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MEDIA RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE PRESENTS THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING CONTEMPORARY COMEDY *THE HEIDI CHRONICLES*

***** Tazewell Thompson returns to Arena to stage a tribute to the beloved American playwright Wendy Wasserstein *****

(Washington D.C.) Arena Stage is proud to present a major revival of the award-winning contemporary comedy *The Heidi Chronicles* in loving tribute to the late Wendy Wasserstein. Arena Stage welcomes back acclaimed director Tazewell Thompson to guide this smart and comedic production. Helen Hayes Award winner and Washington favorite Ellen Karas (*The Women, Shakespeare in Hollywood, The Revengers' Comedies*) will star in the title role alongside a cast of familiar Arena faces including Marty Lodge (*M. Butterfly, Of Mice and Men*). In this insightful comedy, Heidi Holland, feminist art historian, recounts significant milestones in her life – meeting lifelong friends at '60s political events, her own uncertain activism in the '70s and confronting her inner turmoil over her role as a woman of the '80s. ***The Heidi Chronicles* runs April 6 – May 13 on the Fichandler Stage. The press opening night performance is Thursday, April 12 at 8:00 p.m.**

"I am thrilled to be producing this remarkable play in honor of my dear friend Wendy Wasserstein," said Artistic Director Molly Smith. "Each time I encounter Wendy's work, I am struck by its significance for myself and for all women in each stage of our lives. Wendy challenges the status quo with grace, wit and warmth in a way that goes beyond the social mores of any decade or gender. Heidi's struggle with identity is one that is painfully and brilliantly self-referential, and I know that audiences will love her intelligence and spirit."

Thompson remarked, "I will remember Wendy's generosity forever – she left us with a great body of work that's filled with honesty and humanity, and plays that deliver comedy through life's pain. Here is a woman whose own journey is found throughout the play – she was uncompromising, outspoken, and stayed close to her principles. I feel strongly that with this terrific cast and phenomenal designers, we are striving to do her play justice."

Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White, pioneers in the field of new media for the performing arts, will join Set Designer Donald Eastman to bring a visually stunning production to the Fichandler Stage. They are teamed with Tazewell's consistent crew of designers including period costumes by Merrily Murray Walsh, sound by Fabian Obispo and lighting by Robert Wierzel.

The Heidi Chronicles opened Off-Broadway in 1988. It met critical acclaim throughout the nation, winning every major award in 1989 including the Pulitzer Prize, the Tony Award, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, and awards from Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle. It is arguably Wasserstein's most recognized work, and earned her a grant from the

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Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays. *The Heidi Chronicles* brings Wasserstein's grace, humor and smart sensibility to the dilemmas of modern womanhood, indelibly leaving her one-of-a-kind mark on American theater.

Playwright **Wendy Wasserstein** (October 18, 1950 – January 30, 2006) became an American pioneer in her field and was hailed by *The New York Times* as the “chronicler of women’s identity crises.” Her major works include *Uncommon Women and Others*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Isn't It Romantic*, *An American Daughter*, *Old Money*, *Third* and the screenplay *The Object of My Affection*. She earned her B.A. in history from Mount Holyoke College in 1971, an M.A. in creative writing from City College of New York and an M.F.A. in 1976 from the Yale School of Drama. She was also the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Mount Holyoke College and an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Bates College in 2002. Her work, which includes several books and articles as well as plays, will forever be remembered as the foundation for the new American heroine – a concerned, smart and brave woman who is equally tender and tough. Wendy Wasserstein gave birth to a daughter, Lucy Jane, in 1999, was hospitalized with lymphoma in December 2005, and passed away in January of last year.

THE CAST OF *THE HEIDI CHRONICLES*

Ellen Karas (Heidi Holland)'s past Arena Stage credits include *The Women*, *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, *Expecting Isabel*, *Lovers and Executioners*, *Blithe Spirit*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *Misalliance*, *The School for Wives* and *The Revengers' Comedies* for which she won the Helen Hayes Award. Other Washington area credits include *The State of the Union* at Ford's Theatre and *Hilda* at Studio Theatre. She has also performed in such plays as *The Constant Wife* for American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and Seattle Repertory Theatre; *Hilda* at ACT in San Francisco and New York's 59 E. 59th Street Theatre; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for both the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and The Goodman Theatre; and numerous other productions all over the country.

