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2022/23 SEASON

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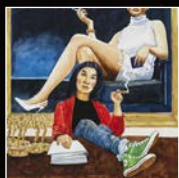
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BY **NATHAN ALAN DAVIS**
DIRECTED BY **MEGAN SANDBERG-ZAKIAN**
FEBRUARY 10-APRIL 2



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BY **TONY KUSHNER**
DIRECTED BY **JÁNOS SZÁSZ**
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BY **KENNETH LIN**
DIRECTED BY **TRIP CULLMAN**
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Photo of Kristolyn Lloyd in *American Prophet* by Margot Schulman.

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RIDE THE CYCLONE

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ARENA STAGE MISSION

Arena Stage is the voice of American theater resident in our nation's capital. Focused on American artists, our productions are innovative and representative of stories from across the country. We nurture new plays and reimagine classics. We celebrate our democracy and diversity through a multitude of voices in our productions and community engagement programs to inspire people to action. We produce all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, entertaining, deep, and dangerous in the American spirit.



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Arena Stage is built on the land of the Piscataway people of the Algonquin-speaking tribes, as well as the lands of the Native American people of the greater Anacostia, Potomac, and Tidewater regions.

What's your favorite “cult” musical?



Asking that question to Reddit came up with a fun list of answers. Some notable responses include *Next to Normal*, *Spring Awakening*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Side Show*, and *Heathers: The Musical*. Perhaps the most well-known example would be *The Rocky Horror Show*, complete with audience participation. *Ride the Cyclone* fits on this list.

So, what makes it a “cult” musical? Cult status means it gets under your skin. It can be subject matter that pushes societal boundaries.

I have often said that musicals can tackle difficult subjects in sneaky ways, because the music keeps your toes tapping while the deeper message sinks in slowly. The plot lines range into topics that are not often discussed in mainstream society and bring them to the forefront. It's not really that these musicals are for a niche audience—one that has an identity already—but rather that their creativity enables a new audience to find its voice through the music and story. They tackle stories about the pain of losing a child, blossoming sexuality, gender identity, difference. The music is often music of a contemporary generation rather than previous ones.

Take, for example, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch's* genderqueer narrative and use of 1970s-inspired rock music, or *Next to Normal's* story of mourning and commentary on mental health which also used the rock band format. New audiences discover they are not alone and are transformed. After we had planned this season, Arena's Director of Production Robert Hand shared that he listened to the music of *Ride the Cyclone* over seven times. We keep hearing from people who are addicted to the music. It's wildly popular among TikTok users, where it's celebrated as an underrated musical masterpiece. It gets under your skin!

Ride the Cyclone starts with tragic loss and ends with us feeling alive. First produced in 2008, by 2010 the show was being recognized, and productions continued around Canada and the U.S., with a limited run off-Broadway in 2016, growing and changing along the way. A driving rock musical, we are taken on a journey through tragedy, reflection, and redemption. The combination of tragic death with the possibility of future life is intriguing. The characters provide snapshot images of aspects of youth and are forced to look at their lives to determine who might have the most to gain. That is an extremely difficult question to ask—but perhaps one that we should ask ourselves regularly as we navigate the world.

One of theater's gifts to the world is helping people find their voice. Thank you for joining us today. We are excited to partner with Sarah Rasmusson and McCarter Theatre in Princeton on this energizing production of *Ride the Cyclone*.

Molly Smith
Artistic Director



Arena Stage
Washington, DC

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Welcome to *Ride the Cyclone*.



Any history professor will say that every decade is a time of transition. However, sometimes we feel the transitions as they happen, and sometimes we don't. Like the students in this musical, sometimes there are new aspects to discover about ourselves as we transition to a new state.

Last spring and summer, Arena engaged in research to better understand where we fit in people's minds and hearts. We were encouraged to learn that Arena and our mission has a strong connection with our long-time audiences. We were also challenged to realize that some people who live in our very own neighborhood are

not sure what happens inside our building. Such an idea is quite thought-provoking. Keeping with my theme this season of Finding Resilience, we learned that we could improve on ways to engage with the upcoming generations of theatergoers.

We know that musicals can take on difficult stories in ways that straight plays cannot—and then there are musicals that also break the mold on musicals. Currently celebrating a decades-long run on Broadway, *The Lion King* on the surface would seem to be a non-starter: an uncle kills his brother for the throne, tried to murder his nephew, and they are all animals. However, the music, the theatricality, the fulsome story combined to make *The Lion King* successful beyond belief. The risk of the creators (even though the Disney movie was a success, I hope we can agree that the innovative translation to stage musical was a big risk) was able to connect to audiences in a new way. Certainly, it made all of theater transition to another level. So today, without too much of a spoiler, a musical about a tragic accident on a roller coaster provides us with a way to approach mortality and how we live our lives. Coming out of a pandemic where mortality was very much top of mind, it is timely to have music that speaks to all generations to guide us through a unique story with cosmic resonance.

It is a pleasure to partner with McCarter Theatre on this production. McCarter Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen started her tenure in 2020—talk about experiencing a challenging transition! As Arena faces our own artistic leadership transition, we are buoyed by this partnership and seeing Sarah's strong leadership and artistry so evident on our Kreeger stage.

It's also interesting to note that *Ride the Cyclone*'s first performance was 15 years ago—in 2008—and the piece has continued to grow and change over these years. Intriguing stories will persevere until they find the most successful way to be told. Resilience is relied upon in navigating these transitions.

Thank you for being with us today and may all your transitions be graceful.

Cheers for the New Year,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Edgar'.

Edgar Dobie

Executive Producer

President of the Corporation

THE THINGS SHE SAID

By Seema Sueko

“First you hear it, then you know it, then you do it, then you become it.”

