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# INDECENT

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## ARTISTICALLY SPEAKING



*Indecent* is inspired by true events around a controversial play, *The God of Vengeance*, which debuted on Broadway in 1923. Some people saw the play as an example of traitorous libel and sexuality that should not be seen and should not be mentioned.

Many moments in *Indecent* are eerily timely and important for this moment, plucked out of history. At the height of its success in Europe, Sholem Asch's *The God of Vengeance* faced objections even from Jews themselves, feeling that it made Jews look bad at a time when anti-Semitism was rampant in Europe and the United States. There were fears that depicting Jews as prostitutes and pimps would only encourage the hateful actions and feelings toward Jewish people.

Obscenity was as unclear then as it is now; issues of identity, sexuality, immigration, anti-Semitism and artistic freedom are still contemporary concerns. As we face tragedies and battles for civil rights and equality, this play reminds us of how far we have come, but also how much work there still is ahead. The continued rise of intolerance and hate crimes in recent U.S. history makes *Indecent* even more disturbing.

Now is the most important time to be telling this story. On the day of the heartbreaking attack at The Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh the talented actors you are about to see assembled to rehearse and the mood took a strong shift when they received the news. Everyone was shaken. Moments in the play took on added resonance and new meaning for each person. No one in the room will ever forget that day.

Paula Vogel's brilliant play is unabashedly political and speaks to the effects xenophobia has on culture. In the weeks after the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in recent U.S. history, it is more important now than ever to tell these stories. There is no other place other than Washington, D.C. where plays like *Indecent* can have such an impact.

This play is more than a history play; it is more than a play within a play. It is a reminder and a warning that culture is lost when we do not protect it. Putting works like these on our stages will always be vital, otherwise we erase the memory of victims, their lives, and what happened to them when fear and hate took over. This play is about a world in which the genocide of European Jews was still unimaginable. The outcomes of modern-day hate are as inconceivable to us now as the Holocaust was for these characters and for the six million Jews who were massacred during World War II.

If we allow ourselves to forget the lessons of history, we are destined to repeat it. Works of art like Paula's *Indecent* send a clarion call.

Many thanks,



**Molly Smith**  
Artistic Director



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



The controversy around Sholem Asch's Yiddish drama *The God of Vengeance* is one from America's collective theater history that emphasizes the importance, risk and value of the art we present. Through *Indecent*, a story brilliantly told by Paula Vogel, Arena Stage strengthens an existing relationship with the Jewish community.

Arena Stage has been pleased to host Theater J in our Kogod Cradle this season with their production of *Actually* while they continue to produce plays during the renovation of their home at the Edlavitch DCJCC. We were also happy to have Theater J produce *The Chosen* on our Fichandler Stage in 2010. Theater J continues to be a leader in providing excellent theater with a mission to explore experiences, complexities and nuances of Jewish identity. However, as with all art, they produce a variety of work and welcome all audiences. It is not a comfort to think of a time when having a mission that speaks directly to a Jewish audience would have been scorned; unfortunately, world history demonstrates that has happened. As a theater community and a neighborhood community, we all can build empathy with our fellow citizens when we share our stories together.

Sometimes this takes the form of productions which directly address Jewish themes, of which Arena Stage has produced many, including Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing!*, Elie Wiesel's *Zalmen, or the Madness of God* and of course the classic musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Other times it is through supporting the voices of playwrights of Jewish heritage like George Kaufman, Jerome Lawrence and Arthur Miller, or the songs of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Sometimes their plays have nothing in common, and sometimes they are peas from a pod. The breadth of work is as diverse as our community.

On a more personal level, Arena Stage has enjoyed a strong Jewish heritage through our theater's artists, administrators and leadership. Theater is a great connector and Arena Stage enjoys being able to connect to communities of all heritages. Sharing the stories of the many different people and practices that form the squares of America's elaborate quilt is an important part of Arena Stage's mission. It is not hard to hope that people who espouse hateful rhetoric would take a chance to see a story they do not know and open their minds to learning followed by acceptance and growth.

A favorite quote of mine is from Hillel, when asked to summarize Judaism and the lessons from the Torah: "What is hateful unto you don't do unto your neighbor. The rest is commentary — now go study."

Hope you all enjoy your holidays!

**Edgar Dobie**  
Executive Producer  
President of the Corporation

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# An Open Letter from Sholem Asch, Author of *The God of Vengeance*

With the permission of the family of Sholem Asch, we reprint the letter he wrote in 1923 as originally published, defending his play against accusations of indecency and anti-Semitism. His words are as relevant and powerful today as when he wrote them.

Because of the wrong interpretation of my play, "The God of Vengeance, now running at the Apollo Theatre," I wish to make the following statement:

I wrote this play when I was twenty-one years of age. I was not concerned whether I wrote a moral or immoral play. What I wanted to write was an artistic play and a true one. In the seventeen years it has been before the public, this is the first time I have had to defend it.

