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TEMPESTUOUS ELEMENTS

2023/24 SEASON

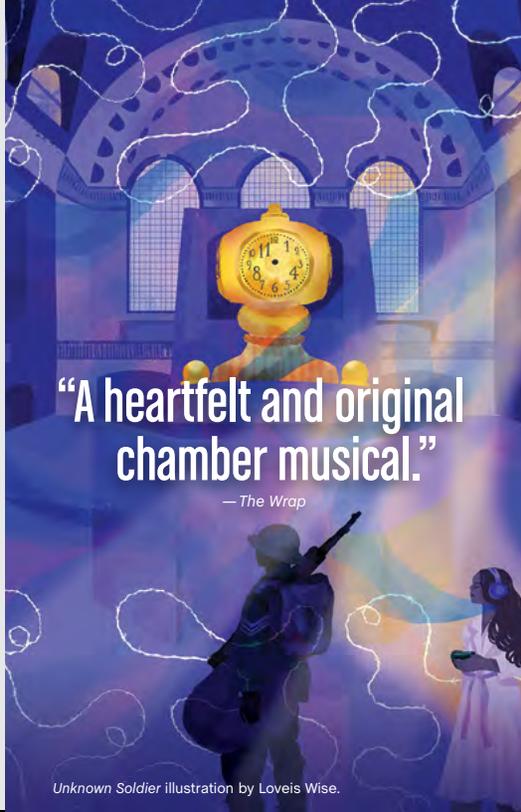


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TEMPESTUOUS ELEMENTS

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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.



Photo by Nic Lehoux courtesy of Bing Thom Architects.



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.

ARTISTICALLY SPEAKING



It is incredibly rare to read a play that not only invokes both historical and contemporary reflections on education and its role in the enduring struggle for equality but places those issues squarely in our city. Just a few miles north of our beloved Arena Stage lives the historic M Street School, the setting of Kia Corthron's soaring and searing *Power Play* which brings the legacy of Anna Julia Cooper to brilliant life on the Fichandler stage. I feel profoundly fortunate to welcome you to *Tempestuous Elements*.

Growing up in Houston, TX, we were all encouraged to read, understand and debate the particular philosophical differences between W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. In fact, indelible in my brain are the reverberations of the sing-song verse of Dudley Randall's poem, "Booker T. and W.E.B.," that I memorized as a child:

*"It seems to me," said Booker T.,
"It shows a mighty lot of cheek
To study chemistry and Greek
When Mister Charlie needs a hand
To hoe the cotton on his land,
And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,
Why stick your nose inside a book?"*

*"I don't agree," said W.E.B.,
"If I should have the drive to seek
Knowledge of chemistry or Greek,
I'll do it. Charles and Miss can look
Another place for hand or cook.
Some men rejoice in skill of hand,
And some in cultivating land,
But there are others who maintain
The right to cultivate the brain."*

Anna Julia Cooper, a teacher at the M Street School, believed in the profound intellectual potential of her M Street students. Their fulfillment of that potential, however, as they outperformed their white peers, set off a domino effect of scandalous accusations and virulent attempts to undermine her intellectual legitimacy, which leave us, sixty years after her passing, to consider: what are the costs for Black women who dare to challenge the patriarchal and oppressive structures that uphold the status quo?

Tempestuous Elements allows us to examine the function and impact of these structures through the prismatic history of our very own city. Each of us, no matter our background, can certainly comprehend what it means to feel constrained by narrow perceptions of others. Even in 2024, against the backdrop of Dr. Claudine Gay's resignation from her appointment at Harvard University, we can trace the cracks from the cumulative pressure on the glass ceiling that spiders outwards as women, people of color, and intellectual pioneers continue to chafe against the status quo.

Haná S. Sharif
Artistic Director

FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



Does it seem ridiculous to say that Washington, D.C., has a rich history? Yes, it does, and yet it's very interesting to note which histories are deep in our collective knowledge and which are not. Anna Julia Cooper was such an immense contributor to American life that her words are quoted on our most important possession, passports, and yet her name is not as well known in the general sphere. *Tempestuous Elements* by Kia Corthron is about to change all that.

Anna Julia Cooper is also a local hero. Arguably, local heroes for Washington, D.C., are often national heroes as well, because of our unique responsibility housing our federal government. Through a host of rich programming, including the Power Plays commissioning initiative (of which *Tempestuous Elements* is a part), Arena proudly tells stories of American heroes (local and national), lesser-known contributors, and fictional Washingtonians. These legacies share valuable lessons, and also educate, entertain, and excite.

There have been presidents on our stages in plays such as *Camp David* (Carter), *All the Way* and *The Great Society* (both LBJ), *Sovereignty* (Jackson), *JQA*, and *Change Agent* (JFK). Of course, not all portrayals must be complimentary.

There have been unsung heroes and controversial figures close to presidents in plays such as *Eleanor: Her Secret Journey* (Eleanor Roosevelt), *Mary T. & Lizzy K* (Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley), *The Originalist* (Justice Antonin Scalia), and *American Prophet* (Frederick Douglass).

Stories set in Washington have strong resonance for our community, with our audiences imagining fictional versions of themselves on stage in plays such as *An American Daughter*, *Born Yesterday*, *The City of Conversation*, *Intelligence*, and, earlier this season, *POTUS*.

Homegrown talents like the great musician Duke Ellington shine in productions like *Sophisticated Ladies*, and we have set our Washington travails to music several times, such as with *Damn Yankees* and *Dave*.

Those titles are merely a few examples of stories that resonate and illuminate our American heritage. Illuminating the essential work of Anna Julia Cooper, the impact of the M Street School, and the importance of education are critical in 2024. All times have their trials, although we seem to have survived a pandemic into an angry time with stubborn divisiveness. There are lessons to be learned from the past. I hope today's story told with grace, humility, and eagerness for conversation lands with you all in a hopeful way as we look to America's future.