These were among the first bits of advice that Molly Smith and her now wife, Suzanne Blue Star Boy, shared with me in January 2013. I was newly arrived in Washington, D.C., on a 16-month grant through Theatre Communications Group to be in mentorship with Molly. I was serving as Executive Artistic Director of a small, Equity theater company I had co-founded in San Diego, Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, and this grant was an opportunity to pause, observe, absorb, and grow. Throughout my mentorship, I wrote down the bits of wisdom Molly shared.

When I was grappling long-distance with a human resources issue at my San Diego theater company, frantically gathering info and seeking Molly's advice, she gave me this mantra to repeat to myself:

“Please take this obsession out of my heart, my mind, my spirit, and show me where to go.”

She added:

“In order to trust, you have to risk yourself emotionally.”

As I observed similarities and differences between Arena Stage and my small theater, Molly clarified: at large institutions,

“You have to fight to keep the art primary.”

Otherwise, the art and the mission of the organization will get lost in a forest of spreadsheets and bottom-line fears.

About managing staff and ideas, Molly shared:

“Pay attention to extremes. Where is the heat? Why?”

I served as Molly's directing assistant on her Broadway bound production of *The Velocity of Autumn* by Eric Coble. I learned that after months of designing and prepping, Molly will,

“clear the mind by looking at something else”

days before commencing rehearsals — museums, nature, books — anything that appeared to be off-topic from the show she would be directing and yet inspiring to her artistic soul.

When talking about directing, Molly offered:

“Transitions are a meditative breath.”

“Land the first image, the image before intermission, and the last moment.”

“When all else fails, go back to the given circumstances.”

“Set the room up for collaboration.”

When it came to leadership, Molly emphasized the importance of bringing respect into all interactions with staff, board, artists, and volunteers, emphasizing that there are many times when the best course is to,

“shut up and listen.”

When she and I ideated about artistic projects or institutional challenges, she mused:

“Imagination is the greatest capital we have.”

And finally, when my mentorship with Molly was coming to its conclusion, she put her hands on my shoulders, looked me in the eyes and urged:

“Now is the time to have balls.”



Director Seamus Suelo and Artistic Director Molly Smith at rehearsal for The Helms (2018/2019 Season).



ON THE WHEELS OF FORTUNE AND BECOMING

By Otis Ramsey-Zöe

"Only once had she felt this kind of happiness. On the Rocket ride she took as a kid. When the rocket zoomed on the downward swing, the rush made her giddy with pleasure; when it slowed just before turning her upside down through the high arc of its circle, the thrill was intense but calm. She squealed with the other passengers, but inside was the stable excitement of facing danger while safely strapped in strong metal."

— Toni Morrison, *Paradise*

Folklorist Joseph Campbell believed that people are more interested in experiencing life rather than seeking out its meaning. In *The Power of Myth*, Campbell suggests, "I think what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonance within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive." Thrill rides can provide these bursts of excitement and ecstasy that speak to our contemporary need for adventure and escape and that speak to our primal selves. In addition, roller coasters, carousels, and the like have symbolic origins in ancient and medieval worldviews.

Ride the Cyclone stages a contemporary story that calls back to medieval and ancient philosophy and it may be understood through multi-level methods of interpretation (or none and enjoyed as simply an experience). The Cyclone, a kind of roller coaster or amusement park ride, harkens back to the Wheel of Fortune, or Rota Fortunae. The wheel of fortune, or some version of it, appears in various ancient cultures from Babylonian, Indian, Greek, and Egyptian civilizations. The wheel symbolizes the ups, downs, and turns as we cycle through life and the sudden, unpredictable nature of fate. Indeed, the idea of the wheel of fortune is ubiquitous and deeply imbedded in aspects of our

society. For example, the wedding ring represents the union of souls "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health," all of which may be represented as points on the wheel of fortune. A phrase like "accidents happen," appeals to fate, and surrender to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" all carry connections to the wheel.



Illustration from John Lydgate's *Siege of Troy*, showing the Wheel of Fortune held/turned by the Queen of Fortune.

In structure and content and in accordance with its handling of time and themes, *Ride the Cyclone* directly engages with the four categories of interpretation—literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical. In the first movement, the characters must make sense of what has happened to them (they are literally grappling with the

past). They next seek to make connections with their past and present towards moral clarity (allegorical and tropological). Finally, they move towards future, mystical orientations of being (anagogical). Within the musical, the super structure unfolds along a traditional narrative arc—beginning, middle, end—and, simultaneously, there are complete character and emotional arcs discretely rising and falling within the piece. Indeed, the plural form, wheels of fortune, more accurately captures the synchronous nature of the phenomena in the musical and in life. The show's multiple wheels conjure a gyroscope akin to descriptions presented in the Old Testament and in second century AD astronomy. "The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl; and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezekiel 1:16, KJV). "Each wheel is inside the other, like an onion's peel sits inside another peel, and there is no empty space between them" (Vettius Valens). Similar descriptions of wheels contained inside other wheels appear in ancient Indian philosophy and Buddhism as expressions of the wheels of life and becoming. Without pretense, *Ride the Cyclone* manages to be philosophically rigorous while showcasing vast sonic and cultural references.

According to co-writer Jacob Richmond, the idea for *Ride the Cyclone* started as a response to Aristotle's suggestion "in the *Poetics* that there was nothing dramatic or interesting about an accident or natural disaster." Richmond maintains, "This always struck me as an unfair sentence to those who fell prey to the horrific event. We have all lost a loved one through some meaningless stroke of bad luck: a fire, a car accident, a freak brain aneurysm, etc." What began as a retort to an ancient Greek philosopher known for his musings on art and ethics has blossomed into a thriving musical that continues to galvanize audiences and fans beyond performances. *Ride the Cyclone* enjoys a huge online presence bolstered by fans who post themselves performing songs and who have annotated and analyzed every aspect of the show. More than a musical, it is a cult phenomenon that explores the meaning of life and most vibrantly provides an exhilarating experience of being alive.