When the play was first produced, the critics in Germany, Russia, and other countries, said that it was too artistically moral. They said that for a man like "Yekel Shepshovitch," keeper of a brothel, to idealize his daughter, to accept no compromise with her respectability, and for girls like Basha and Raizel, filles de joie, to dream about their dead mother, their home, and to revel in the spring rain, was unnatural. About two years ago I was approached by New York producers for permission to present the play in English. I refused, since I did not believe the American public was either sufficiently interested or adequately instructed to accept "The God of Vengeance."

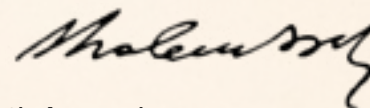
I don't know whether I can explain the real feeling I wanted to put into this play. It is difficult for an author to comment on his own work. As to the scenes between Manka and Rifkele, on every European stage, especially the Russian, they were the

most poetic of all, and the critics of those countries appreciated this poetic view. This love between the two girls is not only an erotic one. It is the unconscious mother love of which they are deprived. The action portrays the love of the woman-mother, who is Manka, for the woman-child, who is Rifkele, rather than the sensuous, inverted love of one woman for another. In this particular scene, I also wanted to bring out the innocent, longing for sin, and the sinful, dreaming of purity. Manka, overweighed with sin, loves the clean soul of Rifkele, and Rifkele, the innocent young girl, longs to stay near the door of such a woman as Manka, and listen within.

As to the comment that the play is a reflection on the Jewish race, I want to say that I resent the statement that "The God of Vengeance" is a play against the Jews. No Jew until now has considered it harmful to the Jew. It is included in the repertoire of every Jewish stage in the world and has been presented more frequently than any other play. "The God of Vengeance" is not a typical "Jewish play." A "Jewish play" is a play where Jews are specially characterized for the benefit of the Gentiles. I am not such a "Jewish" writer. I write, and incidentally my types are Jewish for of all peoples they are the ones I know best. "The God of Vengeance" is not a milieu play—it is a play with an idea. Call "Yekel" John, and instead of the Holy Scroll place in his hand

the crucifix, and the play will be then as much Christian, as it is now Jewish. The fact that it has been played in countries where there are few Jews, Italy for instance, and that there the Gentiles understood it for what it is, proves that it is not local in character, but universal. The most marked Jewish reaction in the play is the longing of "Yekel Shepshovitch" for a cleaner and purer life. This is characteristically Jewish. I don't believe a man of any other race placed in "Yekel's" position would have acted as he did in the tragedy that has befallen his daughter.

Jews do not need to clear themselves before any one. They are as good and as bad as any race. I see no reason why a Jewish writer should not bring out the bad or good traits. I think that the apologetic writer, who tries to place Jews in a false, even though white light, does them more harm than good in the eyes of the Gentiles. I have written so many Jewish characters who are good and noble, that I can not now, when writing of a "bad" one, make an exception and say that he is a Gentile.



Sholem Asch

Paula Vogel's *Indecent* is "the true story of a little Jewish play"—*The God of Vengeance* by Sholem Asch. Asch's original play was an international sensation when it was written at the beginning of the twentieth century, and its controversial 1923 run on Broadway sparked a national conversation about free speech with consequences that lasted decades. Here's what you need to know:

## THE PLAYWRIGHT



Sholem Asch was born in Kutno, Poland in 1880. As a young man, he moved to Warsaw and married Mathilde Shapiro, whose wealthy family enabled him to focus on his writing.

He initially wrote in Hebrew but was convinced by the growing Yiddishist movement to switch to Yiddish. Throughout his career, his writing explored the ways that Judaism was both a unique culture and connected to the rest of the world through universal themes. He and his family left Europe during World War I and he became an American citizen in 1920. While the most successful—and most controversial—years of his career were spent in the U.S., he was also a frequent world traveler and spent the last few years of his life in Israel, outside Tel Aviv. He died in London in 1957.

## THE PLAY

*The God of Vengeance* was the first Yiddish play to be translated and professionally staged throughout Europe. The play blossomed, flourished and survived because of the hard work, artistry and passion of many people, some of whom you will see on stage this evening. Although Paula Vogel took some liberties—changing some names, amalgamating others and stretching details—the characters in *Indecent* represent real human beings who lived, and in some cases died, in service of the stories of the Jewish people. Similarly, *Indecent* is not a documentary, but the story it tells is essentially true, in both the broad strokes and many of the details.

