FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ARENA PRESENTS CITIZEN JOSH:
THE QUIXOTIC ADVENTURES OF AN UNLIKELY ACTIVIST

*** David Dower directs comic monologuist Josh Kornbluth in his personal exploration of democracy today ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage welcomes Josh Kornbluth, writer/performer of Red Diaper Baby and Love & Taxes, in his hilarious and provocative one-man show Citizen Josh. A Jonathan Reinis Production, Citizen Josh is written and performed by Kornbluth in collaboration with Arena’s Associate Artistic Director David Dower. In this production, Kornbluth examines and engages the fundamentals of democracy through his entertaining and moving autobiographical stories. Citizen Josh runs October 9–October 26, 2008 at Arena Stage in Crystal City. The press opening performance is Thursday, October 9 at 8:00pm.

Troubled by the election in 2004 and the health of American democracy, Kornbluth created this smart and funny exploration of active citizen participation. “Inspired by my desire to make the world safer for my wife and son,” Kornbluth remarks, “I began my struggles at the local playground and soon found myself engaging in wider and wider circles: on the state, national, and even global levels. This is heady stuff for a middle-aged, neurotic monologuist, let me tell you!”

Kornbluth last performed at Arena Stage in Love & Taxes and now continues his long-time association with Dower. “Josh and I have created three monologues together, with Citizen Josh being the climactic chapter in his transformation from a disenfranchised red diaper baby to a fully engaged participant in the American Experiment,” Dower explains. “We’ve combined Josh’s signature comic autobiographical voice with the theories underpinning his long-overdue senior thesis on participatory democracy for Princeton—overdue by 25 years! It’s Josh’s particular genius that makes all of this funny, accessible and invigorating in equal measure.”

Former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich agrees that Citizen Josh is “magical, profound, lyrical and very funny” and the San Francisco Chronicle raved the show is “beautifully staged…It’s smart. It’s very funny. It’s another highly entertaining evening with Kornbluth.”

The show was commissioned and developed at The Z Space Studio with the support of The Creative Work Fund, The Sundance Institute Theatre Lab (Philip Himberg, Artistic Director) and The Bernard Osher Foundation and premiered at Magic Theatre in San Francisco. Citizen Josh now comes to Arena as part of “Arena Presents,” a newly inaugurated series designed to complement Arena Stage’s subscription programming and expand the commitment to American voices that has been a hallmark of Artistic Director Molly Smith’s tenure. Regarding coming to D.C., Kornbluth comments, “It’s such a wonderful opportunity for me to share the story of my political transformation, from passive onlooker to reluctant activist, with audiences who actually live and work in the belly of the beast.”

Artistic Director Molly Smith adds, “There is always an extra charge in the air around the District during an election year, but this year the level of excitement is unprecedented. I cannot think of a more appropriate time for Josh Kornbluth to perform his insightful, personal show. I know Citizen Josh will inspire audiences to think, to vote and to consider greater levels of active citizenship.”

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Following each performance, Kornbluth will engage in an open, informal discussion with the audience. On certain evenings he will be joined by notable guest activists, including members of academic, political and literary fields. Among the scheduled participants are Andy Shallal, local activist and restaurateur; Danielle Allen, author of Talking to Strangers and the investigator of the origins of the “Obama is a Muslim” message; and a member of The Little Rock 9. For more information on who will be joining Mr. Kornbluth, please visit: arenastage.org/season/08-09/sub-text/citizen-josh/panelists.