UKRAINE IN ART OUTSIDE AND INSIDE

Among the characters you'll meet in *Ride the Cyclone* is Mischa Bachinski, a Ukrainian "bad boy" according to The Amazing Karnak. Mischa has quite a story to tell, and I'll let him tell it and not rob you of the experience of meeting him with a clean slate. However, it is worth noting that encountering a character from Ukraine hits differently since the February 24, 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, which represents a major escalation in the Russo-Ukrainian War that has been stewing since 2014.

On August 24, 2022, marking six months since the invasion, Arena Stage unveiled a mural (at the Maine Ave & 6th St SW corner glass wall) by artists JAH ONE, Eddie Harris, and R2 Murals as an act of solidarity organized by Amnesty International USA. Our mural features a field of Ukraine's national flowers and a young girl holding a sunflower in front of the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theatre in Mariupol which was destroyed by Russian airstrikes in March 2022. At the time, the theater was serving as a shelter and hundreds of civilians were killed in the bombing. Arena Stage stands with the citizens of Ukraine, and we call for justice for war crimes committed by the Russian Armed Forces.



Amnesty International USA mural in support of Ukraine painted on the Mead Center. Photo by Elizabeth Hawks.





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Powering our communities is just the beginning. At Exelon, we consider it our responsibility to improve the quality of life for people in the communities where we live, work and serve. Participation in good corporate citizenship is an integral part of our culture, and we inspire our employees to help everyone succeed.



Arena Stage
Molly Smith, Artistic Director | Edgar Dobie, Executive Producer
in association with McCarter Theatre Center

PRESENTS

RIDE THE CYCLONE

BOOK, MUSIC, AND LYRICS BY **JACOB RICHMOND** AND **BROOKE MAXWELL**

DIRECTED BY **SARAH RASMUSSEN**

ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY BY **JIM LICHTSCHEIDL**

ADDITIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY BY **TIGER BROWN**

MUSIC SUPERVISOR
MARK CHRISTINE

MUSIC DIRECTOR
NICK WILDERS

SET DESIGNER
SCOTT DAVIS

COSTUME DESIGNER
TREVOR BOWEN

LIGHTING DESIGNER
JIYOUN CHANG

SOUND DESIGNER
ANDRÉ PLUESS

PROJECTION DESIGNER
KATHERINE FREER

HAIR, WIG, AND MAKEUP DESIGNER
J. JARED JANAS

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
TIGER BROWN

ELECTRONIC MUSIC PROGRAMMING
MARK CHRISTINE
NICK WILDERS

CASTING DIRECTOR
STEWART/WHITLEY

STAGE MANAGER
RACHAEL DANIELLE ALBERT*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
ALISON COTE*

Support for *Ride the Cyclone* is provided by **Ilene and Steven Rosenthal**.

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TALK ABOUT US: #ArenaCyclone #RideTheCyclone #ArenaStage
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CAST / MUSICIANS

CAST *(in alphabetical order)*

Swing	KYLE DALSIMER
Constance Blackwood	GABRIELLE DOMINIQUE*
The Amazing Karnak	MARC GELLER*
Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg	SHINAH HEY*
Noel Gruber	NICK MARTINEZ*
Mischa Bachinski / Dance Captain	ELI MAYER*
Jane Doe	KATIE MARIKO MURRAY*
Swing	ASHLEY D. NGUYEN*
Ricky Potts	MATTHEW BOYD SNYDER*

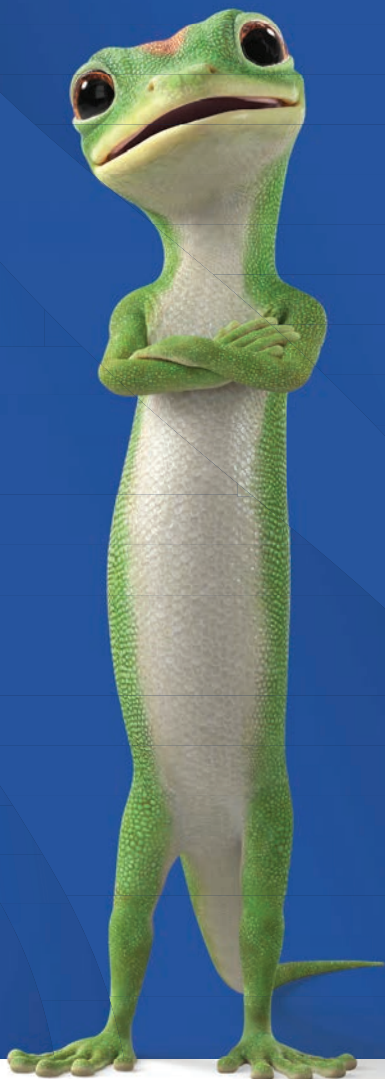
**Actors' Equity Association*

MUSICIANS

Music Director / Electronic Music Programming /	
Conductor / Keyboard 1	NICK WILDERS
Keyboard 2	MARIKA COUNTOURIS
Acoustic / Electric Guitar	GERRY KUNKEL
Acoustic / Electric Bass	ELIOT SEPPA
AFM Musical Contractor / Percussion / Drum Set	DANNY VILLANUEVA

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Associate Sound Designer	JOSEPH DISBROW
Associate Projection Designer	ZAVIER TAYLOR
Associate Hair, Wig, and Makeup Designer	TONY LAURO
Assistant Sound Designer	JOSH MCCAMMON
Intimacy Consultant	ALEXANDRA HADDAD
Lighting Assistant.....	HAYLEY GARCIA PARNELL
Production Assistant.....	ILANA SIMON-RUSINOWITZ
COVID-19 Compliance Officer	TREVOR COMEAU
Stage Carpenters	HANNAH MARTIN, SARAH SCHLEHLEIN
Props.....	ALEKX SHINES, GRACE TRUDEAU,
Light Board Operator.....	KELSEY SWANSON
Moving Light Programmer.....	PAUL VILLALOVOZ
Followspot Operator	STEFANIE DEHART
Audio Engineer	DREW MOBERLEY
Second Audio.....	LEX ALLENBAUGH
Video Engineer	ALYSSA FOY
Wardrobe Supervisor	ALICE HAWFIELD
Wardrobe	EMILY MCCORT
Wig, Hair, and Makeup Supervisor	JAIME BAGLEY

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
Please turn off all electronic devices, unless using specifically for
GalaPro closed captioning service.
Eating and drinking are not permitted inside the theater.
Masks must be worn at all times during the performance.