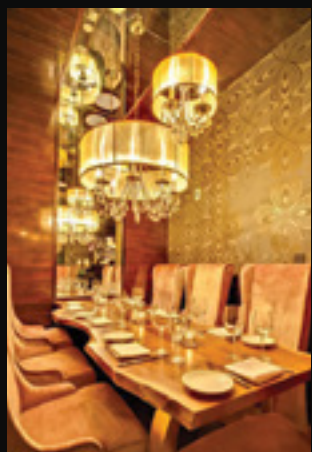


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## TITLE PAGE

Arena Stage

Molly Smith, Artistic Director | Edgar Dobie, Executive Producer

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and Baltimore Center Stage

PRESENTS

# INDECENT

BY **PAULA VOGEL**

DIRECTED BY **ERIC ROSEN**

CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
**ERIKA CHONG SHUCH**

MUSIC DIRECTION & ORIGINAL MUSIC  
**ALEXANDER SOVRONSKY**

SET DESIGNER  
**JACK MAGAW**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**LINDA ROETHKE**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**JOSH EPSTEIN**

SOUND DESIGNER  
**ANDRE PLUESS**

PROJECTION DESIGNER  
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WIG DESIGNER  
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VOICE AND DIALECT COACH  
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CASTING DIRECTOR  
**VICTOR VAZQUEZ**

NEW YORK CASTING  
**GEOFF JOSSELSO, C.S.A.**

STAGE MANAGER  
**KURT HALL**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
**MARNE ANDERSON**

ORIGINAL BROADWAY PRODUCTION  
CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY  
**REBECCA TAICHMAN**

Anonymous support for *Indecent* has been provided by a  
life-long Washingtonian and friend of Arena Stage

Original Broadway Production produced by Daryl Roth, Elizabeth I. McCann, and Cody Lassen  
INDECENT was produced by the Vineyard Theatre (Douglas Aibel, Artistic Director; Sarah Stern, Co-Artistic Director;  
Jennifer Garvey-Blackwell, Executive Director) New York City, Spring, 2016

Originally produced by Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, Connecticut  
(James Bundy, Artistic Director; Victoria Nolan, Managing Director) and La Jolla Playhouse, La Jolla, California  
(Christopher Ashley, Artistic Director; Michael S. Rosenberg, Managing Director)

INDECENT under the then title of "The Vengeance Project" was developed, in part,  
at the 2013 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at the Sundance Resort

Inspired by The People vs. The God of Vengeance, Conceived by Rebecca Rugg and Rebecca Taichman

INDECENT is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.



## SETTING / CAST / MUSIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### SETTING

Warsaw, Poland, 1906, to Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1950s, and everywhere in between.

### CAST (in alphabetical order)

The Stage Manager: Lemml ..... **BEN CHERRY**  
The Middle: Halina/Ensemble ..... **SUSAN LYNSKEY**  
Moriz Godowsky/Musician/Ensemble ..... **JOHN MILOSICH**  
The Elder: Otto/Ensemble ..... **VICTOR RAIDER-WEXLER**  
The Elder: Vera/Ensemble ..... **SUSAN ROME**  
The Ingénue: Chana/Ensemble/Dance Captain ..... **EMILY SHACKELFORD**  
Nelly Friedman/Musician/Ensemble ..... **MARYN SHAW**  
Mayer Balsam/Musician/Ensemble ..... **ALEXANDER SOVRONSKY**  
The Middle: Mendel/Ensemble ..... **ETHAN WATERMEIER**  
The Ingénue: Avram/Ensemble ..... **MAX WOLKOWITZ**

### MUSIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### *Oklahoma!*

Music by Richard Rodgers  
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II  
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#### *Ich hab noch einen Koffer in Berlin*

(Theme from "I Am a Camera")  
German Text by Aldo Von Pinelli,  
Music by Erich M. Siegel  
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A special thank you to Adi Mahalel and Karoline Troger,  
who assisted with Yiddish and German pronunciations.

**Indecent runs approximately one hour and 45 minutes  
with no intermission.**

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever  
is strictly prohibited. Please turn off all electronic devices.



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The role of community in our personal  
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## What are the Arena Civil Dialogues?

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater hosts community conversations as a part of the Arena Civil Dialogues series. The conversations seek to provide an opportunity for members of the Washington, D.C. community to engage in civil discourse about social and political issues, and aim to demonstrate that people of diverse viewpoints can have fruitful dialogues with one another. Each Arena Civil Dialogue features prominent Dialogue Starters, and is moderated by Amitai Etzioni, a university professor at The George Washington University and author.