Edgar Dobie
Executive Producer
President of the Corporation

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WHAT HAPPENED AT M STREET IS BIGGER THAN ANNA JULIA COOPER

by Otis Ramsey-Zöe, Dramaturg

To sow the wind is to reap the whirlwind.

— Anna Julia Cooper, “The Ethics of the Negro Question”

Having now seen how quickly the truth can become a casualty amid controversy, I’d urge a broader caution: At tense moments, every one of us must be more skeptical than ever of the loudest and most extreme voices in our culture, however well organized or well connected they might be. Too often they are pursuing self-serving agendas that should be met with more questions and less credulity.

— Claudine Gay, “What Just Happened at Harvard Is Bigger Than Me”

Public schools were established for public good to strengthen the American citizenry. According to “History and Evolution of Public Education in the US,” a report written by Nancy Kober for the Center on Education Policy at the George Washington University, “The Founding Fathers maintained that the success of the fragile American democracy would depend on the competency of its citizens. They believed strongly that preserving democracy would require an educated population that could understand political and social issues and would participate in civic life, vote wisely, protect their rights and freedoms, and resist tyrants and demagogues.” Different forms of public education systems sprang up by the late 1780s. However, schools for Black Americans were not established until after the ratification of Reconstruction Amendments (1865-1970), which granted citizenship to Black Americans.

In 1870, Congress established the Preparatory High School for Negro Youth in DC. In 1891, the school was relocated and became popularly known as the M Street High School. The school gained a reputation for churning out women and men of excellence who went on to attend elite colleges and universities and rose to prominence in many professional fields including business, dentistry, education, law, medicine, the military, music, and teaching. Illustrious educator, scholar, and activist, Anna Julia Cooper became principal at M Street on January 2, 1902. Cooper’s book *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* (1982) is considered one of the first published articulations of black feminism and earned her the honorific “the mother of black feminism.”

Inspired by real events, *Tempestuous Elements* dramatizes events that occurred during Cooper’s tenure as principal. The play is best viewed with awareness that events represented therein occurred after *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) upheld racial segregation in public accommodations, including schools and before *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) would rule segregations in public schools unconstitutional. The *Plessy* ruling illustrates a post-Emancipation struggle against limits of citizenship for Black Americans and a larger discourse around the possibilities of social equality between Blacks and whites. As a woman, Cooper was additionally subject to gender-based biases, and she wrote and spoke

about her specific positionality as a Black woman subjected to both racism and misogyny. Over one hundred years before black feminist writer Moya Bailey coined the term “misogynoir” to describe the intersection of these two oppressions, Cooper’s work was steeped in the very idea.

While, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. suggests, “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice,” it can sometimes feel like we are standing still or at least, in some ways, pushing a heavy stone up a steep hill. Cooper was not the first and a cursory glance at recent events confirms that she will not be the last Black woman to be attacked and vilified by those wishing to curtail progress. In 2021, Nikole Hannah-Jones was refused tenure at University of North Carolina in the wake of concerted action against her appointment. While UNC eventually flip-flopped on their position and offered Hannah-Jones a tenure post, she refused it, and instead joined the faculty of Howard University. When we gathered on January 17th for first rehearsal, only two weeks had lapsed since Claudine Gay resigned her post as president of Harvard University. In a *New York Times* guest essay, Gay reflects, “It is not lost on me that I make an ideal canvas for projecting every anxiety about the generational and demographic changes unfolding on American campuses: a Black woman selected to lead a storied institution. Someone who views diversity as a source of institutional strength and dynamism.” If, as the Founding Fathers suggested, the health of our democracy depends upon the health of our educational institutions, how is our democracy fairing when what happened to Anna Julia Cooper keeps on happening and happening.

M ST SCHOOL CONTROVERSY

by Vanessa Dalpiaz, Artistic Development Fellow

Anna Julia Cooper’s time as principal of M Street was marked by controversy stemming from the wider national conversations occurring over what sort of education should be available to Black Americans. Cooper aligned with most Black intellectuals in believing that liberal arts college prep education should be emphasized. However, she faced opposition from the growing influence of the Hampton-Tuskegee Idea, popular with white southerners. This idea was embraced by Percy Hughes, Cooper’s white supervisor. Further, cultural attitudes in D.C. at the time made it difficult for any woman to hold on to positions of power. In a letter, former student Annette Eaton said,

“As the Negro population of Washington was concerned, we were still a small southern community where a woman’s place was in the home. The idea of a woman principal of a high school must account in some part for any reaction Dr. Cooper felt against her... It was O.K. for women to be elementary school teachers and principals, but they were not supposed to aspire to any higher rank. Second, she had been married, and married women were not wanted, or even for a time allowed, to teach. She got away with it because she was a widow... The third factor is that she rented out a room in her house to a man...named John Love, and the whole city of Washington was rife with the gossip that she was having an affair with him.”



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PRESENTS

TEMPESTUOUS ELEMENTS

BY KIA CORTHON

DIRECTED BY PSALMAYENE 24

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND
CHOREOGRAPHY BY
TONY THOMAS

SET DESIGNER
TONY CISEK

COSTUME DESIGNER
LEVONNE LINDSAY

LIGHTING DESIGNER
WILLIAM K. D'EUGENIO

ORIGINAL MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN
LINDSAY JONES

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ANITA MAYNARD-LOSH

DRAMATURG
OTIS RAMSEY-ZÖE

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Arena Stage thanks **Tiffeny Sanchez** and **Reg Brown** for their generous sponsorship of *Tempestuous Elements* and their tremendous support of Black storytelling in DC. *Tempestuous Elements* is also made possible through generous funding from **AARP** with additional support from **Susan and Steve Bralove**, **Dr. Donald Wallace Jones**, **Dr. Betty Jean Tolbert Jones**, and **Tracey Tolbert Jones**, **PNC**, and **The Drs. Elliot and Lily Gardner Feldman Endowment for New Plays at Arena Stage**.