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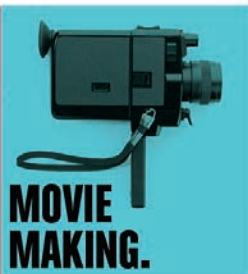
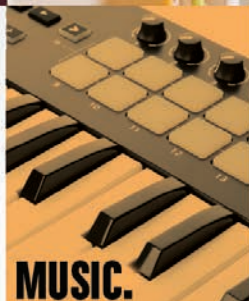
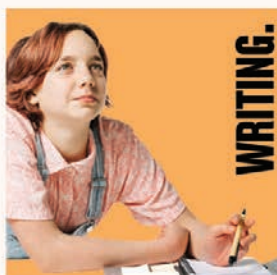


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ARENA.THEATER/CAMP

Held at Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School



SETTING / MUSICAL NUMBERS

SETTING

Time: The distant future & Monday, September 14th, 2009

Place: A dilapidated warehouse in Uranium City,
Saskatchewan, Canada

MUSICAL NUMBERS

“Dream of Life”	Jane Doe
“Uranium”	Ensemble
“Sailing Through Space”	Ensemble
“The Other Side”	Ensemble
“What the World Needs”	Ocean O’Connell Rosenberg, Ensemble
“Noel’s Lament/That F#@&ed Up Girl”	Noel Gruber, Ensemble
“Every Story’s Got a Lesson”	Ocean O’Connell Rosenberg, Ensemble
“This Song is Awesome”	Mischa Bachinski, Ensemble
“Talia”	Mischa Bachinski, Ensemble
“Space Age Bachelor Man”	Ricky Potts, Ensemble
“The Ballad of Jane Doe”	Jane Doe, Ensemble
“The New Birthday Song”	Ensemble
“Jawbreaker / Sugarcloud”	Constance Blackwood, Ensemble
“It’s Just a Ride”	Ensemble



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CAST



KYLE DALSIMER (*Swing*) is so thrilled to be making his Arena Stage debut! Born and raised in Northern Virginia, Kyle is best known locally for his work this past Summer playing

SpongeBob in the D.C. area premiere of *The SpongeBob Musical* (Toby's Dinner Theatre). Most recently, he performed Off-Broadway in *Frankenstein the Musical* and *Friends! The Musical Parody*. Love to Mom and to Isabel always. IG: @kyledalsimer



GABRIELLE DOMINIQUE (*Constance Blackwood*) is thrilled to be making her Arena debut! Regional: *The Wiz* (5th Avenue Theatre); *West Side Story*, *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific*, *A*

Christmas Carol, *Romeo and Juliet* (Guthrie); *West Side Story* (Ordway Center); *Annie*, *I Come From Arizona* (Children's Theatre Company); *Mamma Mia!* (Chanhassen Dinner Theatres); *Jelly's Last Jam* (Theater Latté Da). Gabrielle is thrilled to be reprising her role as Constance after her first appearance in the show at the Jungle Theater (Minneapolis, MN) back in 2019. Much love to Mom, Dad, TaKeyah, & Matt. "Enjoy the Ride!"



MARC GELLER (*The Amazing Karnak*) is very happy to be making his Arena Stage debut. He can currently be seen as Kier Eagan in the Apple TV+ series *Severance* and as

Ragged Man in the upcoming A24 film *A Different Man* with Sebastian Stan. Stage credits include: Herr Schultz in *Cabaret*, The Ghost of Marley in *A Christmas Carol* (for seven years), 13 characters in *Baskerville*, Ned Weeks in *The Normal Heart*, Ira in *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, Joshua/Cathy in *Cloud 9*, Isaac in

Disgraced, Nicodemus/Lady Enid in *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, Roberto Miranda in *Death and the Maiden*, and Doc in *West Side Story*. Other recent television appearances include: *Katy Keene*, *Russian Doll*, *The Onion*, *The Knick*, and *The Eric André Show*.



SHINAH HEY (*Ocean O'Connell Rosenberg*) is making her Arena Stage debut. She was last seen as Ocean at the Jungle Theater. Some other credits include The

Kennedy Center: *Me...* *Jane* national tour (Jane Goodall), *Elephant & Piggie's We Are in a Play* national tour (Piggie); Guthrie Theater: *The Music Man* (Zaneeta Shinn); Chanhassen Dinner Theater: *Footloose* (Rusty), *Grease* (Frenchy, Sandy u/s), *Holiday Inn* (Ensemble, Lila Dixon u/s); Theater Latté Da: *Assassins* (Squeaky Fromme), *Gypsy* (Dainty June and Agnes), *Into the Woods* (Little Red and Lucinda); *Artistry: Little Women* (Amy, Jo u/s). Sending all of her love to Andy and Jane. IG: @ShinahHey



NICK MARTINEZ (*Noel Gruber*) is so excited to be making his Arena debut as he returns to this production of *Ride the Cyclone*, seen at McCarter last spring. Past credits

include *Anne of Green Gables* at Goodspeed Opera House (Moody Macpherson), *The Who's Tommy* at The Kennedy Center (Pinball Lad 1 / Ensemble), *Grease* at The REV (Doody), *Bat Out of Hell* at NY City Center (Swing, Tink u/s), *Newsies* at John W. Engeman Theater (Crutchie). Elon University BFA. Thank you to my incredible team at DGRW and all my love to my family: Mom, Dad, Sofia, Aamir, and baby Kiyan. Follow @neeneemartin!