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## FOR THIS PRODUCTION

### FOR THIS PRODUCTION

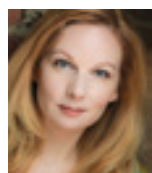
Technical Director .....	NATALIE BELL
Properties Director .....	JENN SHEETZ
Costume Director .....	JOSEPH P. SALASOVICH
Master Electrician .....	CHRISTOPHER V. LEWTON
Sound and Video Supervisor.....	BRIAN BURCHETT
Production Assistant.....	EMILY ANN MELLON
Directing Assistant.....	MANNA-SYMONNE MIDDLEBROOKS
Deck Carpenters.....	MICH COUGHLAN, RACHAEL ALBERT
Props.....	KYLE HANDZIAK
Lighting Programmer.....	PAUL VILLALOVOZ
Light Board Operator.....	KELSEY SWANSON
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Overhire Stitchers .....	ANDREW LANDON CUTLER, RAYNA RICHARDSON, ELIZABETH SPILSBURY



## CAST (in alphabetical order)



**BEN CHERRY** (*The Stage Manager: Lemml*) appeared on Broadway in *Indecent* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, Off-Broadway in *Goldstein* and in the National Tour of *Mary Poppins*. Most recently, Ben played in the regional premieres of *Oslo* at the Pioneer Theatre Company and *Indecent* at the Guthrie. Other regional highlights include *Mothers and Sons* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and *Henry V*, *The Secret Garden*, *The Tempest* and *Merry Wives of Windsor*, all during his four seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. He originated roles in Milwaukee Repertory Theatre's *Route 66*, *Life Could Be a Dream* and *The Andrews Brothers* and in Delaware Theatre Company's *10 Months*. Ben has been seen on TV in *The Following*, *Smash* and *I Love You...But I Lied*. Ben trained at The University of Michigan and North Carolina School of the Arts. [www.BenCherry.com](http://www.BenCherry.com)



**SUSAN LYNKEY** (*The Middle: Halina/Ensemble*) Arena audiences know Susan well from *Roe* (Helen Hayes nomination; also at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Berkeley Rep), *Noises Off* (opposite Robert Prosky), *Proof*, *Well*, Anne Bogart's *Intimations for Saxophone*, *Book of Days* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Earlier this year, she starred as young Margaret Thatcher in the U.S. premiere of the U.K.'s *Handbagged* (Round House Theatre), a role she will take Off-Broadway (59E59) in June 2019. Other recent work includes *Sweat* (ACT), *Imaginary Comforts* (Berkeley Rep), *The Sisters Rosensweig* (Theatre J), *Richard II* (OSF), and directing Barbara Hammond's *Enter the Roar* at The Kennedy Center. Susan is the co-artistic director of Washington Women in Theatre and a usual suspect at the Kennedy Center, NPNN, Mosaic and Metro Stage. On the left coast at OSF's Black Swan Lab; Z Space; Magic

Theatre's Virgin Play Festival (in English and ASL); and as a Berkeley Rep Ground Floor returning artist working with playwrights Lemony Snicket, Ryan Haddad, and Sarah Ruhl on her newest play *Lock Her Up!* (Becky Nurse). Susan has been named by *The Washington Post* as one of the "top ten actors to watch" and featured in *American Theatre Magazine*, *Washington Theatre Review*, and *Broadway World*. She is the recipient of numerous Helen Hayes nominations, the DCTS's Audience Choice Award and high honors from the D.C. Arts Commission. Susan holds degrees from the University of Iowa (MFA), McGill University (BA Honours) and The National Theatre School of Canada. She deeply thanks her parents, Walker, Susie, Metsy, Mr. Ralston, Victor Vasquez, and (always) The Egg.



**JOHN MILOSICH** (*Moriz Godowsky/Musician/Ensemble*) is grateful for the opportunity to debut at Arena Stage. D.C. credits include *Kafka's Metamorphosis*, *Master and Margarita*, *Frankenstein*, *Salomé*, *Crackpots*, *Hamlet*, as well as *Host and Guest* (Synetic Theater). He served as composer and music director for *Courage* (dog & pony dc), co-director for *Annabel Lee* and *The Fiddler Ghost* (Old Lore Theater — Cap Fringe), and solo writer/composer/performer for *The Race* (Arts Alive/Montgomery College). John played the role of Songman in the U.S. national tour of *War Horse*, and recently released the album *One Precious Life* with his PA-based theatrical rock band Featherburn.



**VICTOR RAIDER-WEXLER** (*The Elder: Otto/Ensemble*) returns to Washington after a 53-year absence, last seen here in *Merry Wives of Windsor*. On Broadway he has appeared in *Best Friend*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *Gypsy*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Passion of Dracula*, *The Boys Next Door* and *Give the Bishop My Faint Regards*. National tours include *Grand Hotel* and *Six Degrees of Separation*. His recurring roles on

television include *Seinfeld*, *The King of Queens* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. Movie appearances include *Dr. Doolittle 2*, *Minority Report* and *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Regional appearances include Milwaukee Rep, Denver Center Theatre, Pittsburgh Public, KC Rep, Syracuse Stage and Springfield Rep. He won the best actor award at the Brussels International Film Festival. Most recently in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. His cartoon series *Boss Baby* and *Troll Hunters* are currently on Netflix.