This project is supported in part by the **NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**.

SETTING / CAST

SETTING

1905-1906, Washington, D.C.

CAST *(in alphabetical order)*

Abigail/Lottie **KELLY RENEE ARMSTRONG***
 Mr. Turner/Francis/Atwood/Charles **JOEL ASHUR***
 Hiram/W.E.B. Du Bois/Rep. White **RO BODDIE***
 Male Understudy **PETER BOYER***
 Ernestine/Lula/Mrs. Cook/Alumni Association President **RENEA S. BROWN***
 Anna **GINA DANIELS***
 Male Understudy **JONATHAN DEL PALMER***
 Lucretia/Annie **BRITNEY DUBOSE**
 Minerva/Miss Patterson **YETUNDE FELIX-UKWU***
 Ruth/Ivy/Josephine/Principals' Association Representative **JASMINE JOY***
 Hannah/Mary/Nellie **LOLITA MARIE***
 Hughes **PAUL MORELLA***
 Female Understudy **MONIQUE PAIGE***
 Lawrence/Silas/John/Dr. Purvis/Dance Captain **KEVIN E. THORNE II***
 Female Understudy **RENEE ELIZABETH WILSON**

**Members of Actors' Equity Association*

FOR THIS PRODUCTION / SPECIAL THANKS

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Associate Hair and Wig Designer **DAPHNE EPPS**
 Assistant Set Designer **GISELA ESTRADA**
 Piano Consultant **MARIKA COUNTOURIS**
 Violin Consultant **MEGAN YANIK**
 Lighting Assistant **INDIGO GARCIA**
 Directing Assistant **VANESSA DALPIAZ**
 Production Assistant **CAT MORESCHI**
 Script Production Assistant **GRACE O. GYAMFI**
 Stage Supervisor **HANNAH MARTIN**
 Props **ERICA FEIDELSEIT, ABBY FRY**
 Light Board Operator **SCOTT FOLSOM**
 Audio Engineer **LEX ALLENBAUGH**
 Wardrobe Supervisors **ADELLE GRESOCK, ALICE HAWFIELD**
 Wigs, Hair, and Makeup Supervisor **JAIME BAGLEY**
 Crew Swing **TREVOR COMEAU**
 Deck Crew **MADDIE FRIEDMAN**

SPECIAL THANKS

The playwright wishes to thank Jocelyn Clarke, Shirley Moody-Turner, Joseph Mazur, Pearl Rhein, Art Omi, T.S. Eliot House, and Molly Smith.

Andrew R. Ammerman is the Directing Sponsor of the 2023/24 Season. His support allows Arena Stage to feature the work of the finest directors on our stages.

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WHO'S WHO

CAST



KELLY RENEE ARMSTRONG (*Abigail/Lottie*) is an actor and writer who last appeared at Arena Stage in *Our War*. Regional credits include *Bov' Water* (Northern Stage), *The Call* (Theater J), *The Elder Statesman* (Washington Stage Guild), *Invisible Man* (u/s, Studio Theatre), and *Yellowman* and *Antigone Project* (Rep Stage). Kelly received the Maryland Individual Artist Award grant and was a finalist for the Many Voices Fellowship. She has developed her plays with the Playwrights' Center, Playwrights' Arena, and Eden Theater Company. Kelly is a proud graduate of Bowie State University and holds an MFA in Acting and Playwriting from The Catholic University of America. Much love to Kaliah and my family! kellyrenee.armstrong.com



JOEL ASHUR (*Mr. Turner/Francis/Atwood/Charles*) recently concluded *Confederates* at Mosaic Theater. Other credits include *Bars and Measures* at Mosaic Theater, *Good Bones* at Studio Theatre, *How the Light Gets In* at 1st Stage, *Nollywood Dreams* at Round House Theatre, *Sweat* at Fulton Theatre, *Sister Act* at North Carolina Theatre, *Lombardi* at Actors Theatre of Indiana, and *A Friend of a Friend* at Capital Repertory Theatre.



RO BODDIE (*Hiram/W.E.B. Du Bois/Rep. White*) is proud to be making his Arena Stage debut. Select D.C. area appearances include *The Mountaintop*, *Radio Golf*, *The Tempest*, and *A Boy and His Soul* (Round House Theatre) and *Pipeline*, *Three Sisters*, and *No Sisters* (Studio Theatre). New York credits include

Socrates (The Public Theater) and *Seize the King* (Classical Theatre of Harlem). Select regional credits include Bay Street Theater, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Cleveland Play House, and Baltimore Center Stage. Television credits include *Godfather of Harlem*, *Run the World*, *The Good Wife*, *Elementary*, and *Person of Interest*. Ro is an alum of University of the North Carolina School of the Arts and recipient of the 2016 Actor of the Year Craig Noel Award. Instagram: [@roboddieart](https://www.instagram.com/roboddieart)



PETER BOYER (*Male Understudy*) previously appeared at Arena Stage as Henry in *Holiday* and as Voice of Cop in *The High Ground*. Notable roles include Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Broadway Christmas Carol* at MetroStage, Groucho Marx in *Groucho: A Life in Revue* at Wayside Theatre, Dromio in *Comedy of Errors* at Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, Captain Hook in *Tinkerbell* and Captain Braidbeard in *How I Became a Pirate* at Adventure Theatre, and Charles Dickens in *Discord* and Mr. Praed in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* at Washington Stage Guild. His one-person play *Captain Hook: My Story, or How I Clawed My Way to the Top* was produced at Spotlighters Theatre in collaboration with the Baltimore Playwrights Festival, and at Artistic Synergy of Baltimore. www.petersbrain.art