WHO'S WHO



ELI MAYER (*Mischa Bachinski / Dance Captain*) is so excited to be returning to *Ride the Cyclone*! His previous credits include Mischa in *Ride the Cyclone* (McCarter Theatre), *Footloose* (Muny), *Indian Summer* (Bay Street), and *The Royal Family of Broadway* (Barrington Stage). He is originally from Acton, MA. He would like to extend his affections to his family, friends, Stewart/Whitley, and his wonderful manager, Rochel Saks. He holds a BFA from CCM. IG: @elimayermaynot.

Слава Украине. героям слава.



KATIE MARIKO MURRAY (*Jane Doe*) is making her Arena Stage debut. Katie was born and raised in the DMV. Most recently she played Cinderella in *Into the Woods* at Signature

Theatre. Favorite theatre credits include Maureen in *Rent* at Signature Theatre, *Simply Sondheim* at Signature Theatre, and Janet Van De Graaf in *The Drowsy Chaperone* at Pittsburgh CLO. In NY she was in the developmental workshop of KPOP at ARSNova as well as Dave Malloy's most recent immersive piece *Love Around the Block*. Huge thanks to Joe, Molly, and the creative team of RTC for bringing her on board. BFA Penn State. IG: @ktpotaty katiemarikomurray.com



ASHLEY D. NGUYEN (*Swing*) is ecstatic to be making her Arena Stage debut. Previous credits include: Olney Theatre Center: *Dance Nation* (Zuzu); The Kennedy Center TYA: *The*

Day You Begin (Min, world premiere); Keegan Theatre: *Shakespeare in Love* (Viola de Lesseps); Creative Cauldron: *Into the Woods* (Little Red); Studio Theatre: *White Pearl* (Ruki Minami u/s – U.S. premiere); Catholic University: *A Little*

Night Music (Fredrika Armfeldt), *The Wolves* (#8). EDUCATION: BM in Musical Theatre from Catholic University. IG: @ashley.d.nguyen



MATTHEW BOYD SNYDER

(*Ricky Potts*) is thrilled for his debut at Arena Stage for *Ride the Cyclone*. He most recently served as Understudy/Swing for the same title at Princeton

University's McCarter Theatre. Earlier in 2022, he concluded his role as Mike Teavee (2019-2022) with the North American tour of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Regional credits include *Saturday Night Fever* (Bobby), *In the Heights* (Sonny), *Rock of Ages* (Franz), and *Sister Act* (Pablo). He is immensely grateful to the RTC creative team and Stewart/Whitley for this wonderful opportunity. Deep love to the audience as well as his family, friends, and mentors. IG: @matthewsnyder101

CREATIVE TEAM

JACOB RICHMOND (*Book, Music, and Lyrics*) has written several plays, including: *The Qualities of Zero* (Dora Award nomination, Montreal MECCA Award winner for Best Text); *Small Returns* (Theatre Passe Muraille); *Legoland* (SummerWorks Award for Best Text, Frigid Festival New York Favorite Production, Vancouver Fringe Favorite Award); *From Canada to Canada* (CBC Radio One Award, Best Comedy); and *The Punch and Judy Show* (Caravan Farm Theatre). Born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, he majored in history and performance at Concordia University (Montreal) and is co-founder of Atomic Vaudeville, a popular cabaret theater series in Victoria, BC.

BROOKE MAXWELL (*Book, Music, and Lyrics*) is a freelance musician, composer, and educator based in Victoria, BC,



WHO'S WHO

Canada. In addition to *Ride the Cyclone*, he has underscored and sound designed several local and national works: *Gruff* (Puente Theatre), *And Slowly Beauty* (Belfry Theatre, National Arts Centre, Tarragon Theatre), *A Tender Thing* (Belfry Theatre), *The Glass Menagerie*, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (Bluebridge Theatre), *Joan* (Theatre SKAM), *Busted Up* (Open Pit Theatre). brookemaxwell.com

SARAH RASMUSSEN (Director) is the Artistic Director at McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, NJ, where she is thrilled to carry on its long tradition of championing new voices onstage. Prior to McCarter, Rasmussen was Artistic Director of the Jungle Theater in Minneapolis, where in recognition of her directing work she was named *Star Tribune's* Artist of the Year. Rasmussen also served as Resident Director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Black Swan Lab new work development program and Head of MFA Directing at the University of Texas at Austin. She is an alum of the Women's Project, Soho Rep, and Lincoln Center Directing Labs. She has directed at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie, Dallas Theater Center, Actors Theater of Louisville, and La Jolla Playhouse. She has developed new work with Playwrights' Center, the O'Neill, the Lark, and many others. She was an inaugural recipient of the BOLD Leadership Circle grant and is also the recipient of a Princess Grace Award, an Ivey Award for Overall Excellence, and Drama League and Fulbright fellowships. MFA, UC San Diego.

JIM LICHTSCHEIDL (Original Choreography) is an actor, director, choreographer, and creator based in Minneapolis, MN. Jim's choreography/movement credits include *Thief River* and *The 39 Steps* (Guthrie Theater), *Ride the Cyclone*, *Fly By Night*, and *Little Women* (Jungle Theater), *Ragtime*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *My Fair Lady*, and *The Music Man* (Ten Thousand Things Theater), and

Johnny Baseball and *The Snow Queen* (Park Square Theatre). Jim was awarded a McKnight Theater Artist Fellowship at the Playwrights' Center in 2019. Acting credits include Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theater Company), which earned him the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in 2018. He has also appeared on the stages of St. Ann's Warehouse, Alley Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

