

BUILDING TIMELINE

The Mead Center for American Theater

2010

Summer: Arena Stage staff moves out of temporary operating facilities and into the new campus.

Fall: Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater opens the inaugural season in the new campus with Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, directed by Molly Smith, which plays to sold-out audiences with an extended run, kicking off the successful opening season.

2008

January: Arena Stage breaks ground on its historic Southwest, D.C. theater complex.

September: Performances begin at the historic Lincoln Theatre, 1215 U Street NW | Washington, D.C.; the second temporary space to be used during expansion.

2007

May: Clark Construction is chosen for the construction contract.

October: Arena Stage Board of Trustees votes to commence construction and announces plans to break ground in January 2008.

December: Performances begin at Arena Stage in Crystal City, 1800 S. Bell Street | Arlington, VA; one of the temporary theater spaces Arena uses during the two-year construction in Southwest D.C.

2006

December: Arena Stage announces \$100 million has been raised towards the multipurpose goal of \$125 million for the project, publicly launches the Next Stage Campaign and begins the bid process for the construction contract. The theater also announces the new facility will bear the name Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, after visionary benefactors and Life Trustees Dr. Jaylee M. Mead and the late Gilbert Mead, who pledged \$35 million towards the project—the greatest gift from a single household to a not-for-profit regional theater.

2005

Bing Thom Architects completes construction drawings.

2004

Arena Stage files for the needed permits for the renovation project.

2003

January: Arena Stage selects a Trustee Steering Committee to serve as its campaign leadership.

June: Arena Stage receives approval of zoning variances by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission.

October: Bing Thom Architects' final design is approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustments.

2002

July: The design of Arena's new theater campus by Bing Thom Architects is approved by both the Historic Preservation Review Board and the Fine Arts Commission.

September: Arena Stage receives the Mayor's Agent Approval for Exemplary Architecture.

October: Arena Stage begins the quiet phase of its fundraising campaign.

2001

Arena Stage completes its engineering study.

2000

June: Arena Stage reviews 60 architectural candidates to design the new complex and selects Bing Thom Architects of Vancouver, Canada.

July: Arena Stage completes its fundraising feasibility study.

1998–1999

Arena Stage considers relocating to Seventh Street NW, but after discussions with Mayor Anthony Williams and the City Council, decides to stay in Southwest as a crucial part of the Southwest Waterfront revitalization.

1992

Arena Stage renames the 816-seat venue the Fichandler Stage to honor co-founders Thomas C. and Zelda Fichandler.

1976

Arena Stage converts its downstairs rehearsal space into the “Old Vat Room,” a 130-seat cabaret beneath the Kreeger Theater.

1971

January: The Kreeger Theater, a 514-seat fan-shaped auditorium with a proscenium stage opens with the American premiere of *The Ruling Class*. With the existing supporting spaces, the additions totaled approximately \$1.5 million.

1968

August: The theater breaks ground on construction of a second theater space, also designed by Harry Weese, in addition to rehearsal, technical shops, storage and administrative facilities connected to the existing building, to accommodate the theater’s expanding programs.

1961

October: The new 800-plus-seat Arena Stage, designed as the first theater-in-the-round tailored specifically for the needs of an existing resident theater company, opens with the American premiere of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. The project costs were approximately \$1 million.

1960

October: Arena Stage breaks ground on a plot of land in Southwest D.C. and Chicago-based architect Harry Weese begins work on the company’s new home.

1955

Arena Stage moves to a new 500-seat home nicknamed “The Old Vat,” formerly the Heurich Brewery, in the Foggy Bottom section of D.C.

1950

Arena Stage opens in the 247-seat Hippodrome, a converted movie house on New York Avenue in Washington, D.C. with *She Stoops to Conquer*.

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