



the mead center
for american theater

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 12, 2012

BENEDICT CAMPBELL, NICHOLAS RODRIGUEZ AND MANNA NICHOLS
TO STAR IN ARENA STAGE'S UPCOMING *MY FAIR LADY*
DIRECTED BY MOLLY SMITH

FULL COMPANY ANNOUNCED

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the full company for *My Fair Lady*, directed by Artistic Director Molly Smith, whose recent *The Music Man* was hailed as an “all-American pleasure-machine” (*Washington Post*). Her fresh reinterpretation of *My Fair Lady* broke box office records at the prestigious Shaw Festival in Canada last summer. Smith has reassembled most of the design team from that acclaimed production along with noted Canadian actor and Shaw company member **Benedict Campbell** as Professor Henry Higgins to join Arena favorite **Nicholas Rodriguez** (*Oklahoma!*) as Freddy Eynsford-Hill and **Manna Nichols** as Eliza Doolittle in her Arena Stage debut. The production also features local husband/wife duo **Thomas Adrian Simpson** as Colonel Pickering and **Sherri L. Edelen** as Mrs. Pearce, as well as **Catherine Flye** as Mrs. Higgins, **Benjamin L. Horen** as Zoltan Karpathy and **James Saito** as Alfred Doolittle.

Based on *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw, *My Fair Lady* includes book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Frederick Loewe. *My Fair Lady* runs **November 2, 2012-January 6, 2013 in the Fichandler Stage.**

“It is a real joy to work on this giant of a musical at Arena with its story about class and the rigid social structures which challenge us,” **shares Smith**. “Introducing the brilliant Ben Campbell to our audience and this wonderful company of actors is a particular pleasure.”

She continues, “Higgins and Eliza embark on a journey as treacherous and dangerous as anyone can ever take—the transformation of human beings through the mind and heart. It is a universal journey, and our stage world reflects London in 1912 with a dynamic mix of races and types—vibrant and cross cultural.”

Additional cast members of *My Fair Lady* include D.C.-natives **Rayanne Gonzales** as Mrs. Eynsford-Hill and **Kurt Boehm** as Jamie, with **Ronald Duncan** as Harry. The ensemble also includes **Bev Appleton**, **Dean Andre de Luna**, **Erin Driscoll**, **Jennifer Irons**, **Robert Mintz**, **Jesse Palmer**, **Jobari Parker-Namdar**, **Joe Peck**, **Sade Simmons**, **Kim Willes** and **Hannah Willman**, with swings **Jessica Hartman** and **Victor J. Wisehart**.

Director Molly Smith reunites with her original Shaw Festival creative team members Choreographer **Daniel Pelzig**, Musical Director **Paul Sportelli**, Costume Designer **Judith Bowden** and Lighting Designer **Jock Munro**. The Creative Team for *My Fair Lady* also features Set Designer **Donald Eastman**, Wig Designer **Anne Nesmith**, Dialect Coach **Kim James Bey**, Assistant Choreographer **Melanie Phillipson**, Assistant Music

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Director **Jose C. Simbulan**, Artistic Associate and Casting Director **Daniel Pruksarnukul**, Dramaturg **Amrita Ramanan**, Stage Manager **Susan R. White**, Assistant Stage Manager **Christi B. Spann** and Artistic Producer **David Snider**, with New York casting by **Stuart Howard & Paul Hardt**.

Molly Smith (*Director*) has been instrumental in leading the reinvention of Arena Stage, focusing on the creation of the new Mead Center for American Theater as well as major artistic changes. Arena Stage is a center for the production, presentation, development and study of American theater. Molly has been a leader in new play development for 30 years while at Arena Stage and at Perseverance Theatre in Alaska, the theater she founded and led for 19 years. She has commissioned or championed numerous world premieres, some of which she has directed, including Paula Vogel's *How I Learned to Drive* and Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play*. Molly's directorial work has also been seen at the Shaw Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Tarragon Theatre and Centaur Theatre.

Benedict Campbell (*Henry Higgins*) From 1991 to 2001, Campbell performed with the Stratford Festival, most recently in *Dracula*, *The Three Musketeers* and *Tempest-Tost*. He has also performed at Canadian Stage (*A Little Night Music*, among others), Factory Theatre (*Love and Anger*) and at the Grand Theatre, London (*Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, among others). For the past 10 years, he has acted in the Shaw Festival, appearing as Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* and as Boss Mangan in Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House*. He has also performed the roles of Lopakhin in Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and Broadbent in Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island*. His other Shaw credits include *The Entertainer*, *In Good King Charles's Golden Days*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Mack and Mabel*, *Hotel Peccadillo*, *The Crucible*, *Too True To Be Good*, *Happy End*, *Major Barbara*, *Man and Superman*, *Nothing Sacred* and *The Plough and the Stars*.

Sherri L. Edelen (*Mrs. Pearce, Queen of Transylvania*) Arena Stage: *Cabaret*. DC area: *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Xanadu*, *Hairspray*, and Helen Hayes Awards for *Side Show* and *Les Miserables* (Signature Theatre); *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Merrily We Roll Along* (Kennedy Center/Sondheim Celebration); *Design for Living* (Shakespeare Theatre); *She Loves Me* (Olney); *The World Goes 'Round* (Round House). Regional: *The Light in the Piazza* (Philadelphia Theatre Co, Barrymore Award), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Stages St. Louis) and *Caroline or Change* (Arden Theatre Company).