**SUSAN ROME** (*The Elder: Vera/Ensemble*) returns to Arena Stage after appearing in *The Great Society* and *All the Way*. D.C.-area credits include *If I Forget and Hand to God* (HH nomination, Ensemble) at Studio Theatre; *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Olney Theatre Center); *After the Revolution*, *Vanya and Sonia...*, *An Enemy of the People* and *Mud Blue Sky* (Baltimore Center Stage); *Roz and Ray*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Helen Hayes Award), *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...*, *The Argument* and *After the Revolution* (HH nomination) at Theater J, where she is an associate artist-in-residence; *The Whale*, *Las Meninas* and *A Shayna Maidel* (Rep Stage); and *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (Baltimore Shakespeare Festival). Regional credits include *The Substance of Fire* (Mark Taper Forum) and *The Legacy* (Seattle's Centerstage). TV credits include *House of Cards*, *NYPD Blue* and four seasons as DA Ilene Nathan on *The Wire*. Film credits include *A Dirty Shame* and *My One and Only*. [www.susanrome.com](http://www.susanrome.com)



**EMILY SHACKELFORD** (*The Ingénue: Chana/Ensemble/Dance Captain*) is making her Arena Stage debut. She appeared Off-Broadway in *Lucky Duck* at The New Victory Theatre. Regional theatre credits with The Kansas City Repertory Theatre include Johanna in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Luisa in *The*

*Fantasticks*, *The Mistress in Evita*, and several world premieres such as *Between The Lines*, *Last Days of Summer*, *Man In Love*, *Hair: Retrospection* and *Stillwater*. Instagram: @emilyareti. [www.emilyshackelford.com](http://www.emilyshackelford.com)



**MARYN SHAW** (*Nelly Friedman/Musician/Ensemble*) is thrilled to return to D.C. after last being seen in *The Wolves* (Studio Theatre). Her Off-Broadway credits include *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Theater for a New Audience). Regionally, her credits include *Twelfth Night*, *The Book of Will*, Kate Hamill's *Pride and Prejudice* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival), *Love's Labour's Lost* (The Acting Company/HVSF), and *Clybourne Park* and *Pinkalicious: The Musical* (The Hangar Theatre). Maryn can be seen in the upcoming season of Netflix's *Friends from College*. Maryn is a classically trained violinist and opera singer, and is a graduate of the Fordham University Theatre Program and Interlochen Arts Academy. [www.marynshaw.com](http://www.marynshaw.com) @marynshaws

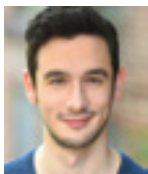


**ALEXANDER SOVRONSKY** (*Mayer Balsam/Musician/Ensemble*) Arena Stage debut. As a composer/performer, NYC credits include Broadway: *Cyrano de Bergerac* (starring Kevin Kline). Off-Broadway: *Mother of the Maid*, *Romeo & Juliet* (The Public); *Othello* (TFANA); *Bottom of the World* (Atlantic Theater Co); *Volpone*, *Women Beware Women* (Red Bull); *King Lear*, *Marat/Sade*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Three Sisters* (Classical Theater of Harlem); *The Little Prince* (Hang A Tale). Regional: Hartford Stage, Walnut Street Theater, Shakespeare & Co, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Ford's Theatre, Barrington Stage Co, Berkshire Theater Group, Arizona Theatre Co, American Shakespeare Center, Connecticut Rep, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Wharton Salon, WAM Theater, Actors Shakespeare Project. International: title role in *Hamlet* (Milan & NYC). Instagram: @AlexanderSovronsky For a good time, check out [www.AlexanderSovronsky.com](http://www.AlexanderSovronsky.com).



**ETHAN WATERMEIER** (*The Middle: Mendel/Ensemble*) has performed a broad range of leading roles in musical theater, theater and opera throughout the United States.

Performance highlights include: Broadway National Tour of *Les Misérables* (Javert and Factory Foreman/Combeferre), Shakespeare Theatre Company, Folger Theatre, Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Aspen Music Festival and Olney Theatre Center. A keen advocate for new works, Ethan has premiered compositions by Ricky Ian Gordon, Jake Heggie, Martin Hennessy, John Musto and Rachel Portman. He was educated at Northwestern University (BM), The Manhattan School of Music (MM), and the University of Maryland (Doctoral Studies), and is a Designated Linklater Teacher trainee. Ethan is a winner of the Lotte Lenya International Competition and currently serves on the faculty at American University. He is a proud member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, VASTA, Musical Theatre Educators' Alliance and the artist roster of Sing For Hope.



**MAX WOLKOWITZ** (*The Ingénue: Avram/Ensemble*) is thrilled to be making his Arena Stage debut. He has appeared regionally in *The Chosen* (Long Wharf),

*Assisted Loving* (Capital Rep), *My Name is Asher Lev* (Penguin Rep), *Ivanov* (Trinity Rep), and the first TheatreWorks tour of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. He received a BA from Bennington College and an MFA in Acting from Brown/Trinity where some highlights were playing Dr. Givings in *In the Next Room* (WISE Foundation Emerging Artist of the Year Award), *Crow in Tooth of Crime* and Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night*. Max is a proud member of The Actor's Center.

