for *Love! Valour! Compassion!* and *Master Class*. In addition, *Love! Valour! Compassion!* won the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play. His other plays include *Corpus Christi*, which was named one of the best plays of 1998 by *Time* magazine; *A Perfect Ganesh*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; *Lips Together, Teeth Apart*; *The Lisbon Traviata*; and *It's Only a Play*.

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Arena Stage presents Terrence McNally's *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*

Page 2

Mr. McNally has written books for musicals including *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*; *The Full Monty*; *Ragtime*; *Kiss of a Spiderwoman* and *The Ritz*. Earlier stage works include *Bad Habits*, *The Ritz*, *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* and *Things That Go Bump in the Night*. He has written a number of television scripts, including *Andre's Mother*, for which he won an Emmy Award. Mr. McNally has received two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Rockefeller grant, a Lucille Lortel Award and a citation from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A member of the Dramatists Guild since 1970, Mr. McNally was raised in Corpus Christi, Texas, and makes his home in New York City.

THE CAST OF *FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE*

Kate Buddeke (*Frankie*) returns to Arena Stage where she last performed in *Tom Walker and Dancing at Lughnasa* (Helen Hayes Nomination). A Chicago native, she is a proud member of American Theater Company. Ms. Buddeke is the recipient of five Joseph Jefferson Awards for acting in such productions as *Ourselves Alone*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Gypsy*, *David's Mother* and *Keely & Du*. Broadway credits include the Tony Award winning *Carousel*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Gypsy* (portraying Mazeppa with Bernadette Peters) and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Her Off-Broadway credits include *Mill Fire* and *Bug* (in which she originated the role of Agnes in the A Red Orchid Theater production in Chicago). Her TV credits include "The Sopranos" and "Law & Order: Criminal Intent." Film credits include *Payback* with Mel Gibson and *Evil Has a Face* with Sean Young; she also has three films due for release this year including *Choking Man* (Gotham Award Winner), *The Northern Kingdom* and *The Last New Yorker*. One of her biggest thrills was singing the National Anthem solo at Wrigley Field.

Vito D'Ambrosio (*Johnny*) makes his Arena Stage debut with this production. Living in Los Angeles, he appeared on stage in *The Great Sebastians*, *Idiot's Delight*, *Confessions of a Robot* (a one man show by Rafael Bunuel), *The Inspector General*, *King Lear* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Mr. D'Ambrosio was born in Italy and moved to Chicago at the age of ten. He attended Columbia College where he first met Kate Buddeke and also worked with the founding members of Steppenwolf Theatre Company. At Steppenwolf, he performed in *Streamers*, *Tracers*, *Fool for Love* (replacing William L. Peterson) and *Three Sisters*. He also appeared in *Riverview* and *Moby Dick* at The Goodman Theatre. In addition to numerous guest star appearances on television, Mr. D'Ambrosio's film credits include *Nancy Drew* (WB this spring), *The Usual Suspects*, *Bonfire of the Vanities*, *The Untouchables* and *Color of Money*.

Stephen Schnetzer lends his voice as the *Radio Announcer*.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

David Muse (Director) makes his Arena Stage debut with *Frankie and Johnny*. Recent directing work includes *The Bluest Eye* at Theatre Alliance; *Frozen* and *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (Helen Hayes nominations for Best Director and Best Production) at Studio Theatre Secondstage; *Swansong* at the NYC Summer Play Festival; *Pericles* at the Shakespeare Theatre Free For All (original direction Mary Zimmerman); and *Antony and Cleopatra* at Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. He has helped to develop new work at numerous theaters including Arena Stage, New York Theatre Workshop, The Kennedy Center, Geva Theatre, Ford's Theatre and the Shakespeare Theatre Company, where he is Associate Director.

Neil Patel (Set Designer) designed *Sideman*, *'night*, *Mother* and *Ring of Fire* for Broadway. Off-Broadway credits include work at Second Stage, Manhattan Theater Club, Roundabout Theatre Company, BAM, New York Theater Workshop, Vineyard Theater and Playwrights Horizon, having designed for *[title of show]*, *Living Out*, *Here Lies Jenny*, *Dinner with Friends*, *The Long Christmas*

Arena Stage presents Terrence McNally's *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*

Page 3

Ride Home, Quills and *The Grey Zone*. Mr. Patel has also designed extensively for regional theaters around the country. His work with Anne Bogart and the SITI Company has been seen throughout the world, including the Holland Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Exit Festival in Paris and BAM. Opera credits include New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Nikikai Opera Tokyo and the Minnesota Opera. London credits include *Sideman* (West End), *A Question of Mercy* (Bush Theater) and *Henry IV* (RSC). Awards include the 2000 EDDY Award, numerous Drama Desk nominations and the 1996 and 2001 Obie Awards for sustained excellence in set design.