Marty Lodge (Scoop Rosenbaum) returns to Arena for the first time since *M. Butterfly* (also directed by Mr. Thompson). Other Arena shows include *Of Mice and Men*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *You Can't Take it with You*. He was an Associate Artist at Round House for 11 years, appearing in more than 30 shows including *The Drawer Boy*, *Three Days of Rain*, *The Weir* and *Uncle Vanya*. His many appearances at The Shakespeare Theatre include *Cyrano* and *Henry IV*. During his time in D.C. he played on many stages, including Woolly Mammoth, Studio and Theater of the First Amendment, receiving four Helen Hayes nominations. Since landing in L.A. a little over two years ago, he has appeared on film in David Fincher's *Zodiac* and on TV in “Boston Legal,” “Cold Case,” “What About Brian,” “Gilmore Girls,” “Las Vegas,” “The Wire,” “The Singles Table,” “Everybody Hates Chris” and as the cowardly anesthesiologist Dr. Milton on “Grey's Anatomy.” In June he can be seen in numerous episodes of the new Fox comedy “The Loop.”

Wynn Harmon (Peter Patrone)'s Broadway credits include *The Detective in Porgy and Bess* (directed by Tazewell Thompson; also telecast “Live from Lincoln Center” on PBS). Other collaborations with Mr. Thompson include the premiere of *Les Trois Dumas* at IRT and *Scrooge in A Christmas Carol* at Westport Country Playhouse. Off-Broadway credits include *As You Like It*, *The New Yorkers* and the premiere of *Tibet Does Not Exist*. Regional credits include *The Constant Wife* (plus seven others) at The Old Globe; *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (Long Wharf, Hartford Stage and The Alley Theatres); *Sylvia* and *Travels with My Aunt* (Virginia Stage and Syracuse Stage); *The Three Sisters* and *Ring 'Round the Moon* (American Conservatory Theatre); *Silent Edward* (La Jolla

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Playhouse); *A Christmas Carol* (Milwaukee Rep); *The Way of the World* (Huntington Theatre Company); the premiere of *The West End Horror* (Bay Street Theatre); *The Marriage of Figaro* (American Repertory Theatre) and *Dr. Faustus* and his one-man show *Pure Poe* (Capital Rep). He played Trevor Babcock on "All My Children" and Mark in the film *Paper Cranes*. Mr. Harmon received the Edwin E. Stein Award for Excellence in the Arts and two Best Supporting Actor Awards for Jacques in *As You Like It* and St. Exupery in *Some Things That Can Go Wrong at 35,000 Feet*.

Catherine Weidner (Susan Johnston) played the Nurse in *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Patricia Clarkson at the Kennedy Center. At Center Stage she appeared in *Blithe Spirit* and *Mary Stuart*. Ms. Weidner played multiple roles in *Bad Beans: Four Short Plays by James Magruder* at the Baltimore Theatre Project. Staged readings include *Shakespeare in Hollywood* at the Kennedy Center and *Turcaret* for The Shakespeare Theatre Company. Ms. Weidner is the Program Director of the Academy for Classical Acting and has worked at The Guthrie Theater, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, La Jolla Playhouse and with Bread & Puppet.

Susan Bennett (Fran/April/Ensemble) returns to Arena Stage where she appeared last season as Alexandra in the co-production of *On the Verge* with Westport Country Playhouse. Off-Broadway performances include Barrow Street Theater's *Orson's Shadow*. Regionally, she has performed in the world premiere of David Wiltse's *Hatchetman* (Florida Stage); *The Dazzle* (Steppenwolf); *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (The Goodman); *Major Barbara* (Remy Bumppo Theater Company, Chicago); *And Neither Have I Wings to Fly* (Fox Theatricals, Chicago); *Crime and Punishment* (Writer's Theater); *The Secret Rapture* (Remy Bumppo); *Top Girls* (Remy Bumppo); *Uncle Vanya* (European Repertory Company, Chicago); *Beautiful Thing* (Cherry Lane Theater); *The Grapes of Wrath* (Ford's Theater); in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *The Lower Depths*, both with Shattered Globe Theater Company, Chicago.

David Covington (Chris/Mark/Ray/Ensemble)'s D.C. credits include Gilgamesh in *Walking the Winds* (Kennedy Center), Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Ford's Theatre), Sebastian (the Prince) in Imagination Stage's *Cinderella*, Azriel in *Passing the Love of Women* (Theatre J) and various roles in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Mack and Mabel*, *Follies* and *Gypsy* at Signature Theatre. Mr. Covington also has an extensive background in tap dancing – credits include the internationally acclaimed *Tap Dogs* (Off-Broadway and national tour), 2002 Winter Olympics, and the Kennedy Center 13th annual gala: *A Salute to the 1940's Broadway Musical* (Associate Choreographer and soloist). Mr. Covington is in the upcoming film *Babylon Central*.