RENEA S. BROWN (*Ernestine/Lula/Mrs. Cook/Alumni Association President*) last appeared in Arena Stage's *Change Agent*. Recent credits include *Camae* in *The Mountaintop* and *Dede* in *Nollywood Dreams* (Round House Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Our Verse in Time to Come*, and *The Reading Room Festival* (Folger Theatre); *Love Factually* (Kennedy Center); *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); and more. Off-Broadway: Short New Play

Festival (Red Bull Theater). Regional: American Shakespeare Center, Kentucky Shakespeare, Island Shakespeare Festival, Quintessence Theatre, Nebraska Rep, Arizona Theater Company, and more. Renea has an MFA from The Academy of Classical Acting. You can catch her in *Metamorphoses* at Folger Theatre this summer! Instagram/TikTok:

@therealdarklady www.reneabrown.com



GINA DANIELS (Anna) appeared at Arena Stage in *Roe* in 2017. Later that year, she was in *The Effect* at Studio Theatre. Gina was in the Broadway companies of *Network* and *All The Way;*

Becomes a Woman at Mint Theater Company; *Judgement Day* at Park Avenue Armory; *The White Snake* at Wuzhen Theatre Festival; and *Angels in America* at Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, as The Angel. Her other credits include *Cincinnati* Playhouse in the Park, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Syracuse Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Paper Mill Playhouse, Arden Theatre, TheaterWorks Hartford, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Baltimore Center Stage, Geva Theatre Center, and Pittsburgh Public Theater, among others. In 10 seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Gina appeared in over 30 productions, originated roles in a dozen world premieres and ran Shakespeare's gamut from Perdita to Portia to Puck. Television/Film credits include *Law & Order*, *Evil*, *Manifest*, *FBI*, *Orange is the New Black*, and *Lapsis*. www.gina-daniels.com



JONATHAN DEL PALMER (*Male Understudy*) is excited to make his Arena Stage debut. His most recent appearance on a D.C. stage was in *The Winter's Tale* (Folger Theatre). Other recent D.C. credits include

Life Jacket (4615 Theatre); *The Rainmaker*, *columbinus*, and *The Member of the Wedding* (1st Stage); *Day of Absence* (Theater Alliance); *Moon Man Walk* (Constellation Theatre Company); *Suddenly Last Summer* (Avant Bard Theatre); and *Our Verse in Time to Come* (Folger Theatre). Del also appeared in *How to Quit Your Day Job* at 54 Below in New York City and was trained at the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts. Instagram: @jonathandelpalmer



BRITTNEY DUBOSE (*Lucretia/Annie*) is excited to return home to D.C. after living in Texas for 24 years and beyond thrilled to be making her Arena Stage debut! Her regional credits

include *The Window King* (Live Garra Theatre) and *A Change Gon' Come* (The Finest! Performance Troupe). Some of her other credits include *Her Stories* (Soul Rep Theatre Company), *Temple Spirit* (Echo Theatre), and *The Bluest Eye* (Jubilee Theater). Brittney's film credits include *The Starter Marriage* directed by Arthur Muhammad and *Color Me You* directed by Marco Bottiglieri. Instagram: @brittney_dubose



YETUNDE FELIX-UKWU (*Minerva/Miss Patterson*) last appeared at Arena Stage in the staged reading of *Scarfoot Lives*. Locally, she was most recently seen in the Helen

Hayes-nominated *Nollywood Dreams* (Round House Theatre). Select regional credits include *A Christmas Carol* (TheatreSquared); *Babel* (Unicorn Theatre); and *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre). Yetunde's TV/film credits as a Dialect Coach include *Time Bandits* (Paramount+) and *King Shaka* (CBS/Showtime). Instagram: @yetundelive www.yetundelive.com



JASMINE JOY (*Ruth/Ivy/Josephine/Principals' Association Representative*) last worked on Arena Stage's hilarious production *POTUS*. She is delighted to return for this

powerful, dynamic world premiere. Local credits include *Shear Madness* at The Kennedy Center; *Dance Nation* at Olney Theatre Center; *The Mamalogues* at 1st Stage; *A Chorus Within Her* at Theater Alliance; *Moon Man Walk* at Constellation Theatre; *A Wind in the Door* at The Kennedy Center TYA; *The Hula-Hoopin' Queen*, *Corduroy*, and *The Snow Queen* at Imagination Stage; *Womxn on Fire* at Keegan Theatre; *The Powers That Be* and *#solestories* at Venus Theatre; and *The Gulf* at Peter's Alley. You can see Jasmine next in *Is God Is* at Constellation Theatre! Jasmine would love to thank her daughter, Calypso, for being her inspiration.

www.jasminejoybrooks.com



LOLITA MARIE (*Hannah/Mary/Nellie*), two-time Helen Hayes Award recipient, is making her Arena Stage debut. D.C. area credits include *The Brothers Paranormal* and

The Joy That Carries You (Olney Theatre); *Well* and *Doubt* (1st Stage); *The Royale* (Olney and 1st Stage in Rep); *Sweat*, *The Outsider*, *N – A Play*, *God of Carnage*, and *American Daughter* (Keegan Theatre); *Hurricane Diane* (Avant Bard); *This Girl Laughs...*, *Flood City*, for colored girls..., and *brownsville* song (Theater Alliance); *The Adventures of Pericles* (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company); *Native Son* (Mosaic Theater); *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *Blood Wedding* (Constellation Theatre); *The Secrets of the Universe* and *Leto Legend* (Hub Theatre). Independent film and television credits include *Too Saved* and *Nocturnal Agony* (Nubia Filmworks), and *Who the (Bleep) Did I Marry?* (Investigation Discovery).



