

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Managing Director Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

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ARENA STAGE LAUNCHES THE NATIONAL TOUR OF THE 2011 TONY AWARD-WINNING PRODUCTION OF LARRY KRAMER'S *THE NORMAL HEART* ADDED TO COINCIDE WITH AIDS 2012

LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE AND *MARY T. & LIZZY K.* POSTPONED

(Washington, D.C.) Artistic Director Molly Smith has announced that the **2011 Tony Award-winning production of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart***, presented by special arrangement with **Daryl Roth**, and directed by **George C. Wolfe**, will launch its national tour as part of the 2011/12 season, replacing *Like Water for Chocolate* in order to provide additional development time for the world-premiere musical. *The Normal Heart* assumes the original run dates of *Like Water for Chocolate*, June 8 – July 29, 2012, and will coincide with AIDS 2012, the biennial international AIDS conference that returns to the United States for the first time in 22 years.

In the face of an unprecedented decline in support from the federal government, Smith has also announced that the world premiere of Tazewell Thompson's play *Mary T. & Lizzy K.* must be postponed. Earlier this year, Congress cut funding to the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs Program by 74%, and recently Arena Stage was alerted that funding levels could be cut even further this fiscal year. These cuts amount to approximately \$1 million over the course of two fiscal years, and have left Arena Stage with reduced resources and no choice but to postpone the production. Arena Stage and our colleagues are making a strong case to have the funding restored.

"The creative process for a new musical and the economic climate can sometimes be nearly impossible to predict," says Smith. "Due to changes in the creative team, unavoidable scheduling conflicts arose for *Like Water for Chocolate* causing its postponement. I am also deeply saddened that the cuts we have encountered from federal government have resulted in the delay of bringing Tazewell's strong new play to our audiences."

She continues, "As we're constantly looking for the best productions in the American theater for our audience, I am pleased that the timing worked out for Arena to launch the national tour of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* following its sold-out Broadway run. *The Normal Heart* presents a remarkably vivid, humorous and ultimately devastating depiction of the lives of the brave men on the front line of the epidemic, and will serve as a tremendous finale to our season."

"We are thrilled that *The Normal Heart* will launch its national tour at Arena Stage," says producer Daryl Roth. "How fitting that Larry's beautiful play will have its Washington premiere during AIDS 2012, and give voice to the bravery of those who fought against society for help during the early days of the AIDS crisis."

The story of a city in denial, *The Normal Heart* unfolds like a real-life political thriller—as a tight-knit group of friends refuses to let doctors, politicians and the press bury the truth of an unspoken epidemic behind a wall of silence. A quarter-century after it was written, this outrageous, unflinching and totally unforgettable look at the politics of New York during the AIDS crisis remains one of the theater's most powerful evenings ever.

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Arena Stage announces changes to 2011/12 Season—Page 2

The Normal Heart played a limited, sold-out engagement on Broadway last season at the John Golden Theatre. Rave reviews included:

“A great cathartic night at the theater” – *New York Times*
“A stunning, pulse-pounding revival” – *Time Out New York*
“A breathtaking achievement” – *Daily News*
“If you see only one play, make it this one” – *Back Stage*

Patrons who had tickets to *Like Water for Chocolate* will be issued new tickets to *The Normal Heart*. Patrons with tickets to *Mary T. & Lizzy K.* will be credited for the value of their tickets. Patrons with questions may call the Arena Stage Sales Office at 202-488-3300.

Announcements about the cast will be forthcoming.

The Normal Heart design team includes **David Rockwell** (Sets), **Martin Pakledinaz** (Costumes), **David Weiner** (Lighting), **David Van Tieghem** (Sound and Original Music) and **Batwin & Robin** (Projections).

The 2011 production of *The Normal Heart* was produced on Broadway by Daryl Roth, Paul Boskind and Martian Entertainment in association with Gregory Rae and Jayne Baron Sherman/Alexander Fraser. The 25th anniversary Broadway staged reading of *The Normal Heart* was held on October 18, 2010, produced by Daryl Roth and directed by Joel Grey.

For more information about the Broadway production of *The Normal Heart* visit thenormalheartbroadway.com.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is a national center dedicated to the production, presentation, development and study of American theater. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Managing Director Edgar Dobie, Arena Stage is the largest company in the country dedicated to American plays and playwrights. 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 300,000. www.arenastage.org

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