Hope Lambert (Lisa/Jill/Ensemble)'s other D.C. appearances include Michelle in *Fallen from Proust* (Signature Theatre), Ginger in *Monkeyboy* (Charter Theatre), Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* (Folger), Elsa in *The Road to Mecca* (Olney), Maire in *Translations* (Keegan Theatre) and Beth in *Little Women* (Kennedy Center) as part of The Theater for Young Audiences tour. She is a former company member with Washington Shakespeare Company where she appeared as Olivia in *Twelfth Night*. In New York, Ms. Lambert appeared in *Darcy Wannamaker...* by Anton Dudley (Cherry Lane Theater). Other New York appearances include The Bank Street Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Source and Stage Door Acting Ensemble.

Emerie Snyder (Denise/Becky/Ensemble)'s past D.C. performances include Sissy in *Heaven* (Woolly Mammoth), Rivkeleh in *God of Vengeance* (Rorschach Theatre/Theater J), Dinah in *The Philadelphia Story* (Rep Stage) and Jeanine in *Schoolgirl Figure* (Cherry Red Productions). New York acting credits include work with Thirsty Turtle Productions and Todo Con Nada. Ms. Snyder is the Artistic Director of the New York City-based theater company The Intentional Theatre Group and will direct their first full production, *Archipelago*, this fall.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Tazewell Thompson (Director) became Artistic Director of Westport Country Playhouse in January 2006. At the Playhouse, he appeared as an actor in *Checking Out* in 1976, as well as directed *The Old Settler* in 2003 and *The Immigrant* in 2005. At Arena he has directed *On the Verge or The Geography of Yearning*, *M. Butterfly*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Yellowman*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Playboy of the West Indies*, *Yerma*, plus his own play *Constant Star* and many others. His international opera career has taken him to L'Opera de Paris, La Scala, Houston Grand Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Tokyo Opera, L'Opera Bastille, Glimmerglass Opera, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Portland, Michigan, Osaka and New York City Opera. His production of *Porgy and Bess* was broadcast on PBS's "Live from Lincoln Center" and received Emmy nominations for Best Director and Best Production. His other national theater credits include Goodman Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Guthrie, Old Globe, Hartford Stage, Seattle Rep., Oregon Shakespeare, PlayMakers Rep., Peoples Light and Theatre Company, Huntington Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Public Theatre, Second Stage, Roundabout, Goodspeed, Indiana Rep., Cleveland Play House, San Jose Rep. and Virginia Stage, among many others. An award-winning playwright, Mr. Thompson's play *Constant Star* has had more than a dozen productions and recently received five NAACP awards. He is commissioned to write plays for Arena Stage, Lincoln Center Theatre, South Coast Rep. and Peoples Light and Theatre Company.

Donald Eastman (Set Designer) designed *On the Verge or the Geography of Yearning*, *M. Butterfly*, *Yellowman*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Constant Star* and *Black No More* at Arena Stage. He has designed for The New York Shakespeare Festival, Lincoln Center Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music and Classic Stage Company. Premiere productions include *Hilda* by Marie Nydaie, *Elektra* by Ezra Pound, *On the Open Road* by Steven Tesich, *Les Trois Dumas* by Charles Smith, *The Gimmick* by Dael Orlandersmith, *Such Small Hands* by Tina Howe, *Constant Star* by Tazewell Thompson and the plays of Maria Irene Fornes. Mr. Eastman received an OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence, the 2005 Barrymore Award for Outstanding Design and a grant from the NEA/National Opera Institute.

Kirby Malone and **Gail Scott White** (Projection Designers) are the co-founders and directors of the multimedia design company Cyurbia Productions and co-editors of *Live Movies: A Field Guide to New Media for the Performing Arts*. They have created multimedia designs for *Silence & Darkness*, *Time Traveler Zero Zero* and Komar & Melamid's *Naked Revolution*. Their work has been featured in *Projection Design: An Overview*, a video by Wendell Harrington, which premiered at the Broadway Projection Master Classes at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center in New York City in June 2005. Mr. Malone is also a writer, director and professor of InterArts in the Department of Art and Visual Technology (AVT) at George Mason University, where he serves as Director of the Multimedia Performance Studio. Ms. White is a multimedia designer, animator, sculptor and professor of digital arts at George Mason University, where she teaches 3D animation and 2D still and motion graphics and serves as Associate Director of the Multimedia Performance Studio.