## CREATIVE

**PAULA VOGEL** (*Playwright*)'s play, *How I Learned to Drive*, received the Pulitzer Prize, Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and New York Drama Critics Awards for Best Play, as well as her second Obie Award. Other plays include *The Long Christmas Ride Home*, *The Mineola Twins*, *The Baltimore Waltz*, *Hot 'N' Throbbing*, *Desdemona*, *And Baby Makes Seven*, *The Oldest Profession*, *A Civil War Christmas* and *Don Juan Comes Home from Iraq*. Her play *Indecent* opened at The Cort Theatre in New York in April 2017. It is available on Broadway HD. TCG has published four books of her work. She teaches playwriting workshops throughout the United States and abroad.

**ERIC ROSEN** (*Director*) recently concluded his decade long tenure as artistic director of Kansas City Repertory Theatre and previously was co-founder and artistic director of Chicago's About Face Theatre for thirteen seasons. World premieres under his direction include *Venice* (named "Best Musical of 2010" by TIME), *Clay*, *Roof of the World*, *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, *M. Proust* and *Theater District*. Directing credits include the Public Theater, Lincoln Center Theatre, Goodman, Hartford Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Chicago Shakespeare, Melbourne Theatre Company, the O'Neill and Sundance. Rosen helped develop and produced the original production of the Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning play *I Am My Own Wife*. As a playwright, his work includes *Lot's Wife*, *Dream Boy*, *Winesburg, Ohio* and *Venice*. Rosen served on the Board of Theatre Communications Group, was inducted into Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame and his work has been recognized with numerous Joseph Jefferson and Barrymore Awards. He holds a doctorate in performance studies from Northwestern University and a B.A. in performance studies from UNC.

**ERIKA CHONG SHUCH** (*Choreographer*) is a performance maker, choreographer and director whose topic-driven ruminations coalesce into imagistic assemblages of music, movement, text, and design. Interested in expanding ideas around how performance is created and shared, her recent work *For You* (a Creative Capital Project, commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts) is a series of intimate performances for audiences of 12. Recent projects also include *Iron Shoes*, a new neo-feminist folk opera created with Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble (supported by Creative Work Fund, NEA) and TheaterTheater, a participatory morality play exploring the hidden forces underlying everyday ethical choices. Her original work has also been commissioned and supported by Gerbode Foundation, Daejeon Metropolitan Dance Theater (Korea) and Berkeley Repertory Theater's Groundfloor Program. Erika choreographs for theater companies such as Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Folger Theater, Hudson Valley Shakespeare, Kennedy Center, American Conservatory Theater, Pittsburgh Public, Playmakers Rep, California Shakespeare Festival, and Magic Theatre. Thank you to Bruce Bierman for sharing his Jewish Dance expertise.

**ALEXANDER SOVRONSKY** (*Music Direction and Original Music*) See bio on page 17.

**JACK MAGAW** (*Set Designer*) makes his Arena Stage debut with this production of *Indecent*. Recent Chicago and regional design credits include the world premiere of *Support Group For Men* (Goodman Theatre), the world premieres of *The Agitators* and *Other Than Honorable* (Geva Theatre), the world premiere of *Sheltered* (Alliance Theatre), *A Flea In Her Ear* (American Players Theatre), *The Flick* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Buried Child* and *East Texas Hot Links* (Writers' Theatre), *The Bridges of Madison County* and *Miss Holmes* (Peninsula Players Theatre), *Radio Golf* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Court Theatre), *Man of La Mancha* and *The Mousetrap* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre), *Of Mice and Men* and *Sweeney Todd* (Kansas City Rep). Eleven Joseph Jefferson Award nominations include designs for *East Texas Hot Links* (Writers' Theatre) and *Long Day's*

*Journey Into Night* (Court Theatre). Upcoming projects include the world premiere of *Approval Junkie* (Alliance Theatre) and *The Scarlet Ibis* (Chicago Opera Theatre). Jack lives in Chicago and teaches design at The Theatre School at DePaul University. [www.jackmagaw.com](http://www.jackmagaw.com)

**LINDA ROETHKE** (*Costume Designer*) Off-Broadway: *Richard III* (The Public Theater). Regional: *Oklahoma!*, *Richard II*, *Into the Woods*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, *All's Well That Ends Well* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Hand to God*, *The Geller Girls*, *Managing Maxine*, *The Underpants*, *Shadowlands* (Alliance Theatre); *The Game's Afoot* (Cleveland Playhouse); *The Good Book*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *The Dead*, *Orlando* (Court Theatre); *Stage Kiss*, *The Clean House* (Goodman Theatre); *Visiting Edna*, *Mary Page Marlowe*, *Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Intimate Apparel* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George* (Kansas City Rep); *Miss Saigon* (The Paramount Theatre). Cincinnati Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Center Stage, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, American Players Theatre and Northlight productions of *How I Learned to Drive* and *Away*. Other credits: co-director of the MFA Design Program at Northwestern University, where she teaches costume design. Awards: Jeff Award (*An Ideal Husband*, Court Theatre); Suzi Bass nominations (*The Geller Girls* and *The Underpants*, Alliance Theatre); Connecticut Circle nomination (*A Little Night Music*, Connecticut Repertory Theatre). Education: MFA, University of Iowa.

