

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE TRANSITIONS DOCUMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION COMPONENTS OF AMERICAN VOICES NEW PLAY INSTITUTE

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces that the documentation and dissemination activities of the American Voices New Play Institute (AVNPI) will be relocated to Emerson College's Office of the Arts beginning July 1, 2012 in order to provide the research and academic setting these programs now need for their continued growth. Arena Stage Associate Artistic Director David Dower will also transition to Emerson in April 2012, and Institute Director Polly Carl will join him in July. The American Voices New Play Institute will remain in full operation at Arena Stage, and will continue to house the nationally recognized playwrights residency program, featuring resident playwrights Lisa Kron, Katori Hall, Charles Randolph-Wright, Amy Freed, Karen Zacarias and project residents Lynn Nottage and David Henry Hwang, as well as Theater 101, the Downstairs New Play Series, commissioning programs, and audience engagement activities.

In 2009, as part of its commitment to the development and study of American theater, Arena Stage launched the American Voices New Play Institute as a center for new play development. In doing so, Arena Stage recognized this additional focus on research required the theater to study a field it actively participates in. Over time, it became clear that in order to best serve the field, the research programs of the Institute would be best served in an academic setting independent from a producing entity so that findings and recommendations are not subject to any perceived, or real, conflicts of interest. During the past few months, Arena Stage identified an evolutionary path for these programs to ensure they fulfill their full potential.

Through its early development, the Institute relied heavily upon Arena Stage's resources and infrastructure. Now that these programs are maturing, those involving the documentation and dissemination of research are capable of transferring to a research-based institution with an environment more conducive to their future success. These programs include the New Play Map, #NewPlay TV, HowlRound and future convenings.

"Arena Stage is proud to have been an incubator for these wonderful young programs for the field of new play development. I have believed in them and championed them because I believe in the importance of living writers," states Molly Smith, Artistic Director of Arena Stage. "I'm proud of David's work and Arena's work in creating these programs."

She adds, "The documentation and dissemination programs of the American Voices New Play Institute have a more natural fit in an academic setting with a focus on research. Given Emerson College's commitment to the arts, these programs have found a new home where they will continue to grow and flourish."

"Arena Stage has provided an important service to the field by creating the American Voices New Play Institute," says Lee Pelton, President of Emerson College. "Emerson is dedicated to bringing innovation to communications and the arts, and we are excited to apply the intellectual resources of the College to carry the Institute's research and communications programs forward."

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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 Executive Producer 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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