Robert Wierzel (Lighting Designer) designed *The Immigrant* at Westport Country Playhouse. On Broadway, he designed David Copperfield's *Dreams and Nightmares* and *The Deep Blue Sea*; Off-Broadway credits include *Hot 'n' Throbbing*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Intrigue with Faye* and *Savanna Bay*. Regional credits include countless work with Tazewell Thompson at Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Milwaukee Rep, Chicago Shakespeare, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf, Goodman Theatre, The Guthrie, Mark Taper Forum and Berkeley Rep, among others. Opera credits include work with companies of Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Toronto, Boston, San Diego, San Francisco, Houston, Washington, Seattle, Virginia, Chicago (including Lyric Opera and Chicago Opera Theatre), Glimmerglass and New York City Opera.

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Merrily Murray Walsh (Costume Designer) has designed *Constant Star* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at Arena Stage. Career highlights include *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *Patience* at Glimmerglass Opera, *Vanqui* at Opera Columbus, *Brothers* and *The Speed of Darkness* on Broadway. Other regional credits include San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center, Goodman Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Children's Theatre of Minneapolis, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Hartford Stage, Williamstown Theatre Festival and The Shakespeare Theatre. Ms. Walsh's film credits include *The Glass Menagerie*, starring Joanne Woodward and directed by Paul Newman, and *Prayer of the Rollerboys*. Her TV credits include "Kingfish: A Story of Huey P. Long," "The Murder of Mary Phagan," "In Search of Dr. Seuss," "MGM: When the Lion Roars" and "Miss Lonelyhearts."

Fabian Obispo (Sound Designer)'s Arena Stage credits include *On the Verge*, *M. Butterfly*, *Yellowman*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Agamemnon and His Daughters*, *Constant Star*, *Black No More*, *Yerma* and *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. He designed *The Member of the Wedding* and *The Old Settler* at Westport Country Playhouse. Off-Broadway credits include *The Right Kind of People* and *Speaking of Rita* (Primary Stages); *What of the Night*, *Last Easter*, *Bright Ideas*, *Intrigue with Faye* and *Sueno* (MCC); *La Terrasse*, *Neat* and *Seeking the Genesis* (MTC); *Two Sisters and a Piano* (The Public); *Servicemen* (New Group); *Clean* (Atlantic Theatre Company); *The Batting Cage* (Vineyard Theatre); *Phaedra in Delirium* (CTC); and *No Foreigners Beyond This Point*, *The Romance of Magno Rubio* and *The Square* (MaYi Theatre). Other credits in Connecticut include *Constant Star* (Hartford Stage); *Going Native*, *Infinite Ache*, *Third Army*, *Syncopation* and *Abstract Expression* (Long Wharf). Other regional theaters include Goodman Theatre, The Guthrie, The Shakespeare Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare, Seattle Rep., Cincinnati Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, Syracuse Stage, the Kennedy Center and Alabama Shakespeare, among others.

Jill Kaplan (Wig/Hair Designer) makes her Arena Stage debut for *The Heidi Chronicles*. Her work has been seen for the last five seasons at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, as well as the Utah Shakespearean Festival, the Seattle Children's Theatre, the Arizona Theatre Company and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. She currently works for Watson and Associates.

Mark Bly (Dramaturg) is entering his third season as senior dramaturg at Arena Stage. Earlier this season he dramaturged Molly Smith's *Cabaret*, Jonathan Munby's *Noises Off*, Moisés Kaufman's workshop of 33 *Variations* and Arena's current production of *Gem of the Ocean*. Mr. Bly is the director of the Arena Stage **downstairs** New Play Reading Series.

The Heidi Chronicles Line Producer is **David Dower**, Vocal Consultant is **Lynn Watson**, Stage Manager is **Amber Dickerson**, Assistant Stage Manager is **Kurt Hall**, Production Assistant is **Angelita Thomas**, Board Intern is **Peggy Tomlinson**, Stage Management Fellow is **Victoria Murray**, Directing Fellow is **Lileana Blain-Cruz** and Dramaturgy Fellow is **Clarence Coo**.

The Heidi Chronicles is sponsored by The Family of H. Max and Josephine F. Ammerman, Andrew R. Ammerman, and Hubert (Hank) and Charlotte Schlosberg.

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

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Special Events, Ticket Information, and Performance Calendar

The Salon

Monday, April 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Featuring special guests from *The Heidi Chronicles*

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, April 13 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 \$47-66, 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.)

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 5/6)

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 4/17, 4/25, and 5/2

Post Show Conversations: 4/26 at 8:00 p.m.; 5/8 at 7:30 p.m.

Sign-interpreted performances: 4/19 at 8:00 p.m.; 4/22 at 7:30 p.m.

Audio described performances: 4/25 at 7:30 p.m., 4/28 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 *The Heidi Chronicles* is available at www.arenastage.org or the iTunes Music Store.

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