

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER TO HOST SECOND ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER AND PERFORMANCE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2012

(Washington, D.C.) Every year, hundreds of D.C.-area military families must spend the Thanksgiving holiday away from loved ones. In gratitude for their service, **Arena Stage is inviting wounded warriors, service men and women, and their families to a complimentary Thanksgiving dinner and performance of *My Fair Lady* at the Mead Center for American Theater (1101 Sixth St., SW) on Friday, November 23.** Arena Stage is working through each military service branch to distribute the tickets. It is anticipated that about 200 service men and women and their families will experience this special evening.

“The United States military is volunteer service, and we are living in a world where we all need to be thankful for those who volunteer to be in the armed forces,” shares **Arena Stage Executive Director Edgar Dobie**. “Providing this evening for service men and women and their families is the least we can do for the huge sacrifices they make for us.”

Dinner will be prepared and served by **Ridgewells Catering** at 5:30 p.m., and guests will enjoy the musical *My Fair Lady* at 8:00 p.m. following dinner. The event’s featured speaker will be **Rear Admiral Jeffrey Lemmons, U.S. Navy and Director of the Inter-American Defense College at Ft. McNair**.

Arena Stage will be partnering with Cell Phones for Soldiers, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing cost-free communication services to active duty military members and veterans, to collect used cell phones that evening. For more information, visit cellphonesforsoldiers.com/.

Support for Arena Stage is made possible in part by a grant from the **Bob Woodruff Foundation**, which provides resources and support to injured service members, veterans and their families so they can have successful futures. For more information about the Bob Woodruff Foundation, visit ReMIND.org. Additional support for the event is provided by generous contributions from **USAA Real Estate Company, Northrop Grumman, Chevron, GEICO, Altria, Accenture Federal, The Coca-Cola Company, John and Linda Derrick, and Ridgewells Catering**.

Additional sponsorship opportunities are still available. For information contact Laura Haynes at lhaynes@arenastage.org or 202-600-4030.

The Bob Woodruff Foundation is the nonprofit dedicated to ensuring injured service members, veterans and their families are thriving. A national organization with grassroots reach, the Bob Woodruff Foundation augments the work of the federal government, diligently navigating the maze of more than 40,000 nonprofits providing services to veterans, finding and funding the most innovative programs, and holding those programs accountable for measurable results. To date, through its charitable investments, the Bob Woodruff Foundation

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Arena Stage to host second annual Thanksgiving dinner and performance for military families—Page 2

has invested more than \$12 million in 70 organizations, reaching more than a million service members, support personnel, veterans and their families. The Foundation's investments are meeting the full spectrum of needs that injured service members have—from medical care, physical accommodations and counseling to larger social issues like homelessness and suicide. The Bob Woodruff Foundation was co-founded in 2006 by award-winning anchor Bob Woodruff, and his family, whose own experiences inspired them to make sure our nation's heroes have access to the high level of support and resources they deserve, for as long as they need it.

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 seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org.

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