**Josh Kornbluth** (Writer/Performer), originally from New York City, worked at a series of alternative newspapers before moving to San Francisco. In 1989, he opened his first autobiographical monologue, *Josh Kornbluth’s Daily World*, at Enrico Banducci’s hungry i. Since then, he has created and performed several more solo shows, including *Haiku Tunnel*, *The Mathematics of Change*, *Red Diaper Baby*, *Ben Franklin: Unplugged* and *Love & Taxes*. He has also appeared in films: the back of his head was seen briefly in *Searching for Bobby Fisher*; the front of his head (and little else) was seen for a minute or two in Francis Ford Coppola’s *Jack*, in which he played the pivotal character of Cigarette Pack Man; in addition, he had slightly more extensive parts in Lynn Hershman-Leeson’s *Teknolust* (he was seduced by Tilda Swinton) and Jonathan Parker’s *Bartleby* (no seductions whatsoever). In 2001, a feature-film version of *Haiku Tunnel*, starring Mr. Kornbluth and co-directed by him and his brother Jacob, was selected for the Sundance Film Festival and then released nationally by Sony Pictures Classics. In 2002, Mr. Kornbluth collaborated with the San Francisco Mime Troupe on their summer show, *Mr. Smith Goes to Obscuristan*. Recently a concert film of *Red Diaper Baby*, directed by Doug Pray, debuted on the Sundance Channel. Mr. Kornbluth can be seen in Ms. Hershman-Leeson’s latest film, *Strange Culture*. A book titled *Red Diaper Baby*, collecting three of his early monologues, has just come out in a second edition. Mr. Kornbluth is currently the host of an interview program on KQED-TV, cleverly titled *The Josh Kornbluth Show*. His website is www.joshkornbluth.com.

**Citizen Josh Creative Team:**

**David Dower** (Director) came to the role of Associate Artistic Director at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. after serving as the Founding Artistic Director of the Z Space Studio for 16 years. He has developed and directed over 20 world premiere works through the studio. With monologuist Josh Kornbluth he developed and directed *Love & Taxes* and *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*, both of which still tour nationally, and collaborated on the films *Haiku Tunnel* and *Red Diaper Baby*. With Gary Hill, he directed the award-winning *Say Grace, 8 Bob Off* and *The Real Cheese*. He commissioned and collaborated on Leigh Fondakowski’s award-winning *The People’s Temple* and Sara Felder’s interview-based play *Keeping up with the Joans*, and he is currently working on the Z Commissions of *The Los Alamos Project* and Anne Galjour’s *Class Project*. Mr. Dower is the architect of the NEA New Play Development Program hosted by Arena Stage, serves as a consultant to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation on issues of new play development and was a 2006 Gerbode Fellow for Excellence in Non-Profit Leadership. He’s a regular contributor to the blogs *Stage Banter* and *The NEA New Play Development Program* both hosted by Arena Stage at www.arenastage.org.

Tony Award-winning **Producer Jonathan Reinis’** Broadway productions include Harvey Keitel in *Jerry Springer: The Opera* at Carnegie Hall (2008), *How The Grinch Stole Christmas: The Musical* (2006-7), *Kiki and Herb: Alive On Broadway* (Tony Nomination 2006), *Dame Edna* (Tony Award, 2000), Russell Simmons’s *Def Poetry Jam* (Tony Award, 2003), *Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home* (Tony Nomination, 2003) and *It Ain’t Nothin’ But the Blues* (Tony Nomination, 1999). His Off-Broadway work includes *Room Service*, Marga Gomez’s *Los Big Names*, Josh Kornbluth’s *Love & Taxes* and Shay Duffin as Brendan Behan. San Francisco/Bay Area and touring productions include Carrie Fisher’s *Wishful Drinking*; Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues*; Josh Kornbluth’s *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*; Sam Shepard’s *The Late Henry Moss* (with Sean Penn, Woody Harrelson, Nick Nolte and Cheech Marin); *Dame Edna, Ennio, His Way; Sandra Bernhardt*; Steve Martin’s *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (national tour); John Leguizamo’s premiere

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of *Freak; Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde;* and *Forever Tango* (national tour). Mr. Reinis built and operated Theatre on the Square in downtown San Francisco for more than 20 years (1981-2002). The theatre opened with the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play *Talley’s Folly.* Other San Francisco productions include *Jeffrey, Irving Berlin in Revue, Bubbe Meises, The Piano Lesson* (national tour), *The Kathy and Mo Show, Shirley Valentine, Love Letters, Mass Appeal and Phantom of the Opera* by Ken Hill. He also presented Mikhail Baryshnikov’s White Oak Dance Project in Northern California, the premier production of Smuin Ballets/SF *Dances with Songs,* the Kirov Ballet’s original *Nutcracker, Ballet Folklorico de Mexico de Amalia Hernandez, Stomp, Riverdance—The Show,* *Guys and Dolls* (national tour), *Fame: The Musical* and *Dirty Blonde* (national tour). Mr. Reinis is a member of the Broadway League and ATPAM.

