

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wednesday, February 15, 2012

ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER ANNOUNCES SUBSCRIPTION LINEUP FOR 2012/13 SEASON

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith announces eight productions on subscription for the company's third year in its new home, the Mead Center for American Theater. As a national center for the production, presentation, development and study of American theater, the 62nd season continues Arena Stage's focus of showcasing diverse and ground-breaking work from our country's most talented theater companies and artists.

"I'm looking forward with great anticipation to the artists and projects in our third season in the Mead Center," shares **Smith**. "It starts off with a bang with a celebration of American music—first with the explosive musical event *One Night with Janis Joplin* featuring more than 25 songs from the rock legend, followed by Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady*, which I cannot wait to direct in the Fichandler, and then Cheryl L. West's blues-infused world-premiere *Pullman Porter Blues* that Arena will be co-producing with Seattle Repertory Theatre directed by Lisa Peterson."

She continues, "Artistic Director of the Shaw Festival Jackie Maxwell will direct Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Lindsay-Abaire's contemporary social drama *Good People* about class wars featuring strong American characters, which will play opposite the magical production that catapulted Mary Zimmerman's career 10 years ago, *Metamorphoses*—complete with an enormous pool of water on the Fichandler Stage. Arena alum Tazewell Thompson will direct his world-premiere play *Mary T. & Lizzy K.*, which is the first of Arena's American President's Project—a multi-year cycle where playwrights and ensembles will develop work inspired by the lives and legacies of our nation's presidents.

"I especially look forward to bringing the D.C. premieres of acclaimed Broadway plays to our audiences with Jon Robin Baitz's *Other Desert Cities* directed by Kyle Donnelly, and the riveting play *The Mountaintop* by one of our own resident playwrights Katori Hall and directed by Robert O'Hara. Each production in this lineup shines on its own but together they offer a beautiful whole, representing the pulse of America today through the experience of live theater."

Additional programming in the 2012/13 season to be announced at a later date.

[Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater 2012/13 Schedule*](#):

One Night with Janis Joplin

Written and directed by Randy Johnson

September 28 – November 4, 2012 in the Kreeger Theater

With a voice like whiskey and a laugh like pure joy, Janis Joplin took the music scene by storm. Simultaneously rough and vulnerable, Joplin was dubbed the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll, proving music wasn't just a man's world anymore. Packed with classic songs ("Piece of My Heart," "Summertime," "Mercedes Benz"), the show also shines the spotlight on trailblazers who influenced Janis—like Bessie Smith, Etta James

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and Aretha Franklin. Now, in a new musical event featuring more than a dozen singers and band members, playwright-director Randy Johnson creates “a compelling portrait of an artist” (*Culturemob*) through the words, inspiration and music of one of America’s greatest rock ‘n’ roll originals.

My Fair Lady

Based on *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw

Book and Lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner / Music by Frederick Loewe

Directed by Molly Smith

November 2, 2012 – January 6, 2013 in the Fichandler Stage

Just as Molly Smith’s record-breaking production of *Oklahoma!* was enthralling audiences at Arena, her fresh reinterpretation of *My Fair Lady* set the all-time box office record at the prestigious Shaw Festival in Canada. And now Molly is reassembling her creative team to bring this breathtaking musical to Arena Stage. When Professor Henry Higgins wagers he can transform a Cockney flower girl into an aristocratic lady, he never guesses that Eliza Doolittle will in turn transform him. Lerner and Loewe’s sparkling score includes such enduring favorites as “I Could Have Danced All Night,” “Wouldn’t It Be Lovely,” “The Rain in Spain,” “On the Street Where You Live” and “Get Me to the Church on Time.” Based on Shaw’s most incisive social satire, *My Fair Lady* is a joyful, crowd-pleasing celebration for the entire family.

Pullman Porter Blues

A world-premiere co-production with Seattle Repertory Theatre

By Cheryl L. West / Directed by Lisa Peterson

November 23, 2012 – January 6, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater

Jam-packed with 14 original and classic blues songs, including “Sweet Home Chicago,” *Pullman Porter Blues* is the world-premiere production that reveals the true hero hidden within every man. It’s June 1937 and the *Panama Limited*, bound from Chicago to New Orleans, is bouncing to the beat of the rollicking Midwest blues. Most folks are tuned in to the Joe Louis/James Braddock championship bout, but the men of the Sykes family—three generations of porters—know there’s more at stake than just a boxing title, as they battle each other, racial tensions and an uncertain future. Will the hope they get from the Brown Bomber be the fuel this family needs to make a better life, or will progress tear them apart?