TIGER BROWN (Additional Choreography / Associate Director): Off-Broadway: *The Lesson* (NY Theatre Barn). Regional: *Ride the Cyclone* (McCarter), *Mystic Pizza*, *Rock of Ages*, *Elf* (Engeman), *Matilda* (1st Regional at Tuacahn Amphitheatre), *Holiday World* (Lab, RWS). Film/TV: The Jimmy Awards (2022, 2019 Iowa PBS), Stars in the House with Seth Rudetsky. Proud graduate of NYU Tisch, SDC Professional Development Program 2018-19, dance faculty at AMDA. Sarah, Mark, and the brilliant team at Arena Stage — your trust and collaboration means the world. IG/TikTok: @stigerb tiger-brown.com

MARK CHRISTINE (Music Supervisor/ Electronic Music Programming) is a NY-based musician, actor, and nationally recognized college audition coach. As pianist/keyboardist, arranger, and musical director: Broadway & 1st National Tour of *Waitress*, McCarter, Guthrie, The Jungle, Signature, La Jolla, and others. He is also a songwriter and produces music out of his NY studio. As an actor: *Waitress* (Broadway & 1st National), Mark Taper Forum, Denver Center, Guthrie, A.C.T., La Jolla, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and the acclaimed U.S. National Tour of Peter Brook's *The Suit*. He is president of www.CollegeAuditionCoach.com where he helps young artists successfully apply/ audition for college performing arts programs. He holds a BFA in Musical Theatre (w/ a focus on Music Direction) from Michigan and an MFA in Acting from UC San Diego / La Jolla Playhouse.



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NICK WILDERS (*Music Director / Electronic Music Programming / Conductor / Keyboard 1*) is making his Arena Stage debut with *Ride the Cyclone*. His Broadway credits as a pianist are *Company* and *Wicked*, and additional New York credits include *Emojiland*, *Titanique*, *Notes From Now* (all Off-Broadway), and *SuperYou* (Carnegie Hall). Recent regional credits include *Guys and Dolls* (ACT of Connecticut), the co-regional premiere of *The Cher Show* (Gateway Playhouse), *Who Could Ask for Anything More?* (Barrington Stage Company), and *Ride the Cyclone* (McCarter Theatre Center). His orchestrations, arrangements, and electronic music design have been heard around the world, from performances at Lincoln Center to the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal. He is a frequent collaborator with DC's own American Pops Orchestra. Next up: world premiere of *Wings* at Drake University. www.nickwilders.com

SCOTT DAVIS (*Set Designer*) Production Designer: *Disney On Ice: Frozen & Encanto*, *Disney On Ice: Road Trip Adventures*, Off-Broadway credits include *Ride the Cyclone* at MCC, *Othello: The Remix* at The Westside Theatre. Chicago credits include productions with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Steppenwolf, Court Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Victory Gardens, Drury Lane, Northlight Theatre, American Theater Company, Marriott Theatre, Griffin Theatre Company, Windy City Playhouse, Steep Theatre, and Northwestern University. International credits include productions with Shakespeare's Globe, Unicorn Theatre (London), The Market Theatre (South Africa), The Neuss (Germany), Gdansk Shakespeare Theatre (Poland), The Cultch (Vancouver), DUCTAC Theater (Dubai), Brice Mason Centre (New Zealand), and Edinburgh Festival (Scotland). Regional credits include productions with Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Signature Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre,

Children's Theatre Company, Utah Shakespeare Festival. TV credits include Art Director for *Gilded Age* Season 2 on HBO Max, Concept Artist for *Gossip Girl* on HBO Max and *The Watcher* on Netflix, and Art Consultant on *American Horror Story: NYC*. www.scottadamdavis.com

TREVOR BOWEN (*Costume Designer*) This is Trevor's first production at Arena Stage. Credits include: *The Day You Begin*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963* (Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts). New York credits include *Molière Turns 400* (FIAF); *All is Calm* (Sheen Center). Trevor's regional design credits include Guthrie Theater, Glimmerglass Opera Festival, Boston Lyric Opera, Asolo Rep, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, MN Opera, 5th Ave, Seattle Children's Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Penumbra Theatre, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Steppenwolf Theatre, Contemporary American Theatre Festival. www.trevorbowendesign.com

JIYOUN CHANG (*Lighting Designer*) Broadway credits: *KPOP*, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf* (Tony nomination), *Slave Play* (Tony, Drama Desk, Henry Hewes nominations); Other credits: *Merry Wives* (Delacorte Theater), *The Far Country* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Letters of Suresh* (Second Stage), *Bina's Six Apples* (Suzi Bass Award), *Marys Seacole* (Henry Hewes nomination). More credits at The Public, Roundabout, NYTW, BAM, MCC, Signature, Guggenheim, Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes (TBA nomination), Long Wharf Theatre, Guthrie, The Old Globe, OSF. Recipient of Obie Award, Suzi Bass Award, and Falstaff Award.

ANDRÉ PLUESS (*Sound Designer*) Arena Stage credits include *Right to Be Forgotten*, *Indecent*, *Smart People*, *Metamorphoses*, *Equivocation*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Legacy of Light*, *33 Variations*, *Passion Play*. Broadway credits



WHO'S WHO

include *The Minutes* (Cort/Studio 54), *33 Variations* (Eugene O'Neill Theatre), *I Am My Own Wife* (Lyceum Theatre), *Metamorphoses* (Circle in the Square). Off-Broadway credits include *The Clean House* (Lincoln Center), *Milk Like Sugar and BFE* (Playwrights Horizons). Regional credits include multiple productions with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Center Theatre Group, Yale Repertory, McCarter Theatre, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Court Theatre, Berkeley Repertory, Williamstown Theatre Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, and South Coast Repertory. He's received multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards, an Ovation Award, Drama Critics Circle Award, Barrymore Award, Helen Hayes Award, Drama Desk, and Lucille Lortel nominations for composition and design. André is an ensemble member of Lookingglass Theatre Company.