**JOSH EPSTEIN** (*Lighting Designer*) has designed lighting at many of the top theaters in the country, including the Guthrie, Mark Taper Forum, Goodman, Geffen Playhouse, Baltimore Center Stage, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Trinity Repertory, Long Wharf, Alliance, South Coast Repertory, Geva Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, PlayMakers Repertory, Cincinnati Playhouse and Paper Mill Playhouse. He



is also an adjunct professor at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Josh is an LA Ovation Award Winner, a Knight of Illumination Nominee and a recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers. In addition he serves on the O'Neill Playwrights Conference Artistic Council. Josh received his MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three daughters. [www.joshepsteindesign.com](http://www.joshepsteindesign.com)

**ANDRE PLUESS** (*Sound Designer*) Arena Stage credits include *Smart People*, *Equivocation*, *The Passion Play Trilogy*, *Legacy of Light*, *33 Variations*, *Metamorphoses* and *Arabian Nights*. Broadway: *Metamorphoses*, *I Am My Own Wife* and *33 Variations*, as well as the world premiere of *The Clean House* at Yale Repertory and Lincoln Center. Based in Chicago, his work has appeared on most of the city's stages including the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare and Lookingglass Theatre, where he is an associate artist. Regional credits include multiple productions with Oregon and California Shakespeare Festivals, The Guthrie Theatre, McCarter Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Seattle Repertory, La Jolla Playhouse and Center Theater Group.

**JEFFREY CADY** (*Projection Designer*) is a freelance lighting and projection designer living in Kansas City, Missouri. Credits include: KC Rep: *Side by Side*, *A Christmas Carol* (2010–2016), *The Invisible Hand*, *The Roof of The World*, *When I Come to Die*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Lighting and Projections); *Stillwater*, *Hair*, *Harriet Jacobs*, *Palomino*, *Back Home Again: A John Denver Holiday Concert*, *Under Midwestern Stars*, *Love, Janis*, *Give 'Em Hell, Harry*. Other credits: *The Great Divorce* (Pearl Theatre NYC); *Rebecca* (LG Theatre Seoul, South Korea); *Mary Wilson Holliday Spectacular* (Harris Theatre, Chicago); *Seeing America* (Ensemble Galilei, Washington, D.C.); *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* (Portland Center Stage); *The Gay Bride of Frankenstein*, *Rooms* (Seacoast Repertory Theatre, New Hampshire); *The Wiz*, *Always*, *Patsy Cline* (Main State Musical Theatre); *Lombardi*

(Cleveland Playhouse); *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club*, [*title of show*], *Woody Guthrie's American Song* (Arizona Theatre Company); *Love, Janis* (Lighting and Projections, Columbia Artists Theatricals' tours). Mr. Cady served as the Head Projections Programmer for Green Day's *American Idiot* (Broadway production), Jennifer Lopez's *AKA tour*, Jason Aldean's *Burn it Down Tour*, Imagine Dragons, Pitbull and Wintuk (Cirque du Soleil).

**ANNE NESMITH** (*Wig Designer*) is pleased to return to Arena Stage following last season's *The Pajama Game*, *Nina Simone: Four Women* and *The Price*. Her designs have been seen locally at Kennedy Center, Ford's Theatre, Signature Theatre, Wolftrap Opera, Shakespeare Theatre, Folger Theatre and Washington Ballet. Regional work includes designs with Opera Philadelphia, Opera Boston, Annapolis Opera and Castleton Music Festival and internationally at Saito Kinen Festival and Hyogo Performing Arts Center in Japan. Anne was the resident wig/makeup designer for the Baltimore Opera and has constructed wigs for *Scooby Doo! Live* and *42nd Street* (Asian tour). You can see her work in Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery programs, *Ice Cold Killers* for Investigation Discovery, the Military Channel's *Great Planes*, MD Public Television and the U.S. Army's tour *Spirit of America*.