PAUL MORELLA (*Hughes*) previously appeared at Arena Stage in *All My Sons* and *Orpheus Descending*. He recently completed his 14th season of *A Christmas Carol* at Olney Theatre, a

one-person show he adapted from Charles Dickens' original novella. Other regional credits include leading roles at Folger Theatre, Signature Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Studio Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, Theater J, Ford's Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Asolo State Theater, Delaware Theatre Company, Olney Theatre, Everyman Theatre, Round House Theatre, Potomac Theatre Project, MetroStage, and Mosaic Theater. He also tours the country as Clarence Darrow in the one-person play, *A Passion for Justice*. He is on the faculty of American University's Washington College of Law, where he teaches the Art of Persuasion as part of its Trial Advocacy Program.

www.clarencedarrow.org



MONIQUE PAIGE (*Female Understudy*)'s D.C. credits *Breath*, *Boom* (Studio Theatre). New York credits include *Goliath* (Robert Morris Theatre) and, most recently, *She's Got Harlem*

on *Her Mind* (Metropolitan Playhouse). Philadelphia credits include *Back to the Old Landmark* (Freedom Theatre), *A Salt Water Oasis* (InterAct Theatre), *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men* (Allens Lane Art Center), and *The Piano Lesson* (Barnstormers Theater).



KEVIN E. THORNE II (*Lawrence/Silas/John/Dr. Purvis/Dance Captain*) is a D.C.-based actor making his return to Arena Stage. His previous credits include u/s Red Carter in

Seven Guitars at Arena Stage; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in *The Mountaintop* at Lyric Rep Theatre; Flow in *Fabulation* or, *The*

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Re-Education of Undine at Mosaic Theater Company; Charles Gilpin in *N* at Keegan Theatre; Clip in *I Killed My Mother* at Spooky Action Theater; u/s Joker/ Scarecrow in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* at Synetic Theater; Arveragus in *Imogen* at Pointless Theatre Co; and Samuel P. Leonard in *Nation We Build Together*, Dr. Huey P. Newton in *Cramton 1961*, and Jesse Owens in *Going the Distance* at Discovery Theater. Kevin holds a BFA in Acting from Howard University. Instagram: @kj_nation



RENEE ELIZABETH WILSON (*Female Understudy*) is beyond thrilled to be back at Arena Stage with *Tempestuous Elements!* Previous Arena Stage credits include *Seven*

Guitars. Her most recent theater credits include *Intimate Apparel* (Theater J); *Monumental Travesties* (world premiere), *Native Son*, and *Milk Like Sugar* (Mosaic Theater Company); *Moon Man Walk* (Constellation Theatre Company); *Radio Golf* and *Nollywood Dreams* (Round House Theatre); *The Hula-Hoopin' Queen* (Imagination Stage); *Ain't No Mo'* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre); and *Skeleton Crew* (Studio Theatre). Renee is an American actress and a NASM-certified personal trainer. She is a graduate of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts and has a BFA in Drama from NYU Tisch. Instagram/ Twitter: @actpoetic88

Regional credits include Yale Rep, Goodman Theatre, Eclipse Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Humana/Louisville, Center Stage, Hartford Stage, Children's Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival; and in London the Royal Court Theatre and Donmar Warehouse. For her body of work, Kia has garnered the Windham Campbell Prize, Horton Foote Prize, USArtists Fellowship, and others. She has written two novels, *Moon and the Mars* and *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter*, which won the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize.

PSALMAYENE 24 (*Director*)'s directing credits include *Good Bones*, *Flow*, and *Pass Over* (Studio Theatre); *Necessary Sacrifices: A Radio Play* (Ford's Theatre); *Native Son* (Mosaic Theater); and *Word Becomes Flesh* (Theater Alliance, Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Direction of a Play). He is currently the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Mosaic Theater. Playwriting credits include *Monumental Travesties*, *Dear Mapel*, and *Les Deux Noirs* (Mosaic); *Out of the Vineyard* (Joe's Movement Emporium); and *Cinderella: The Remix* (Imagination Stage). His acting credits include *Ruined*, *Cuttin' Up*, and *Anthems* (Arena Stage); *Dear Mapel* (Mosaic); and HBO's *The Wire*. He is the writer/director of the Arena Stage-presented short film *The Freewheelin' Insurgents*, and he is the former Master Teaching Artist at Arena Stage. Instagram: @psalmayene24

TONY THOMAS (*Associate Director and Choreography*) is an award-nominated director, choreographer, and interior architect. Credits include *The Freewheelin' Insurgents* at Arena Stage; *Fat Ham*, *Good Bones*, *People, Places & Things*, *White Noise*, *Pass Over*, *Flow*, and *PYG or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle* at Studio; *Out of the Vineyard* at Joe's Movement Emporium; *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience* and *P.Nokio: A Hip-Hop Musical* at Imagination Stage; *Native Son* at Mosaic Theater Company; and *Mysticism & Music* and *The*

CREATIVE

KIA CORTHON (*Playwright*)'s New York productions include *A Cool Dip in the Barren Saharan Crick* and *Breath, Boom* (Playwrights Horizons), *Force Continuum* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Light Raise the Roof* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Seeking the Genesis* (Manhattan Theatre Club), and in *March Fish* will be produced by Keen Company/Working Theater.

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Last Five Years at Constellation Theatre Company. In education, Tony has worked with Strathmore Children's Chorus, ATMTC Academy, Landon School, Levine Music Theatre, Holton-Arms School, and actively leads numerous privates, workshops, and coaching circuits between New York, D.C., and Los Angeles.