KATHERINE FREER (*Projection Designer*) is a multimedia artist, filmmaker, organizer, and educator whose artistic practice lives at the intersection of story, technology, and civic engagement. Frequent collaborators include Ping Chong, Ty Defoe, Kamilah Forbes, Steve H. Broadnax III, Lux Haac, Porsche McGovern, Liza Jessie Peterson, Talvin Wilks, and Tamilla Woodard. She is a proud member of Wingspace Theatrical Design and United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829. Core collaborator in All My Relations Collective. Interim Head of Integrated Media Program, University of Texas at Austin. www.katherinefreer.com

J. JARED JANAS (*Hair, Wig, and Makeup Designer*) Broadway credits include *Ohio State Murders*, & *Juliet*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *American Buffalo*, *Jagged Little Pill*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *Gettin' the Band Back Together*, *Bandstand*, *Indecent*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Visit*, *The Real Thing*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *Motown*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*,

The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess, and *All About Me*. Recent Off-Broadway include *Prayer for the French Republic* (MTC), *Kimberly Akimbo* (Atlantic Theater), *Seven Deadly Sins* (Tectonic), *Sing Street* (NY Theatre Workshop), and *Yours Unfaithfully* (Mint Theater, Drama Desk nomination). Recent regional theater include *Good Night, Oscar* (Goodman), *The Bluest Eye* (Huntington), and *Clue* (Paper Mill). Recent TV includes *And Just Like That*, *The Gilded Age*, and *Gotham*.

STEWART/WHITLEY (*Casting*) Duncan Stewart CSA and Benton Whitley CSA. Broadway/NY: *Paradise Square*, *Hadestown* (Artios Award), *Chicago the Musical*, *Rock of Ages*, *Lightning Thief*, *Great Comet of 1812*, *Elf*, *On the Town*, *Pippin*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*. TV/Film: Netflix, 20th Century Fox, NBC, Lionsgate, Disney Channel. West End/U.K.: *Hadestown*, *Thriller Live*, *Menier Chocolate Factory*. Tours: *Hadestown*, *Hairspray*, *Waitress*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Finding Neverland*, *Into the Woods*, *We Will Rock You*. Regional: A.R.T., Berkeley Rep, Alley, Bay Street, For The Record, TUTS, Hollywood Bowl, McCarter, Signature, RCCL. Follow: @stewartwhitley and stewartwhitley.com

RACHAEL DANIELLE ALBERT (*Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be back at Arena Stage. Favorite credits include: *American Prophet*, *Change Agent*, Ken Ludwig's *Dear Jack*, *Dear Louise*, *Junk*, *Native Gardens*, among others. Selected regional credits include: *Just For Us*, *Hi*, *Are You Single*, *Fairview*, *Describe the Night*, and *Botticelli in the Fire* (Woolly Mammoth); *The Wolves* (Studio Theater); *Seize the King*, *Up Here*, and *Ether Dome* (La Jolla Playhouse); *The Odd Couple*, *Sylvia*, and *Souvenir* (New London Barn Playhouse); and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Stage 773). During quarantine, Rachael entered the brave new world of digital theatre, as the livestream stage manager for



WHO'S WHO

Amir Nizar Zuabi's new play *This Is Who I Am*, produced by Woolly Mammoth and PlayCo, in partnership with The Guthrie, A.R.T., and OSF. Showcaller: ArchiteX. Founding member: Oakland Theater Project. MFA: University of California, San Diego. BFA: University of Michigan. Proud AEA member.

ALISON COTE (*Assistant Stage Manager*) returns to Arena Stage having previously stage managed Arena and McCarter Theatre Center's co-production of *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*. She has been a freelance stage manager with McCarter for 24 seasons. Working on over 20 world premieres, highlights include Danai Gurira's *The Convert*, *Sorrows and Rejoicings* written and directed by Athol Fugard, Stephen Wadsworth's adaptations of *The Figaro Plays*, and Tarell Alvin McCraney's trilogy of *The Brother/Sister Plays*. Other regional credits include The Old Globe, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Berkeley Rep, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Long Wharf, Paper Mill Playhouse, Center Theatre Group, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, Pittsburgh Public, and 23 productions at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. New York credits include Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage, and The Public Theater. Abroad, Alison was stage manager for *An Iliad* at the Sibiu International Theatre Festival in Romania. She is a founding partner of Princeton-VIRTUAL as a virtual stage manager and is an adjunct instructor at Rider University.

MCCARTER THEATRE CENTER

An independent, not-for-profit, Tony Award-winning performing arts center located between New York City and Philadelphia—and on the campus of Princeton University—McCarter is a multi-disciplinary creative and intellectual hub offering theater, music, dance, spoken word, family, and educational programs for all ages. As a destination for arts and

ideas, we hope to inspire conversations, connections, and collaborations in our communities. McCarter is celebrated for commissioning and developing new work. World premiere plays include Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Tony Award, Best Play), Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays*, Emily Mann's *Having Our Say*, and more. Renowned artists who have appeared on stage include: Alvin Ailey, Yo-Yo Ma, Audra McDonald, Béla Fleck, David Sedaris, The Moth, Terence Blanchard, Rhiannon Giddens, Roseanne Cash, Shawn Colvin, Jorge Drexler, the rock band Lake Street Dive, and others. McCarter and Princeton University share a long history of unique partnerships and creative collaborations. McCarter's mission is to create stories and experiences that enliven minds, expand imaginations, and engage communities via performing arts; our work is led by values of justice and joy, beauty, and belonging. We connect with the audiences year-round through behind-the-scenes opportunities, digital programming, on-site classes, and in-school residencies. www.mccarter.org

ARENA STAGE LEADERSHIP

MOLLY SMITH (*Artistic Director*) has served as artistic director since 1998. Her 40 directing credits at Arena Stage include large-scale musicals, like *Catch Me If You Can*, *Anything Goes*, Disney's *Newsies*, *Carousel*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oklahoma!*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man*, *Cabaret*, *South Pacific*; new plays, like *Celia and Fidel*, *Sovereignty*, *The Originalist*, *Camp David*, *Legacy of Light*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, *How I Learned to Drive*; and classics like *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Great White Hope*, and *All My Sons*. Her directorial work has also been seen Off-Broadway at