Catherine Flye (*Mrs. Higgins*) Arena Stage: *George Don't Do That!*, *Shirley Valentine*. DC area: *Henry V*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Folger Theatre); *Design for Living*, *Major Barbara* (Shakespeare Theatre); *Shakespeare's Will*, *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again* (MetroStage); *Moonlight*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Studio Theatre); *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wintertime* (Round House); also Ford's Theatre, Washington Stage Guild, Olney, the Kennedy Center.

Benjamin L. Horen (*Zoltan Karpathy*) DC area: *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Signature Theatre); *The Boys From Syracuse*, *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare Theatre); *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (Studio Theatre Second Stage); *Cool Papa's Party*, *The Stephen Schwartz Project* (MetroStage); *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible...* (Adventure Theatre). Spotlight Communications: *Gay: Accept ME If You Love Me*.

Manna Nichols (*Eliza Doolittle*) DC area: starred as the title role in *Mulan* at Imagination Stage. NYC/Off-Broadway: Laurie in *Oklahoma!* at the Acorn Theatre, *Tokio Confidential* at Atlantic Theatre Co. Regional: Barrymore Award nominee for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical for *The King & I* at Walnut Street Theatre; *The King and I* at North Shore and Theatre for the Stars; *Miss Saigon* at Walnut Street Theatre and The Fulton Theatre.

Nicholas Rodriguez (*Freddy Eynsford-Hill*) Arena Stage: Curly in *Oklahoma!* and Fabrizio Nacarelli in *The Light in the Piazza*. On Broadway, he performed the title role in *Tarzan*, and Off-Broadway, he's appeared in *The Toxic Avenger*, *Almost Heaven* and *Bajour*. He's toured in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Jesus), *Evita* (Che) and *Hair* (Claude). His regional credits include originating the role of Aaron and understudying Val Kilmer's Moses in *The Ten Commandments* at Kodak Theater, *JCS* (Jesus), *Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston), *Damn Yankees* (Joe),

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Cinderella (Prince), *South Pacific* (Cable), *Master Class* (Tony), *Love, Valour, Compassion!* (Ramon) and *The King and I* (Lun Tha). This past summer, he was seen in the film *Sex and the City 2* and was featured on the film's soundtrack. Mr. Rodriguez is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Nick Chavez on ABC's *One Life to Live*.

James Saito (*Alfred Doolittle*) Broadway/National Tour: *Flower Drum Song*, *Golden Child*, *The King & I*. Film/TV: *Eli Stone*, *I Think I Love My Wife*, *Pearl Harbor*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *Henry Fool*, *Robot Stories*, *Home Alone 3*, *Devil's Advocate*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order Criminal Intent*, *Third Watch*, *Sex and the City*, *Star Trek Voyager*, *100 Centre St.*, *Blood and Orchids* and BBC's *Heroes and Villains: The Shogun*.

Thomas Adrian Simpson (*Col. Pickering*) Arena Stage: *The Light in the Piazza*, *The Fantasticks*, *The Great White Hope*, *Seagull*, *Antigone in New York* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. DC area: *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *The Boy Detective Fails* (Signature Theatre); *1776*, *Liberty Smith* (Ford's Theater); *Candide*, *The Boys From Syracuse* (Shakespeare Theatre). Regional: *Candide* (Goodman); *Shenandoah*, *Man of La Mancha* (Wayside Theatre).

Full company bios and images available upon request. Please e-mail press@arenastage.org.

My Fair Lady is sponsored by Edward and his "Fair Lady" Karen Burka. Additional support is provided by the Margaret Abell Powell Fund. The 2012/13 Fichandler Stage season is sponsored by Life Trustee Dr. Jaylee Montague Mead.

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

Choreography by Daniel Pelzig

In the Fichandler Stage

November 2, 2012 – January 6, 2013

Just as Molly Smith's record-breaking production of *Oklahoma!* enthralled audiences at Arena, her fresh reinterpretation of *My Fair Lady* set the all-time box office record at the prestigious Shaw Festival in Canada. Now following the success of *The Music Man*, Smith is reassembling most of her original creative team to bring *My Fair Lady* 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.

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Weekday matinees at noon on Tuesday, 11/13; Wednesday, 11/28; Tuesday, 12/4 & Wednesday, 12/26.

Full calendar: tickets.arenastage.org/single/psDetail.aspx?psn=14303.

TICKETS: Tickets for *My Fair Lady* are \$45-\$94, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as student discounts, Southwest Nights, Pay-Your-Page tickets, Family Fun Packs, HOTTIX and Hero's Discounts, visit <http://www.arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs/>. Tickets may be purchased online at arenastage.org, by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth St., SW, D.C.

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Sales Office/Subscriptions	202-488-3300
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets	202-488-4380
TTY for deaf patrons	202-484-0247
Info for patrons with disabilities	202-488-3300

METRO: Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is only one block from the Waterfront-SEU Metro station (Green Line). When exiting the station, walk west on M Street toward Sixth Street, and the main entrance to the Mead Center is on the right.

PARKING: Parking is available in Arena Stage’s on-site garage. Subscribers may purchase parking in advance for \$16. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$18 or on the day of the performance for \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited handicapped parking is available by reservation. Advanced parking must be reserved by calling 202-488-3300. The entrance to the Mead Center garage is on Maine Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets, and the garage closes one hour after the day’s last performance ends. Patrons can also park at the Public Parking Garage at 1101 Fourth Street, one block from the Mead Center, for \$11. Street parking is also available along Maine Avenue and Water Street.

VALET PARKING: Arena Stage offers valet service at no additional cost to patrons with accessibility needs who call 202-488-3300 in advance to request valet parking. On days when valet parking is being used for accessibility, it is also available to general patrons one hour prior to show time for \$25, based on availability. To use valet parking, pull up to the main entrance on Sixth Street.

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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