

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REGISTRATION OPENS FOR PILOT CLASS OF THEATER 101, PART OF ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER'S AMERICAN VOICES NEW PLAY INSTITUTE

Program to give audiences behind-the-scenes look at new play development

(Washington, D.C.) The newest venture of the **American Voices New Play Institute** launches this fall with **Theater 101**, an audience enrichment seminar designed to deepen audiences' understanding of the development of new plays. **Online registration for the program begins Monday, August 16, 2010.** The program will start at the end of September in the Mead Center for American Theater.

For its inaugural year, the program will follow the rehearsal process of *every tongue confess*, by Marcus Gardley (Off-Broadway's *On the Levee*) and directed by Kenny Leon (Broadway's *Fences*), which celebrates its world premiere as the first play to be produced in the new Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle in the Mead Center, with Phylicia Rashad (*The Cosby Show*, Broadway's *A Raisin in the Sun*) leading the ensemble cast as Mother Sister/Sophia. Participants will follow the production's development from the first rehearsal through its opening, with several behind-the-scenes opportunities. Each event will be followed by a discussion with members of the artistic staff at Arena Stage. All events will take place in the evenings and during weekends, and a specific schedule will be announced at a later date.

"By inspiring audiences to dive into the creative process of how new plays are developed from beginning to end, Arena will create ambassadors of new work," says Artistic Director Molly Smith. "This is the only New Play Institute program directly focused on the public's experience, and we look forward to creating more invested audiences through this program."

Theater 101 is modeled loosely after Steppenwolf Theatre Company's First Look 101 program, which began in 2004. Arena Stage plans to document and disseminate the successes and lessons learned from the pilot year of this program to help guide other theaters nationwide who also may be interested in creating similar audience enrichment programs for new play development.

Program participants will be limited to 50, and enrollment will be held on a first-come, first-served basis. The registration fee, which includes the price of one ticket to see *every tongue confess*, is \$75, or \$50 for participants under 30. Participants can register at <http://arenastage.org/new-play-institute/theater-101/>.

For more information on Theater 101 or other programs of the American Voices New Play Institute, visit www.arenastage.org.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is a national center dedicated to the production, presentation, development and study of American theater. Arena Stage produces huge plays of all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays through the American Voices New Play Institute. Now in its sixth decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 200,000. www.arenastage.org.

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