TONY CISEK (*Set Designer*) designed the Arena productions of *Disgraced*, *King Hedley II*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Oak and Ivy*, and *Dimly Perceived Threats to the System*. Recent D.C. credits include *Ink* (Round House Theatre), *Selling Kabul* (Signature Theatre), *In His Hands* (Mosaic Theater), and the production design for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Folger Theatre at the National Building Museum). Recent regional credits include *Blue* (New Orleans Opera), *The Color Purple* (Denver Center Theatre Company), *Thurgood* (People's Light), *Choir Boy* (Denver Center and ACT), and *Toni Stone* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre/Alliance Theatre). His work has also been seen Off-Broadway and regionally at Roundabout Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Ford's Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Indiana Repertory, Cincinnati Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Syracuse Stage, New York Theatre Workshop, and The Kennedy Center. www.tonycisek.com

LEVONNE LINDSAY (*Costume Designer*) received the Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship at Arena Stage 2001-2003 and was the Resident Designer for the African Continuum Theatre in Washington, D.C., 2002-2004. Now based in her hometown of Philadelphia, recent credits include *Kiss and Kill Move Paradise* at the Wilma Theater; *Into the Woods*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Gem of the Ocean* (Philadelphia's Barrymore Award winner for Outstanding Costume Design 2019) at the Arden Theatre; *Sweat* and *The Garbologists* at Philadelphia Theatre Company; and the world premiere of *Time Is On Our Side* by R. Eric Thomas at Simpatico Theater.

Other regional credits include Hangar Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Indiana Repertory Theater, Everyman Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Trinity Repertory Company, and Indiana Repertory Theatre.

WILLIAM K. D'EUGENIO (*Lighting Designer*) is a lighting and sound designer based out of Washington, D.C. Favorite regional lighting credits include *The Chosen* and *The Brothers Size* [Helen Hayes Award] (1st Stage); *Good Bones* (Studio Theatre); *Love Like Tuesday* (Faction of Fools); *In His Hands* and *Native Son* (Mosaic); *Mnemonic* and *Word Becomes Flesh* [Helen Hayes Award] (Theater Alliance); and *Long Way Down* (The Kennedy Center). His television credits include *Cynthia Erivo & Friends: A NYE Celebration*, *Robert Glasper's Black Radio*, *Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra*, *Let My Children Hear Mingus*, and *A Joni Mitchell Songbook* (PBS/NEXT at the Kennedy Center), among others. More recent concert designs include Joshua Redman Group; DECLASSIFIED: Laufey, dodie & Jacob Collier; Gavin Creel in Concert; Robert Glasper and Jason Moran; and Ledisi Sings Nina (The Kennedy Center).

LINDSAY JONES (*Original Music and Sound Design*) Broadway: *Slave Play* (Tony nominations for Best Score and Best Sound Design of a Play), *The Nap*, *Bronx Bombers*, and *A Time to Kill*. Off-Broadway: *Privacy* (Public), *Bootycandy* (Playwrights Horizons), *Feeding the Dragon* (Primary Stages), and many others. Regional: Guthrie Theater, Center Stage, American Conservatory Theater, Hartford Stage, Alliance Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Arena Stage, Old Globe Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, and many others. International: Stratford Festival (Canada), Royal Shakespeare Company (England), and many others. Audio dramas: Marvel, Audible, Next Chapter Podcasts, and the award-winning *The Imagine Neighborhood*. Film/TV scoring: HBO Films' *A Note of Triumph* (2006 Academy

Award for Best Documentary, Short Subject) and over 30 other films. He is the co-chair of Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association (TSDCA). www.lindsayjones.com

LASHAWN MELTON (*Hair and Wig Designer*) is a native Washingtonian hair and wig designer. Film: *Loiness* (Hairstylist), *White House Plumbers* (Hairstylist), *Rustin* (Hairstylist). Utah Shakespeare Festival: *Raisin in the Sun*, *Emma The Musical*, *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Wig Master). Montgomery College: *Little Women* (Wig Designer). GALA Theatre: *On Your Feet!* (Wig Designer). Woolly Mammoth Theatre: *Botticelli in the Fire*, *Describe the Night*, *Fairview* (Wig Designer). The Kennedy Center: *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* (Wig Designer). Olney Theatre Company: *Comedy of Tenors* (Wig Designer). Round House Theatre: *School Girls* (Wig Designer). Arena Stage: *Disgraced* (Hair Designer), *Smart People* (Assistant Wig Designer), *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Assistant Wig Designer), *Pajama Game* (Assistant Wig Designer), *Snow Child* (Hair and Makeup Designer). Education: Fashion Merchandising, Graphic Design, UDC. Stage Makeup, Montgomery College.

LISA NATHANS (*Dialect and Vocal Coach*) is an Associate Professor of Voice and Acting at University of Maryland's School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies. She's coached voices and accents for Arena Stage, Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Olney, Signature, Ford's, Folger, Guthrie (Minneapolis), 5th Avenue (Seattle), and Theatricum Botanicum (LA). Lisa received her MFA from Central School of Speech and Drama and BFA from Boston University. She's a designated Linklater Voice teacher and a certified Colaianni Speech practitioner.

