

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

High-resolution photos and B-roll available upon request.

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## ARENA STAGE CASTS FIVE LOCAL YOUTH FROM OPEN AUDITIONS FOR MEREDITH WILLSON'S *THE MUSIC MAN*

(Washington, D.C.) During an all-day casting call at **Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater** in December, 120 young hopefuls from the D.C.-metro area turned up to audition for **Meredith Willson's *The Music Man***, which runs **May 11-July 22, 2012 in the Fichandler Stage, directed by Molly Smith**. From the open auditions, 19 talented young actors were invited back by Smith, Choreographer **Parker Esse**, Musical Director **Lawrence Goldberg** and Arena Stage Casting Director **Daniel Pruksarnukul** to vie for the roles of Winthrop Paroo and Amaryllis. **As a result, Arena Stage cast five local youth**, filling not only the roles of Winthrop and Amaryllis but also three other roles.

**Ian Berlin**, 11, a fifth-grader at Maret School in D.C., makes his professional debut as Winthrop Paroo, the timid and lisping younger brother of Marian Paroo. **Heidi Kaplan**, 9, plays Marian's precocious and inquisitive young piano student Amaryllis, and is a third-grader from Maryland who recently performed as Gretl in Olney Theatre Center's *The Sound of Music*. McLean resident **Jamie Goodson**, 13, plays Gracie Shinn, the mayor's youngest daughter, and is a seventh-grader at Cooper Middle School (Ford's Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*, The Kennedy Center's *Ragtime*).

Appearing as River City kids are 14-year-old **Colin James Cech** of Alexandria, a past participant of the [Voices of Now](#) Mead Ensemble at Arena Stage (Washington National Opera's *Tosca*, Ford's Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*) and 10-year-old **Mia Goodman**, a fifth-grader at Washington International School in D.C. making her professional theater debut at Arena Stage.

### **Meredith Willson's *The Music Man***

Book, music and lyrics by Meredith Willson  
Story by Meredith Willson and Franklin Lacey  
Directed by Molly Smith  
Choreography by Parker Esse

Fresh off her success with *Oklahoma!*, Molly Smith tackles five-time Tony Award winner *The Music Man*. Having exhausted all 102 counties in Illinois, "Professor" Harold Hill gives Iowa a try and soon enough convinces River City of its trouble with the "sin and corruption" of the pool hall, trouble that can only be stopped by forming a boys' band. Marian the librarian suspects he's a con man, but she begins to trust him after seeing how he's given confidence to her shy younger brother. Soon, this "Music Man" has transformed the entire town, not only turning the bickering school board into a barbershop quartet, but himself into an honest man. When the stage erupts with "76 Trombones," you'll be cheering along with River City for Harold Hill!

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## Arena Stage casts five local youth from open auditions for Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*—Page 2

For more information about *The Music Man*, visit [arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/the-music-man/](http://arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/the-music-man/).

**Ian Berlin** (Winthrop Paroo) will make his professional debut in *The Music Man*. Later this month, he will appear as Jojo in Maret School's production of *Seussical Jr.* He also appeared as Toby in *Youthtopia*, an original musical developed during a yearlong performance ensemble workshop at Imagination Stage. He has performed in youth productions of *Shrek* (Lord Farquaad), *Pete's Dragon* (Hoagy), and *101 Dalmatians* (Jasper) at French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts in Hancock, N.Y., as well as in its youth circus. He studies jazz piano at Levine School of Music and last year—purely by coincidence—began playing the trombone.

**Colin James Cech** (River City Kid) makes his Arena Stage debut in *The Music Man*. He most recently was on a D.C. area stage in Washington National Opera's production of *Tosca* at the Kennedy Center. In 2010 and 2011 he played Young Scrooge and Turkey Boy in *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre. He also has been active in community theater, recently appearing as Young Guido in Arlington Players' production of the musical *Nine* and was a past participant in the Voices of Now Ensemble at Arena Stage. He is a 14-year-old Alexandria resident but got his acting start as part of the Misi Theater Company in Bogota, Colombia, in 2005.

**Mia Goodman** (River City Kid) is working with Arena Stage in her first professional production. She is 10 years old and a fifth-grader in Washington International School's Spanish-English program. Mia sings with Washington Girls Chorus and has enjoyed summer programs at Imagination Stage and Theatre Lab. Mia has performed with Baltimore Memorial Players (Molly in *Annie*) and Falls Church Providence Players (Zuzu and Young Violet in *It's a Wonderful Life*).

**Jamie Goodson** (Gracie Shinn) is a 13-year-old D.C. native who has been acting, singing, dancing, and playing the piano since age 5. Her local credits include *Ragtime* at the Kennedy Center, *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre, and *101 Dalmatians* at Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre. The past four summers, Jamie attended French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts in Hancock, N.Y., where she performed such roles as Clio/Kira in *Xanadu*, Mary in *The Secret Garden*, Pocahontas in *Pocahontas*, and Nala in *The Lion King*. Jamie attends Cooper Middle School in McLean, Va., where she regularly performs the national anthem at local sports events.

**Heidi Kaplan** (Amaryllis) makes her Arena Stage debut. Other D.C. area performances include Gretl in *The Sound of Music* at Olney Theatre Center, Molly in the Helen Hayes Award-nominated production of *Annie*, also at Olney Theatre Center, and Tootie, the youngest daughter of the Smith family, in Montgomery College Summer Dinner Theatre's production of *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

Further company information will be announced at a later date.

Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* is sponsored by Karen and Edward A. Burka and Margot Kelly. The 2011/12 Fichandler Stage season is sponsored by Life Trustee Dr. Jaylee Montague Mead.

**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. [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org)

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