Good People

By David Lindsay-Abaire / Directed by Jackie Maxwell

February 1 – March 10, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater

Enter South Boston’s Lower End, where minimum wage is the maximum wage and hard work and sacrifice don’t ensure success. Facing eviction, single mother and mouthy “Southie” native Margaret Walsh reunites with an old flame who “made good,” hoping that his fortune can somehow improve her own. But not every man wants to relive his past, and with each surprising twist of their meeting they discover the dire costs the truth can hold. From Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Lindsay-Abaire (*Rabbit Hole*) and named the Best Play by the New York Drama Critics’ Circle during its Broadway run, *Good People* is a “poignant, brave and almost subversive” (*New York Post*) drama about life in a broke and broken American town.

Lookingglass Theatre Company’s production of

Metamorphoses

Based on the myths of Ovid

Written and directed by Tony Award winner Mary Zimmerman

February 8 – March 17, 2013 in the Fichandler Stage

Back in D.C. for the first time since her smash hit productions of *The Arabian Nights* and *Candide*, and 10 years after this exquisite production stormed Broadway and earned her the Tony Award for Best Director, MacArthur “Genius” Mary Zimmerman returns with *Metamorphoses*. Zimmerman’s magical interpretation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* proves myths about romance, family, loss and redemption never go out of style. Through lyrical storytelling and stunning imagery, Zimmerman constructs a wondrous world where gods and mortals interact in

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a giant pool on Arena's famous in-the-round stage. These timeless stories—"powerful, moving, and funny" (*Talkin' Broadway*)—ripple through the depths of imagination, reminding us of the transformative power of theater.

Mary T. & Lizzy K.

Arena Stage commission and world premiere

Written and directed by Tazewell Thompson

March 15 – April 28, 2013 in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle

Writer-director Tazewell Thompson (dir. *M. Butterfly*, *Yellowman*) stitches together an insider's look at the unlikely friendship between First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln and her talented seamstress, the successful freed slave Elizabeth Keckly. As one woman's skilled hands work overtime, creating the most beautiful garments of her career, the other's reality continues to slip ever further from her grasp. Old wounds and new recriminations explode in this riveting drama about loss, love and the importance of promises, both kept and broken. This world-premiere drama is the first commission of Arena Stage's American President's Project.

The Mountaintop

By resident playwright Katori Hall / Directed by Robert O'Hara

March 29 – May 12, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater

Hailed as "daring, rousing and provocative" by *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Mountaintop* is Katori Hall's bold reimagining of the last night of the historic life of Dr. Martin Luther King. Exhausted from delivering a significant speech, Dr. King rests in his room at the Lorraine Motel when an unexpected visit from a feisty, young maid compels him to confront his own humanity and the fate of our nation. Winner of the Olivier Award for Best New Play, *The Mountaintop*'s "soul-stirring" (*Variety*) storytelling fuses theatricality with spirituality to reach a summit that will leave audiences breathless.

Other Desert Cities

By Jon Robin Baitz / Directed by Kyle Donnelly

April 26 – May 26, 2013 in the Fichandler Stage

After a six-year absence, Brooke Wyeth returns to her Reaganite parents' Palm Springs enclave for the holidays. But the warm desert air turns chilly when news of her upcoming memoir threatens to revive the most painful chapter of the family's history. Perception and reality grapple with love and mercy as old family wounds are opened, childhood memories are tested, and the Wyeth clan learns that some secrets cannot stay buried forever. Full of surprisingly touching moments, Pulitzer Prize nominee Jon Robin Baitz (*A Fair Country*) brings dysfunctional family drama to new heights in this witty, deeply enjoyable work NY1 called "one of the best new plays of the decade."

***Plays, artists and dates are subject to change.**

Subscription packages are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Arena Stage Sales Office at 202-488-3300 or by visiting 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. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive 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. arenastage.org.

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