ANITA MAYNARD-LOSH (*Text Director*) was the director of community engagement and senior artistic advisor at Arena Stage for two decades, leading the theater's education and outreach programs and serving on the

artistic team. Anita has been involved in an artistic capacity on more than 45 Arena productions: she directed last season's *Holiday* and the world premiere of *Our War*, and has been an associate director, text director, and vocal/dialect coach on multiple other productions. Her first show at Arena was assisting former artistic director Molly Smith on *South Pacific* in the 2002/03 Season. Anita trained and taught at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, was on the faculty at Webster University in St. Louis, headed the theater department at the University of Alaska Southeast, and was the associate artistic director of Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska, where she directed 21 mainstage productions. Anita traveled extensively with the artist-in-schools program in Alaska, working primarily with indigenous populations within the context of traditional villages. The Alaska Native-inspired production of *Macbeth* that Anita conceived and directed was performed in English and Tlingit at the National Museum of the American Indian as part of the Shakespeare in Washington Festival, and is currently being edited into a full-length film. Her essay about the project was published in *Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance*, Palgrave MacMillan. She has coached dialects for the Kennedy Center, the Washington National Opera, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, the American Conservatory Theater, and the Broadway revival of *Ragtime*. Anita has traveled with Arena's devised theater program, Voices of Now, to India (2012, 2014), Croatia (2015, 2019), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019) to collaborate with communities in devising original plays addressing social justice issues.

OTIS RAMSEY-ZÖE (*Dramaturg*) is a care worker, dramaturg, director, theater arts educator, Literary Manager at Arena Stage, and Lecturer in Dramaturgy at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. He has developed new works at such institutions as Sundance Institute, Kennedy Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights

Center, and National New Play Network. He has held posts in Theatre at Northeastern University, Dramaturgy at Carnegie Mellon University, Women's Studies and Honors Humanities at University of Maryland, Performing Arts at American University, and Theatre Arts at Howard University. He was Associate Artistic Director at banished? productions, Future Classics Program Coordinator at The Classical Theatre of Harlem, Literary Manager at Center Stage, and an Allen Lee Hughes Senior Fellow at Arena Stage.

JOSEPH PINZON (*Casting Director*) is the founder and creative producer of the contemporary circus company Short Round Productions and its award-winning show *Filament*. With over 25 years of performing experience, he has worked internationally with renowned companies such as Cirque Éloize, Compagnia Finzi Pasca, Cirque du Soleil, and The 7 Fingers. He holds an MS in Arts Leadership from USC, a BA in Psychology from UCLA, and graduated from the National Circus School in Montreal with a specialization in aerial techniques. He was the casting and resident director for Chamäleon Productions (Berlin) and Constellation Immersive (CAA's experiential affiliate). He is also a member of the Creative & Independent Producer Alliance and a founding board member of the American Circus Alliance. You can see him causing chaos on season 6 of *Nailed It!* on Netflix, where (spoiler alert) he is a part of the series' first three-way tie.

CHRISTI B. SPANN (*Stage Manager*) has been working as a stage manager in D.C. since 2011. Recent Arena Stage productions include *Holiday*, *The High Ground*, *Exclusion*, and *POTUS*. She previously spent 12 seasons on the stage management staff at the Denver Center Theatre Company and has also worked with The Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, MN, and Virginia Repertory Theatre in Richmond, VA.

JALON PAYTON (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is excited to be returning to Arena Stage for *Tempestuous Elements*. Recent Arena credits include *The High Ground* and *Swept Away*. Recent Baltimore/D.C. credits include Ken Ludwig's *Baskerville* (Everyman Theatre); *The Swindlers: A Tru-ish Tall Tale*, *The Folks at Home* (Baltimore Center Stage); and *10 Seconds* (Imagination Stage). Other credits include *The Royale*, *Anton's Shorts*, *The Brothers Size*, and *A Raisin in the Sun* (American Players Theatre). Jalon has also stage-managed play readings/workshops with Arena Stage, Taffety Punk Theatre, and Round House Theatre. Jalon is a graduate of the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

ARENA STAGE LEADERSHIP

HANA S. SHARIF (*Artistic Director*) has enjoyed a multi-faceted theater career, including roles as an artistic leader, director, playwright, and producer with a specialty in strategic and cross-functional leadership. Hana began her professional career as an undergraduate student at Spelman College. From 1997 to 2003, Hana served as the co-founder and Artistic Director of Nasir Productions, a theater dedicated to underrepresented voices challenging traditional structure. Hana joined the Tony® Award-winning regional theatre, Hartford Stage, in 2003. During her decade-long tenure at Hartford Stage, Hana served as the Associate Artistic Director, Director of New Play Development, and Artistic Producer. Hana launched the new play development program, expanded the community engagement and civic discourse initiatives, and developed and produced Tony®, Grammy, Pulitzer, and Obie Award-winning shows. Starting in 2012, she served as Program Manager at ArtsEmerson, a leading world theater company based at Boston's Emerson College. During her

tenure at ArtsEmerson, Hana launched an Artists in Residency program, led a research program assessing barriers to inclusion across the region, and leveraged her regional theater experience to freelance produce for smaller theater companies looking to expand and restructure their administrative teams. Hana was Baltimore Center Stage's Associate Artistic Director from 2014 to 2019 and was the architect of the innovative CS Digital program: a platform that pushes the boundaries of traditional theater and looks at the nexus point between art and technology. Her other achievements at Baltimore Center Stage included prototyping the Mobile Unit focused on historically underserved audiences, strengthening community engagement, producing multiple world and regional premieres, and helping to guide the theater through a multi-million dollar building renovation and rebranding effort. Hana became the first Black woman to lead a major regional theater in 2018 when she was named the Augustin Family Artistic Director of The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. During her tenure at The Rep, Hana guided the organization through a strategic alignment, revolutionized the New Works program, expanding access to underserved communities, and centering equity and anti-racism as the organization's foundational values. Hana holds a BA from Spelman College and an MFA from the University of Houston. Hana is the recipient of USITT's 2023 Distinguished Achievement Award, Spelman's 2022 National Community Service Award, the 2009-10 Aetna New Voices Fellowship, EMC Arts Working Open Fellowship, and Theatre Communications Group (TCG) New Generations Fellowship. Hana is a founding member of The Black Theatre Commons (BTC). She serves on the board of directors for the TCG, BTC, and the Sprott Family Foundation.