**Alexander V. Nichols** (*Production Designer*) has created scenery, costumes, lights and projections for dance and theater companies across America, including 16 shows at Berkeley Rep. His credits also include American Conservatory Theater, the Alley Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theater, Arena Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Boston Ballet, California Shakespeare Theater, the Hartford Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Huntington Theatre Company, the Kronos Quartet, the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, the National Theater of Taiwan, ODC/SF, OSF, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, Pennsylvania Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and San Francisco Ballet.

**Marco D’Ambrosio** (*Composer*) is a composer, producer, trumpet player and all-around noise wrangler. A native of Florence, Italy, Mr. D’Ambrosio was captivated early on by the power of film music, particularly the classic collaborations of Fellini and Nino Rota, the scores of Ennio Morricone and Bernard Herrmann and the pivotal soundtrack to *Blade Runner.* This quickly led him to composition, with a special interest in combining the textures of electronic and acoustic music. He has scored numerous award-winning films, documentaries and live theater projects including the anime hit *Vampire Hunter D Bloodlust,* the Emmy-winning *Blink,* the PBS documentary *Double Dare* and the recently released film *The Rape of Europa.* In addition to scoring *Haiku Tunnel* (Sundance 2001), Mr. D’Ambrosio has collaborated with Josh on *Red Diaper Baby* and *Love & Taxes.* In 2005, Mr. D’Ambrosio was one of six accomplished composers awarded a fellowship from the Sundance Institute.

The Stage Manager for *Citizen Josh* is **Darl Andrew Packard** and the Dramaturg is **Mame Hunt.**

*Citizen Josh* is sponsored by Helga Tarver.

“Arena Presents” is sponsored by Whole Foods.

The Arena Stage 2008/09 Season is sponsored by The Family of H. Max and Josephine F. Ammerman, Andrew R. Ammerman, and Hubert (Hank) and Charlotte Schlosberg.

*Citizen Josh* **Special Events, Ticket Information, and Performance Calendar:**

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *Citizen Josh* range from $30 to 35, with discounts available for students and groups. A limited number of $10 tickets for patrons 30 and under go on sale beginning on Monday for the following week of performances (Tuesday through Sunday) until all available $10 tickets sell out. Patrons may purchase $10 tickets by phone, online or in person. (All patrons must be 30 or younger.) Patrons will be required to present valid ID for age verification. HOTTIX, a limited number of half-price, day-of-performance tickets, are available from 90 to 30 minutes before curtain prior to every performance for all patrons. **Tickets are available for purchase online at www.arenastage.org,** at the Arena Stage Sales Office at 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington, VA 22202 or by phone at (202) 488-3300.

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ABOUT ARENA RESTAGED

With construction well underway on the 47-year-old Southwest D.C. theater campus, Arena Stage has launched ARENA RESTAGED, a massive, two-year festival celebrating the rich mosaic of our nation’s voices. ARENA RESTAGED, which will lay the foundation for a new home for theater artists and audiences, will take place throughout the time it takes to finish the expansion of the new theater complex, Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater. At the Center, the two existing performance spaces—the Fichandler Stage and the Kreeger Theater—will be fully renovated and a new 200-seat space dedicated to premiering American theater, The Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle, will be added. Arena Stage at the Mead Center is scheduled to open for the 2010/2011 season.

To allow for a timely and cost-effective renovation, Arena currently operates out of Arena Stage in Crystal City (1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington, VA) and at the historic Lincoln Theatre (1215 U Street, NW, Washington, D.C.). As information changes and/or becomes available throughout the transition, Arena plans to keep its website at www.arenastage.org as up to date as possible with Frequently Asked Questions, directions and other relevant information. Information on Arena Stage’s 2008/09 season is also available online.

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