

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

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ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER ANNOUNCES SIX PROJECTS FEATURING 11 NEW WORKS OF THEATER FOR THE 2013/14 KOGOD CRADLE SERIES

*** Creative artists include Resident Playwright Samuel D. Hunter, Nicholas Rodriguez, Eleasha Gamble, Ann Randolph, the inaugural Playwrights' Arena writers, local ensemble-driven companies dog and pony dc and Faction of Fools ***

(Washington, D.C.) Following an open submission process, six projects have been selected for the 2013/14 Kogod Cradle Series, as part of the American Voices New Play Institute at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater (1101 Sixth St., S.W.). Focused on the development of new and emerging work by artists from throughout Greater Washington and around the country, this series of workshops, readings and performances invites artists and audiences to actively explore the development process.

The 2013/14 Kogod Cradle Series lineup includes the return of **dog and pony dc**, following the successful 2012 workshop of their smash hit *A Killing Game*. The interactive devised-theatermakers, who knock down the traditional fourth wall in live theater, will explore their newest project *Toast*. The Series also welcomes **Faction of Fools**, another D.C.-based ensemble, who will put their trademark Commedia dell'Arte spin on a classic piece of theater. Arena Stage favorites **Eleasha Gamble** and **Nicholas Rodriguez** will reunite to create *The Power of Two*, a special new cabaret act blending their voices and inspirations under the direction of Signature Theatre Associate Artistic Director **Matthew Gardiner**. During two different presentations from the American Voices New Play Institute, Resident Playwright **Samuel D. Hunter** (*The Whale*) will share the latest draft of a play he has been working on and the inaugural members of **Playwrights' Arena** will introduce the plays they have created through their yearlong collaborative process. The Series concludes with a special extended presentation of *Loveland*, a new American play under development by writer/performer **Ann Randolph** (*Squeeze Box*) that centers on her uncanny ability to find humor in loss and features a post-show process conversation with each audience.

Of the lineup **Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith** shares, "The breadth of this season's Kogod Cradle Series—in terms of the projects, artists and companies—captures this program's ability to support artists and provide platforms for discovery and presentation that will be meaningful and rewarding both for the talented creators as well as for our intelligent audiences, who become an integral part of the future of these new contributions to American theater."

The selected artists will benefit from the opportunity to rehearse, workshop, perform and discuss their work in the Mead Center's intimate 200-seat Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle, a space specifically designed to support the development of new American theater.

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"In our second season we have expanded our ability to meet the needs of artists looking to create, develop and share their work with audiences in the Kogod Cradle," adds **Director of Artistic Programming David Snider**. "We have selected six very unique projects; all with artists who have clear visions for what they hope to gain from their time in the Mead Center. We are proud that this Series, along with the numerous new works in our mainstage season, provides for ongoing development of and public access to new work throughout the coming year."

2013/14 Kogod Cradle Series*

Toast

Created and performed by members of dog and pony dc

December 5-8, 2013

Before electricity, how did people make toast?

It's not a trick question. Think about it for a moment. Go look it up.

The invention of the electric toaster and its widespread adoption wasn't as easy as sliding sliced bread between heated coils. It was a complex, non-linear process, a beautiful confluence of conditions, opportunities, discoveries and intensity. Piqued? Back after their hit show *A Killing Game* thrilled audiences in last season's Kogod Cradle Series, dog & pony dc returns for a workshop of their newest show *Toast*—a participatory theatrical performance meets science experiment exploring technological innovation, discovery, invention, consequences and the intricate networks that weave us all together. A Salon, as part of dog and pony dc's Incubator Series, will be held September 14 in the Kogod Cradle to begin work on *Toast*. For more information visit dogandponydc.com.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:00 p.m. & Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10

