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MEDIA RELEASE

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U.S. THEATER CRITICS HONOR MOISES KAUFMAN'S 33 VARIATIONS WITH \$25,000 STEINBERG/ATCA NEW PLAY AWARD

***** The American Theatre Critics Association selected Kaufman's
premiere among six other finalists out of 28 eligible plays *****

(Washington, D.C.) The American Theatre Critics Association (ATCA) announced yesterday that it has selected Moisés Kaufman's *33 Variations* to receive the 2008 Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award. The announcement was made at Actors Theatre of Louisville during the Humana Festival of New American Plays. The award includes a commemorative plaque and a cash prize of \$25,000—currently the largest national playwriting award. Deborah Zoe Lauffer's *End Days* and Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* also received citations and \$7,500 each. These three were among six finalists selected from 28 eligible scripts submitted by ATCA members. They were evaluated by a committee of 12 theater critics from across the country.

"Arena is thrilled that *33 Variations* has been honored with the Steinberg Award," said Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith. "Moisés is a deserving playwright and we are very excited for him and all of those involved in the inception of the play. Considering Arena's particular focus on nurturing new American work, we could not be more proud to have played a role in the development of this inspiring new piece of American theater."

Kaufman's *33 Variations* debuted in September 2007 at Arena Stage as a co-production with Tectonic Theater Project. The production received three other workshops in association with Arena Stage before it came to full-production. The story is a fictional telling of Beethoven's creation of 33 variations, famously known as The Diabelli Variations, on a simple and trivial waltz. The composer's obsessive, four-year writing process parallels a contemporary story of a terminally-ill musicologist, who embarks on a personal journey to discover the source of Beethoven's inspiration.

33 Variations opens for its second production at La Jolla Playhouse April 8 – May 11.

The Steinberg/ATCA Award was started in 1977 to honor new plays produced at regional theaters outside New York City, where there are many new play awards. No play is eligible if it has gone on to a New York production within the award year (in this case, 2007). Since the inception of ATCA's New Play Award in 1977, honorees have included Lanford Wilson, Marsha Norman, August Wilson, Jane Martin, Arthur Miller,



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Mac Wellman, Adrienne Kennedy, Donald Margulies, Lee Blessing, Lynn Nottage, Horton Foote and Craig Lucas. Last year's honoree was Peter Sinn Nachtrieb's *Hunter Gatherers*. The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust was created in 1986 by Harold Steinberg on behalf of himself and his late wife. Pursuing its primary mission to support the American theater, it has provided grants totaling millions of dollars to support new productions of American plays and educational programs for those who may not ordinarily experience live theater.

ATCA was founded in 1974 and works to raise critical standards and public awareness of critics' functions and responsibilities. The only national association of professional theater critics, with several hundred members working for newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations and websites, ATCA is a national section of the International Association of Theatre Critics, a UNESCO-affiliated organization that sponsors seminars and congresses worldwide. ATCA also presents the M. Elizabeth Osborn Award, honoring emerging playwrights, and the Francesca Primus Prize, funded by the Francesca Ronnie Primus Foundation, honoring outstanding contributions to the American theater by female artists who have not yet achieved national prominence. Annually it makes a recommendation for the Regional Theater Tony Award presented by the American Theatre Wing/Broadway League and votes on inductions into the Theater Hall of Fame.

For more information on ATCA, visit www.americantheatrecritics.org.

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Arena Stage's 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 has become renowned as one of the most robust not-for-profit theaters in the United States, attracting a diverse annual audience of more than 200,000. On January 30, 2008, Arena Stage broke ground on its 47-year-old Southwest, D.C. theater campus to commence 29 months of construction to make way for the new Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater. The Center, opening fall of 2010, will be a breathtaking expansion of the current campus, allowing Arena Stage to focus on the strengths of the two existing spaces – The Fichandler Stage and the Kreeger Theater – while reinventing the surrounding building and adding a 200-seat space dedicated to premiering American theater, The Robert and Arlene Kogod Cradle.

To allow for a timely and cost-effective renovation, Arena Stage moved its operations from Southwest D.C. to Crystal City of Arlington, VA in December 2007. While the Mead Center is under construction, the company will be performing in the former Crystal Forum, which recently underwent a substantial renovation in preparation for our audiences and is now referred to as Arena Stage in Crystal City. The theater is roughly the same size as the Kreeger, and is the host to four productions in the 2008 season: "Ella," "Death of a Salesman," "A View from the Bridge," and "The Mystery of Irma Vep." For more information visit www.arenastage.org

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