

molly smith
artistic director

stephen richard
executive director

zelda fichandler
founding director

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Kirstin Lunke / Haley Miller
press@arenastage.org; (202) 554-9066 ext. 715

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 26, 2007

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES DATES FOR 2007/08 DOWNSTAIRS NEW PLAY READING SERIES

***** Works include commissioned plays by Eric Overmyer, Marcus Gardley and several up-and-coming American voices *****

(Washington, D.C.) The 2007/08 **Downstairs New Play Reading Series** successfully kicked off last week with *The Good Negro*, written by African-American playwright Tracey Scott Wilson and directed by Liesl Tommy, about a trio of emerging black leaders during the Civil Rights Movement, who struggle with their personal obsessions while battling the Ku Klux Klan and the FBI. Arena Stage Senior Dramaturg Mark Bly continues to direct this season's readings, which feature many exciting new voices in contemporary American theater.

"Molly Smith and I are thrilled to be championing the work of this emerging and established group of American voices who wrestle in their plays with nothing less than our personal, national and global demons," said Bly.

The 2007/08 downstairs New Play Reading Series:

November 5, 2007 at 7:00 pm

***The Aaronville Woman* by Stephen Spotswood
Anita Maynard-Losh directs in the Kreeger Theater**

Stephen Spotswood, a graduate student at Catholic University, recently won the Paula Vogel Playwriting Prize. This play, with its echoes of the Kennewick controversy, about a puzzling scientific find—the discovery of prehistoric human remains—brings Eve, a forensic anthropologist, back to the hometown she thought she'd left behind forever. Now her past and present collide as she is forced to confront the remnants of an abusive adolescence and an old love, all while trying to discover the true identity of the Aaronville Woman.

December 3, 2007 at 7:00 pm

***Resurrection* by Daniel Beaty
Charles Randolph Wright directs in the Kreeger Theater**

Resurrection is the story of six interconnected black males, ages 10-60: a child scientist, a young man from the projects on his way to college, an ex-convict, a corporate executive, a health food store owner and the Bishop of a mega-church, who all experience an unexpected phenomenon on the same evening that changes their lives forever. Beaty is well-known for his virtuosic one person play *Emergence-SEE!*, which played at Arena Stage last summer in 2007.

1101 Sixth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024
T: 202 554 9066
F: 202 488 4056
www.arenastage.org



Arena Stage announces 2007/08 downstairs New Play Reading Series
Page 2

January 28, 2008 at 7:00 pm

***Good Egg* by Dorothy Fortenberry**

David Dower directs at Arena Stage in Crystal City

Fortenberry is an M.F.A. student at the Yale School of Drama. In *Good Egg*, responsible Meg has always taken care of her bipolar younger brother Matt, but when she decides to get pregnant—and have her embryos pre-screened for bipolar disorder—is she taking the idea of “being responsible” too far? Fortenberry’s play explores the complex and elusive world of bioethics, siblings, and the limits of unconditional love.

February 4, 2008 at 7:00 pm

***Feels Like A Fire....Shut Up in My Bones*, a commission by Marcus Gardley**

Molly Smith directs at Arena Stage in Crystal City

Based on the lyrics of an old Negro spiritual, Gardley’s play interweaves the Biblical tale of the Hebrew captives and the fiery furnace with the story of a Black congregation attempting to rebuild their church after it is burned in a community overwhelmed by fear and racial tension.

February 11, 2008 at 7:00 pm

***Santa Ana*, a commission by Eric Overmyer**

Director TBA at Arena Stage in Crystal City

By the producer/writer of “Homicide,” “Law & Order” and HBO’s “The Wire,” and the new Fox Series “New Amsterdam,” Overmyer has created a seductive murder mystery set in 21st Century Hollywood for his gripping film-noir narrative. His work *On the Verge or the Geography of Yearning* was last seen at Arena Stage in the 2005/06 season.

March 24, 2008 at 7:00 pm

***The Near East* by Alex Lewin**

Gregg Henry directs at Arena Stage in Crystal City

Lewin is a graduate student at the University of California at San Diego. In his play, an American archaeologist teams up with an Arab activist to unearth the “Mother of Books,” the oldest scripture, from its resting place in the desert between Mecca and Medina. Their controversial mission affects a number of other characters, including a secretly gay Arab radical, a British spy and the ghost of a precocious 13-year-old boy.

The 2007/08 **Downstairs New Play Reading Series** is made possible, in part, due to the support from The Barbara R. Walton Endowment Fund for New Playwrights. Barbara R. Walton (1920-2003) was very active in the Washington theater community, serving as President of the Little Theatre of Alexandria and Secretary of the Board of Trustees at Arena Stage (Board member from 1957-65). In addition to directing community theater productions for the Montgomery Players and The Children’s Theatre of Richmond, she wrote six full-length and numerous one act plays that were produced throughout the Capitol region. Her most notable works include: *Hallowe’en Time*; *The Wonderful Idababa*; *Lost*; *The Gin-Gin Trade*; and *The Red Hat*. Her musical, *The Sing Ling Circus* (book and lyrics), was presented on the Fichandler Stage by the Arena Stage repertory company in 1962 to wide audience and critical acclaim.

Tickets to the **Downstairs New Play Reading Series** are \$8 plus applicable fees, and may be purchased online at www.arenastage.org or by calling the Arena Stage Sales Office at (202) 488-3300.

###