Nancy Schertler (Lighting Designer) began both her career and association with Arena Stage thirty years ago. Her Broadway credits include *Fool Moon* and *Largely/New York* (Tony Award nomination). Ms. Schertler's work Off-Broadway includes *The Regard Evening, Texts for Nothing, A Flea in Her Ear, Scapin* and *Falsettoland*. Regionally, she has worked extensively on new plays, including designs for Arena's productions of *Lovers and Executioners, Tom Walker, and Before It Hits Home; Hilda, The Gamester, The Difficulty of Crossing a Field, The Colossus of Rhodes* and *Levee James* for ACT in San Francisco; *The Sisters Matsumotto* for Seattle Rep; and *A Christmas Carol* for the Milwaukee Rep. Her opera credits include *Il Vaggio a Reims* for Portland Opera, *Don Giovanni* and *The Barber of Seville* for Boston Lyric Opera, *Il Trovatore* for Baltimore Opera, and *Falstaff* and numerous other productions for Wolf Trap Opera Company. She also worked on the opera *Clara* commissioned by the University of Maryland about the life of Clara Schumann.

T. Tyler Stumpf (Costume Designer) has designed for Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi* at Source Theater (2002 GLAAD Media Award), *The Diaries* at Signature Theatre, *Love's Labor's Lost* at Washington Shakespeare Company (costumes featured in the Washington Post), *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Fredricksburg Theatre Company and *Twelfth Night* at Catholic University (Guest Artist). Mr. Stumpf received his M.F.A. in Costume Design from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he was the recipient of the USITT Peggy Ezekiel Award of Outstanding Achievement in Costume Design for *The Rivals*.

Daniel Baker (Sound Designer)'s D.C.-area credits include *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* at Studio Theater, also with director David Muse. His Off-Broadway credits include *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *Everything's Turning into Beautiful* with The New Group; *The Mystery Plays* at Second Stage Theater; *Jenny Chow* at the Atlantic Theater; *The Cataract* and *Victoria Martin: Math Team Queen* at Women's Project; *Theophilus North* at the Keen Company; and *Acts of Mercy* at Rattlestick Playwright's Theater. Mr. Baker's regional designs include *The Real Thing* at Huntington Theater; *Private Lives, Santaland Diaries* and the upcoming *Uncle Vanya* at Long Wharf Theater; *Jenny Chow* at Portland Center Stage and San Jose Rep; and *My Fair Lady* at Dallas Theater Center.

Clarence Coo (*Production Dramaturg*) is the Allen Lee Hughes Dramaturgy Fellow at Arena Stage. At Arena, he dramaturged Amy Herzog's *Willing* as part of the Downstairs New Play Series and assistant dramaturged new plays by Moisés Kaufman, Nilo Cruz and Jim Magruder. Previously, he helped to develop new work at the Mark Taper Forum, the Young Playwrights Festival in New York and DC's Young Playwrights Theater. He is also a playwright – this year his plays will be produced by the Smithsonian's Discovery Theater and by Theater Mu in Minneapolis.

The *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* Fight Choreographer is **Robb Hunter**, Stage Manager is Amy K. Bennett, **Assistant Stage Manager** is Kate Olden, **Stage Management Fellow** is Victory Joy Murray, **Directing Fellow** is Lileana Blain-Cruz, **Line Producer** is Eli Dawson, **Dialect Coach** is Gary Logan, and **Board Intern** is David E. Shiffrin.

The Arena Stage 2006/07 season is sponsored by Joan and David Maxwell.

Special Events, Ticket Information, and Performance Calendar

The Salon

Monday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m.

Featuring special guests from *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*

In the spirit of artistic and literary salons of the past, The Salon features artistic leaders from Arena Stage in a series of lively, in-depth conversations with the playwrights, actors, directors, designers, dramaturgs and audiences which make Arena Stage so unique. The Salon is free to Arena Stage subscribers and donors (\$75+), and only \$3 for the general public. Reservations must be made through the Arena Stage Sales Office at (202) 488-3300.

Southwest Night

Friday, March 2 at 8:00 p.m.

A special invitation is extended to our Southwest D.C. neighbors to buy \$20 tickets for one specially designated Friday evening performance of each production. Proof of Southwest D.C. residency or employment must be presented at the time of purchase. Tickets are limited to 4 per person and are based on availability. To purchase tickets, call (202) 488-3300 or stop by the Arena Stage Sales Office.

TICKETS: Tickets range from \$46-66, 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 p.m. on the day of performance. (For matinee weekend performances, tickets can be purchased on the day before the performance.)

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| Sales Office | (202) 488-3300 |
| TTY for Deaf patrons | (202) 484-0247 |
| Group Sales Hotline | (202) 488-4380 |
| Subscriptions | (202) 488-4377 |
| Info for patrons with disabilities | (202) 554-9066 |

Tickets are available for purchase online at www.arenastage.org.

PERFORMANCE TIMES:

Tues., Wed., and Sun. at 7:30 p.m. (Exception: 6:00 p.m. curtain 4/8)

Thurs., Fri., and Sat. at 8:00 p.m.

Sat. and Sun. matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Weekday matinees at 12:00 p.m. on 3/6, 3/21, and 4/4

Post Show Conversations: 3/15 at 8:00 p.m.; 4/3 at 7:30 p.m.

Sign-interpreted performances: 3/18 at 7:30 p.m.; 3/22 at 8:00 p.m.

Audio described performances: 3/28 at 7:30 p.m., 3/31 at 2:00 p.m.

Arena Stage Podcast

Arena Stage has launched its own podcast featuring Arena Stage Artistic Associate David Dower as host. The Arena Stage podcast on *Frankie and Johnny* is available at www.arenastage.org or the iTunes Music Store.

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