The Power of Two

Created and performed by Nicholas Rodriguez and Eleasha Gamble

Directed by Signature Theatre Associate Artistic Director Matthew Gardiner

Musical Direction by Mark Hartman

December 11-15, 2013

Two powerhouse singers—Nicholas Rodriguez and Eleasha Gamble (Curly and Laurey in Arena's *Oklahoma!*)—return to harmonize again in this limited-engagement cabaret about the powerful bonds of friendship and relationships. Highlighting their favorite Top 40 hits and the best of Broadway, Nicholas and Eleasha create sweet music with a set of crowd-pleasers from Rodgers & Hammerstein and Sondheim to Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, Roberta Flack and more. Signature Theatre's Associate Artistic Director Matthew Gardiner (*Dreamgirls*) directs this special event in the intimate Kogod Cradle.

Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday at 8:00 p.m., Friday at 6:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m. and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Tickets start at \$25

Presentation of an adapted classic by Faction of Fools

January 9-12, 2014

Join D.C.'s Helen Hayes Award-winning Commedia dell'Arte troupe as they bring their devilish sense of humor to an iconic piece of theater in the Kogod Cradle. The Fools specialize in a style of masked comedy originating in the Italian Renaissance and are known, not only for traditional Commedia dell'Arte, but also for poignant interpretations of classics by Dickens, Shakespeare and Edward Albee. *The Washington Post* likened their take on Hamlet to a "Beckettian" black comedy with a "high concept spin." Arena Stage audiences may remember how their masks and acrobatics highlighted the absurdity during their contribution to the 2011 Edward Albee Festival with *The Sandbox*. factionoffools.org

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:00 p.m. & Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10

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Workshop performance of new work by Samuel D. Hunter

February 6-9, 2014

Award-winning Arena Stage Resident Playwright Samuel D. Hunter is creating a new work for the American theater as part of his Arena Stage residency. In the February Kogod Cradle series presentation, Sam will explore this new work in collaboration with a director, Institute Dramaturg **Jocelyn Clarke** and company of actors. Join them to hear this new piece for the very first time and learn about his playmaking process from his collaborators and him.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:00 p.m. & Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10

Playwrights' Arena – A Weekend of New Work

March 6-9, 2014

Norman Allen, Randy Baker, Jacqueline E. Lawton, Heather McDonald, Danielle Mohlman and Shawn Northrip—the six members of the inaugural Playwrights' Arena playwriting group will share excerpts from each of their plays and discuss their writing process during the yearlong program. Playwrights' Arena is a group of high-caliber local playwrights in residence at the Mead Center, dedicated to the support and development of each other's process and practice. All six members have worked closely with each other and Arena Stage artists and staff to advance their development as playwrights. Audiences will get a window into the work of these writers as well as the collective impact of Playwrights' Arena. For more information on the writers and Playwrights' Arena visit arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/playwrights-arena/.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:00 p.m. & Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10

Kogod Cradle Series Special Presentation

Loveland

Written and performed by Ann Randolph

Directed by Joshua Townshend-Zellner

March 18-April 13, 2014

Building on critical acclaim for her one woman show, and through ongoing development work with Institute Dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke, writer/performer Ann Randolph joins the Kogod Cradle Series in a special extended presentation of *Loveland*, an “unforgettable, over-the-top comedy that forces people to think” (*The Huffington Post*). Randolph brings humanity to the role of Frannie Potts, an irreverent oddball trapped on a plane as she travels from California to Ohio for her mother's funeral. Accompanied by a cast of hilarious characters, all portrayed by Randolph, we witness the tragedy, beauty and humor that unite us all in grief. “Compared to the late Gilda Radner” (*The San Francisco Examiner*) and called “a genius” by comedy master Mel Brooks, Randolph is one performer not to miss. Audiences are invited to stay after each performance for a transformative mini writing workshop, led by Randolph. annrandolph.com

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.;

Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets start at \$25

Detailed specifics about each Kogod Cradle Series event will be announced at a later date. For up-to-date information on the Kogod Cradle Series and to purchase tickets visit arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/the-cradle-series/index.shtml. Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300.

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

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

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