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. I am honored to have been recognized for my service to, and leadership of, the Washington, D.C.-area theater community as a recipient of Theatre Washington's inaugural Victor Shargai Leadership Award in 2022.

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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The Molly Smith Fund for New Work was created to honor the tremendous legacy of Molly Smith, Arena Stage's Artistic Director Emeritus, who retired at the end of the 2022/23 Season after 25 years of visionary leadership. The fund will support the artistic development of new work at Arena Stage, a pillar of Molly's vision.

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For more information, contact Maya Weil, CAP®, Arena's Gift Planning Specialist at 202-600-4158 or mweil@arenastage.org

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

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Artistic Development
CoordinatorMelissa Singson
Dramaturg.....Jocelyn Clarke
Artistic Development Fellow Vanessa Dalpiaz*
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PorterLawrence Wise
Stage Door Attendant.....Kay Rogers

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Associate Technical DirectorClare Cawley
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Stage SupervisorHannah Martin
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Sound Technicians.....Lex Allenbaugh,
Alex Cloud

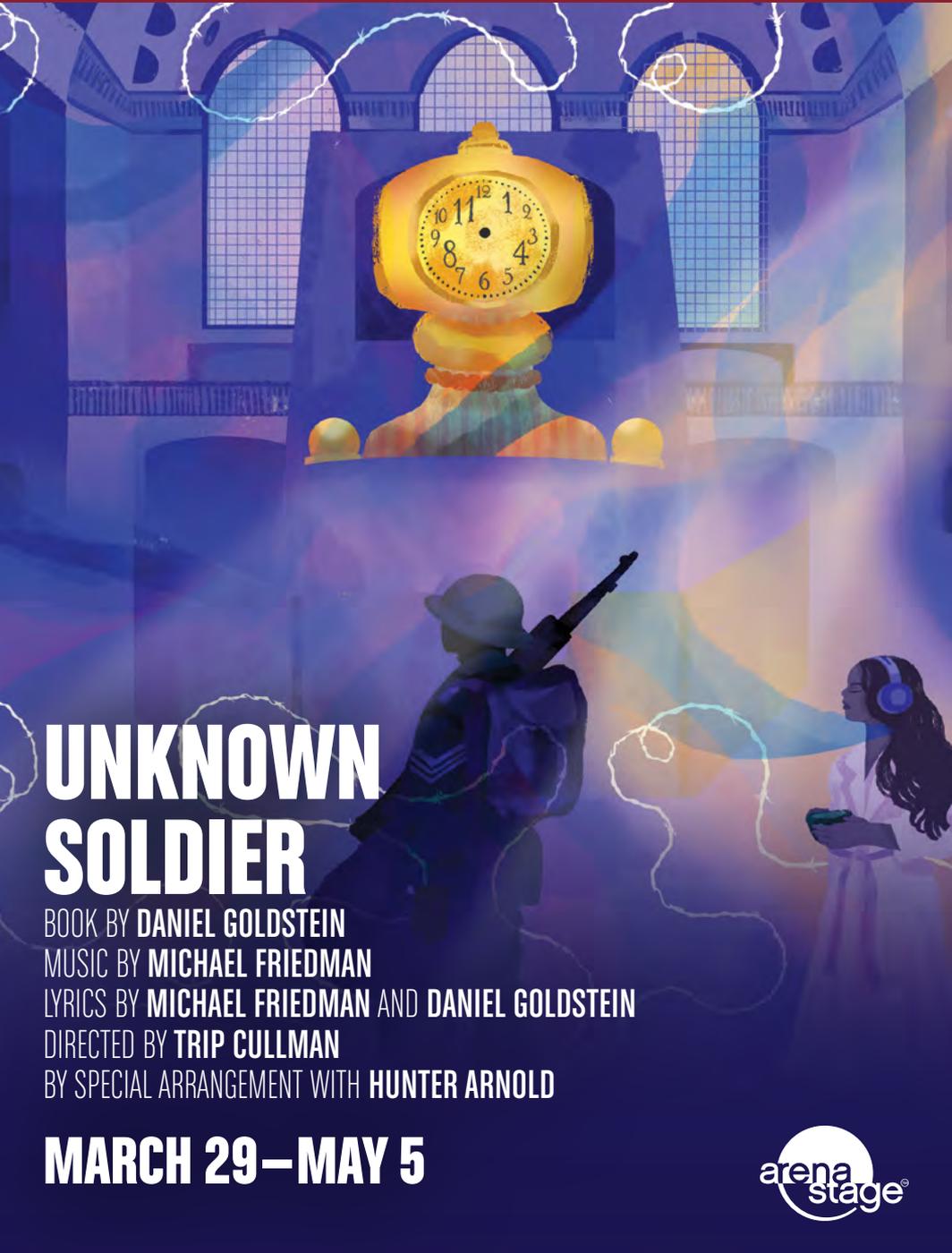
COSTUMES

Costume DirectorJoseph P. Salasovich
Associate Costume Director.....Cierra Coan
Drapers.....Erika Krause, Carol Ramsdell
First HandsMichele Macadaeag,
Elizabeth "Liz" Spilsbury
Craftsperson.....Deborah Nash
Wardrobe SupervisorsAdelle Gresock,
Alice Hawfield

Wigs, Hair, and
Makeup Supervisor.....Jaime Bagley

*2023/24 Class of the Allen Lee Hughes
BPOC Fellowship Program

COMING UP NEXT



UNKNOWN SOLDIER

BOOK BY **DANIEL GOLDSTEIN**

MUSIC BY **MICHAEL FRIEDMAN**

LYRICS BY **MICHAEL FRIEDMAN AND DANIEL GOLDSTEIN**

DIRECTED BY **TRIP CULLMAN**

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH **HUNTER ARNOLD**

MARCH 29—MAY 5

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