**ZACH CAMPION** (*Voice and Dialect Coach*) is a freelance voice, speech and dialect coach and once worked in the Arena Stage sales office. D.C. credits include voice/dialect coach for *Sovereignty*, *The Price* and *Smart People* (Arena Stage); *Hand to God* (Helen Hayes Award-winning), *Vietgone*, and *The Remains* (Studio Theatre); the world premiere of *The Gulf*, and *Heisenberg* (Signature Theatre); *Labour of Love*, *The Invisible Hand*, and *My Fair Lady* (Olney Theatre Center); *The Legend of Georgia McBride* and *Angels in America Part 1 and 2* (Round House); and *When the Rain Stops Falling* (Helen Hayes Award-winning, 1st Stage). Upcoming projects include *Kleptocracy* at Arena and *Kings* at Studio Theatre. Zach is a certified teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework® and is a member of the Studio Theatre Acting

Conservatory faculty. Education: MFA Virginia Commonwealth University, BFA Texas State University. [www.voicecoachdc.com](http://www.voicecoachdc.com)

**GEOFF JOSSELSO, CSA** (*New York Casting*) is pleased to continue his association with Arena Stage. Broadway and Off-Broadway productions include *The Velocity of Autumn* starring Estelle Parsons; *Southern Comfort*; *Yank!*; *Enter Laughing*; *Pretty Filthy*; *John and Jen*, *Himself and Nora*; and *Altar Boyz*. He has also cast productions for Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arizona Theatre Company, Bay Street Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Civilians, Cleveland Play House, Bucks County Playhouse, Cape Playhouse, Denver Center, Marriott Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre, Old Globe, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theatre, and the York Theatre Company. For more information: [www.geoffjosselson.com](http://www.geoffjosselson.com)

**KURT HALL** (*Stage Manager*)'s Arena Stage credits include *The Great Society*, *The Pajama Game*, *Smart People*, *Watch on the Rhine*, *Carousel*, *The Year of Magical Thinking* starring Kathleen Turner, *Born for This*, *All the Way*, *Sweat*, *Destiny of Desire*, *The Blood Quilt*, *Our War*, *The Shoplifters*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Mother Courage and Her Children* starring Kathleen Turner, *Maurice Hines is Tappin' Thru Life*, *Good People*, *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins* starring Kathleen Turner, *The Normal Heart*, *Red, Ruined*, every tongue confess starring Phylcia Rashad, *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*, *Looped* starring Valerie Harper, *Next to Normal* starring Alice Ripley, *Awake and Sing!* and *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia*. Additional regional credits at the Kennedy Center, Roundabout Theatre Company, McCarter Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company and Signature Theatre. Thanks to his family for all their support.

**MARNE ANDERSON** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is thrilled to begin her 10th season with Arena Stage after starting as an Allen Lee Hughes Fellow in 2009. Some highlights include *Dave*, *Two Trains Running*, *The Great Society*, *Nina Simone: Four Women*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Moby Dick*, *All the Way*, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, *King Hedley II*, *Five*

*Guys Named Moe*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Mountaintop*, *Metamorphoses*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Arabian Nights*, *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

**KANSAS CITY REPERTORY THEATRE** Founded in 1964 by Dr. Patricia McIlrath, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, the professional theatre in residence at UMKC, is led by interim artistic director, Jason Chanos and executive director, Angela Lee Gieras. KCRep is nationally known as an incubator of new plays and producer of innovative musicals and reimagined classics. Together with an active board of directors, a year-round, part-time, and seasonal staff of 210, and over 300 volunteers, KCRep serves patrons from more than 40 states on their two stages, the Spencer Theatre and Copaken Stage in downtown Kansas City. More than 12,000 school students and educators see live theatre productions at KCRep annually, many of whom are experiencing the genre for the first time. The company dedicates itself to producing works which are compelling, passionate, and entertaining.

**BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE** Named the State Theater of Maryland, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to artistic excellence. We engage, enrich, and broaden the perspectives of diverse audiences through entertaining and thought-provoking work and educational programs. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Executive Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works. In addition to Mainstage productions, the theater ignites conversations across Baltimore and beyond through the Mobile Unit, which brings high-quality theater to economically, culturally, and geographically diverse communities. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series, and many other educational programs for students, families, and educators.

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## WHO'S WHO

### ARENA STAGE LEADERSHIP

**MOLLY SMITH** (*Artistic Director*) has served as Artistic Director since 1998. Her more than 30 directing credits at Arena Stage include *Anything Goes*, *Sovereignty*, *Carousel*, *The Originalist*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Camp David*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Oklahoma!*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Great White Hope*, *The Music Man*, *Legacy of Light*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Cabaret*, *South Pacific*, *All My Sons* and *How I Learned to Drive*. Her directorial work has also been seen Off-Broadway at 59E59 in New York, 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 *How I Learned to Drive*; *Passion Play*, a cycle; *Next to Normal*; and *Dear Evan Hansen*. 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. 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 D.C. Hall of Fame.

**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 sell-out audience for the full season of plays we had to 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 at Arena in 2009 makes me feel like I am well-equipped for the best job in the world.

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.



The Director and Choreographer are members of the **STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.

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



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*"We feel the long-term viability of theater really has to come from two sources—annual fundraising efforts and long-term donations [in the form of a planned gift] from the people who love the theater and are willing to commit to it in perpetuity."*

— Beth Newburger Schwartz and the late Richard Schwartz



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