59E59 in New York, Portland Center Stage, Canada's Shaw Festival, The Court Theatre, The Old Globe, Asolo Repertory, Berkeley Repertory, Trinity Repertory, Toronto's Tarragon Theatre, Montreal's Centaur Theatre and Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska, which she founded and ran from 1979-1998. Molly has been a leader in new play development for over 40 years. She is a great believer in first, second and third productions of new work and has championed projects, including *Dear Evan Hansen*; *Next to Normal*; *Passion Play*, a cycle; and *How I Learned to Drive*. She led the re-invention of Arena Stage, focusing on the architecture and creation of the Mead Center for American Theater and positioning Arena Stage as a national center for American artists through its artistic programming. During her time with the company, Arena Stage has workshopped more than 100 productions, produced 39 world premieres, staged numerous second and third productions, and been an important part of nurturing nine projects that went on to have a life on Broadway. In 2014, Molly made her Broadway debut directing *The Velocity of Autumn*, following its critically acclaimed run at Arena Stage. She was awarded honorary doctorates from American University and Towson University. In 2018, she was honored as Person of the Year by the National Theatre Conference and inducted into the Washington DC Hall of Fame. In 2020, she was awarded the Director of Distinction in Cairo, Egypt, from the Academy of Arts. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, she developed the concept for two online films, *May 22, 2020* and *The 51st State*, overseeing the production direction as well as directing pieces within the films. She also spearheaded a variety of other new online content, including a weekly talk show *Molly's Salon*, during the live performance hiatus.

EDGAR DOBIE (*Executive Producer*) Born in Vernon, British Columbia, a village next to the Rocky Mountains (three years after Arena had its first performance in 1950), I am one of five brothers raised by my Dad Edgar, a mechanic and small businessman, and Mom Connie, a telephone operator and union organizer. I am the only Dobie to make a career in theater. Luckily for me, drama was an arts elective I was offered at the tender age of 12 so I hung up my hockey skates and joined the drama class, led by teacher Paddy Malcolm and her fledgling Powerhouse Community Theater after school. By the time I graduated from high school, we volunteers had built ourselves a 200-seat, fully equipped theater on its own piece of land in the center of town and found a sold-out audience for the full season of plays we had on offer. That experience taught me so many lessons about the power of theater to foster collaboration and share meaningful stories, as well as the public values that attach themselves to building a safe place where everyone is welcome. All those lessons served me well as a managing leader and producer both sides of the border and both sides of the commercial and non-profit theater divide. Arriving here in Southwest with my good wife Tracy and our daughter Greta Lee in 2009 makes me feel like I am well-equipped to do a good job for you all.

This theater operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association.



The actors and stage managers are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



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Arena Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theater.

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The cast of *The Pajama Game*. Photo by Margot Schulman.



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Gift Planning Specialist Maya Weil
Development Operations and
Events Specialist Casey Radner
Membership Coordinator Lauren Lopaty
Strategic Philanthropy
Assistant Kiana Livingston
Development Fellow Fabian Rodriguez*

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

General Manager Alicia Sells
Assistant General
Manager Katharine Templeton
Company Managers Trisha Hein,
Maddie Newell
General and Production
Management Coordinator Jenna Murphy

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS

Director of Information Systems
and Operations Travis Armbuster
System Administrator Brian Oh
Help Desk Associate Edward Wieland
Operations Director Paul Reagan
Lead Building Technician Keaun Windear
Building Technician Larry Serious
Porters Tevin Smith, Lawrence Wise
Stage Door Attendant Kay Rogers

PRODUCTION

Director of Production Robert Hand
Production Manager Trevor A. Riley
Assistant Production
Manager Rachel Crawford

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Resident Production
Stage Manager Christi B. Spann

SCENIC

Technical Director Natalie Bell
Associate Technical Director Zachary Fullenkamp
Scene Shop Supervisor Travis Smith
Charge Scenic Artist Li Qiang
Carpenters Matthew Grisdela, Julia Junghans,
Hannah Martin, Logan McDowell
Frank Miller, Jess Rich, Erick Boscana

PROPERTIES

Properties Director Jennifer Sheetz
Associate Properties Director.. Lance Pennington
Assistant Properties Director Jonathan Borgia
Head Props Artisan Niell DuVal
Props Artisan Kyle Handziak
Props Assistants Alekx Shines,
Grace Trudeau

LIGHTS

Lighting Supervisor Christopher V. Lewton
Assistant Lighting Supervisor Paul Villalovoz
Electricians Scott Folsom, Kelsey Swanson
Lighting Fellow Hayley Garcia Parnell*

SOUND

Sound and Video Supervisor Brian Burchett
Assistant Sound and
Video Supervisor Byron Hurst
Sound And Video
Shop Technician Timothy M. Thompson
Sound Technicians Lex Allenbaugh,
Alex Cloud, Andrew Moberley

COSTUMES

Costume Director Joseph P. Salasovich
Associate Costume Director Cierra Coan
Draper Erika Krause, Carol Ramsdell
First Hands Michele Macadaeg,
Elizabeth "Liz" Spilsbury
Craftsperson Deborah Nash
Wardrobe Supervisors Adelle Gresrock,
Alice Hawfield
Wigs, Hair, and
Makeup Supervisor Jaime Bagley
Costume Assistant Kathleen Crescenzo
Costume and
Costumes Fellow TyQuria Fountain*

**Allen Lee Hughes Fellow*





THE HIGH GROUND

BY NATHAN ALAN DAVIS

DIRECTED BY MEGAN SANDBERG-ZAKIAN

BEGINS FEBRUARY 10

arena
stage

the mead center
for american theater