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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 5, 2006

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH GEORGETOWN THEATER PROGRAM

***** The collaboration is extension of the institutions' shared commitment
to further the development of American theater *****



(Washington D.C.) Arena Stage and the Georgetown Theater Program have developed a partnership to enrich the future of American theater through collaboratively hosting artists and developmental play workshops, involving Arena artists as faculty, and providing mentoring for students in professional settings as well as in community outreach programs. The partnership involves students in all stages of the creative process and helps to shape the theater field for 21st century futures.

"Theater is a craft about mentorship – since its inception, the know-how of theater has been passed down in creative partnerships," said Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith. "Universities house the theater professionals of tomorrow, and both the students and the theater community have a lot to gain from working together. Georgetown has an excellent reputation, and already this unique partnership has yielded one successful workshop – it is just the beginning of many successful collaborations to come."

In the fall of 2006, Arena and Georgetown, along with the Tectonic Theater Project, successfully produced a two-week workshop for playwright Moisés Kaufman's new script, *33 Variations*. The Georgetown Theater Program made the workshop possible by housing the artists on campus and providing faculty and production resources, and Arena closely integrated the faculty and students into the dramaturgical and technical aspects of the project. The workshop concluded with two sold-out staged readings that were open to the public. Georgetown will also host a panel discussion entitled "21st Century Issues in Playwriting," featuring members of Arena's Writers Council and commissioned playwrights Nilo Cruz, David Henry Hwang, Charles Randolph-Wright and Karen Zacarias on December 5, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. at the Gonda Theatre. In addition to special programs such as these, Arena Stage Executive Director Stephen Richard is a visiting Georgetown faculty member, and is instructing a fall 2006 semester course in Arts Administration.

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"Georgetown's Theater Program is proud to forge a special relationship with Arena Stage as it cultivates student learning," said Maya Roth, Artistic Director of the Georgetown Davis Theater Program. "This partnership is a manifestation of the deep commitment we share with Arena Stage for the development of new theater of the Americas, and community outreach."

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Arena Stage has a long history of building strong relationships with colleges and universities through its internship and fellowship programs, student ambassadors and critics programs, and active attendance by students from across the metro area. In addition to the partnership with the Georgetown Theater Program, Arena Stage also enjoys partnerships with Virginia Tech and Howard University. Students who take part in a working partnership with Arena Stage polish their skills in a wide range of artistic and administrative disciplines and many have moved on to successful careers in the field.

Georgetown's Theater Program, based in the new Davis Performing Arts Center, integrates creative and critical inquiry. A rapidly growing program taught by faculty nationally recognized as artists and scholars as well as teachers, Theater at Georgetown is distinctive for its emphasis on the development of new work, socially engaged performance and collaborative research to performance labs. Poised to offer a distinctive major in Theater and Performance Studies starting Fall 2007, the program foregrounds integrative understandings of identity, culture and the world through performance. With diverse course offerings and a vital production season in the Davis Center, the program reflects Georgetown's emphasis on social justice issues, cross-cultural concerns and the College's America's Initiative.

Through the arts, humanities and social sciences, Georgetown College's Americas Initiative seeks to foster research and teaching about the northern and southern hemispheres as regions of rich cultural variety and as a connected land-mass with extensive political and economic interrelations. Issues of population and language migration, of cultural diffusion and identity, of conflicts both present and past, and of ever-increasing religious and ethnic diversity will be among the initial foci of this initiative.

Since the Davis Center's opening in fall 2005, the Theater Program has hosted an impressive range of artists in residency, including Timberlake Wertenbaker, who was in residency throughout the 2005-06 academic year; Olympia Dukakis, leading stage and film star; Joe Dowling, Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater; Irina Brown, Staff Director of the National Theatre in England; among others. The Program's Home Season reaches thousands of people annually, drawing its audience base from the D.C. arts community as well as the extended Georgetown community. This year's season – *Classics Re-Visioned* – foregrounds community engagement as it involves guest artists, D.C.-area schools, and faculty from across the Georgetown campus working in collaboration with students to feature plays ranging from the area premiere of Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* earlier this fall to the upcoming stage adaptation of Leo Lionni's *Swimmy & Other Children's Stories* to be premiered in February in the Davis Center.

Arena Stage is under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director Stephen Richard. Its core purpose is to produce huge plays of all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit. Now in its sixth decade, Arena Stage is the oldest and largest of the Washington, D.C. area's not-for-profit producing theaters, attracting a diverse annual audience of more than 200,000. Founded in 1950 by Zelda Fichandler, Thomas Fichandler and Edward Mangum, Arena Stage was one of the original leaders of the resident theater movement, and is still widely regarded by its national peers as the flagship of the American not-for-profit theater.

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