

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: This release has been updated as of 6/19/13 to reflect confirmed casting for the season.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February 26, 2013

## ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER ANNOUNCES 10 SHOWS FOR 2013/14 SEASON

\*\*\* Four world premieres including a work by Resident Playwright Charles Randolph-Wright  
and a presentation by Tectonic Theater Project \*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith announces 10 productions for the company's 2013/14 season, the fourth year in the Mead Center for American Theater. As a national center for the production, presentation, development and study of American theater, Arena Stage pursues a dynamic and diverse body of work with an upcoming season that showcases award-winning theater artists and projects.

"Perhaps it's because of the anniversary of the Civil War that you'll find our season is soaked in history," shares Smith. "As a young person it was impossible to memorize the dates of historical events, but boy—when I heard a story about a person's life being moved and shaped by history, I got it. Somehow the arc of history—the demands of history—are acted out in sharp relief with many of the human stories we're telling next season, from the Civil War battlefield to Camp David to contemporary stories about our lives today."

She continues, "From Afghanistan to the Apollo Theater, our stories are personal and human and funny and moving. People such as Paul Robeson, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, Anwar Sadat, Menachem Begin, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller span America's 20th century and come alive through this season. We're pleased to be partnering with so many talented artists—Moisés Kaufman, Kenny Leon, Liz Lerman, Estelle Parsons, Bill Pullman, Charles Randolph-Wright, Kathleen Turner, Lawrence Wright—just to name a few. It's definitely a season filled with ideas and stories that will powerfully remind us what it is to be human."

The 64th season features a multitude of new work, including four world premieres: *Love in Afghanistan* by American Voices New Play Institute Resident Playwright Charles Randolph-Wright; Pulitzer Prize-winner Lawrence Wright's *Camp David* directed by Smith as part of Arena Stage's American President's Project; MacArthur "Genius" Fellow Liz Lerman's theatrical dance piece *Healing Wars* featuring narrator Bill Pullman (*Independence Day, 1600 Penn*); and a presentation of Tectonic Theater Project's production of *The Tallest Tree in the Forest*, written and performed by Daniel Beaty.

In addition, the season features the pre-Broadway production of *The Velocity of Autumn* starring Academy Award winner Estelle Parsons and two-time Tony Award winner Stephen Spinella, as well as the return of Kathleen Turner (last seen at Arena Stage in her sold-out run of *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins*) in the epic drama *Mother Courage and Her Children*, both directed by Smith.

Rounding out the season is a new adaptation of the classic American story *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* directed by Tony Award nominee Kenny Leon (Broadway's *Stick Fly*), *Tappin' Thru Life* featuring Broadway

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legend and Tony Award nominee Maurice Hines and a pair of productions featuring the genius of acclaimed writer/director Randy Johnson: a return engagement of *One Night with Janis Joplin* and a new production of the musical revue *Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller*.

### **Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater 2013/14 Schedule\***

#### ***One Night with Janis Joplin***

**Created, written and directed by Randy Johnson / Starring Mary Bridget Davies**

**A co-production with Pasadena Playhouse and Milwaukee Repertory Theater**

**June 21–August 11, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater**

Get ready to relive the summer of love! Back by popular demand, *One Night with Janis Joplin* returns to rock Arena Stage for another round of “exhilarating” (*Washington Post*) performances packed with classic songs like “Piece of My Heart,” “Summertime” and “Mercedes Benz.” Mary Bridget Davies “brings the house to its feet” (*Washingtonian*) as one of America’s greatest rock ‘n’ roll originals, and “delivers no-holds-barred vocal fire through one classic song after another” (*TheaterMania*).

#### ***The Velocity of Autumn***

**Exclusive Pre-Broadway Engagement**

**By Eric Coble / Directed by Artistic Director Molly Smith**

**Starring Academy Award winner Estelle Parsons and two-time Tony Award winner Stephen Spinella**

**September 6–October 20, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater**

In a simple Brooklyn brownstone, 79-year-old Alexandra lives a solitary existence with her fleeting memories and enough explosives to take down most of the block. At an impasse with her family over how she should spend her autumn years, Alexandra’s long-absent son enters as a most unlikely mediator, to try and save his mother’s life as much as his own. Funny and sweet, aching and revelatory, this perceptive play reveals both the fragility and ferocity of life. Academy Award winner Estelle Parsons (*Bonnie and Clyde*, *Roseanne*) and two-time Tony Award winner Stephen Spinella (*Angels in America*) make their Arena Stage debuts.

#### ***Love in Afghanistan***

**World premiere by Resident Playwright Charles Randolph-Wright / Directed by Lucie Tiberghien**

**October 11–November 17, 2013 in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

From resident playwright Charles Randolph-Wright (*Blue, Cuttin’ Up*) comes a daring world premiere drama set to take audiences on a thrilling, romantic adventure in a chaotic land. Meet Duke and Roya, two fantastically different people discovering love in the most unlikely of places: war-torn Afghanistan. One, an emerging hip-hop artist, the other, a high-level Afghani interpreter, both fight to navigate the pitfalls of romance amid the cultural land mines of religious differences and political unrest.

#### **Maurice Hines is**

#### ***Tappin’ Thru Life***

**Created by and starring Maurice Hines / Directed by Jeff Calhoun**

**A co-production with Alliance Theatre and Cleveland Play House**

**November 15–December 29, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater**

**Featuring John and Leo Manzari**

Broadway legend and Tony Award nominee Maurice Hines (*Sophisticated Ladies*) returns to Arena Stage to tap us through his incredible 40 years in show business. With song and dance, Hines pays tribute to his brother, Gregory, and the singers who have inspired him, from Frank Sinatra to Lena Horne. To help bring the history of American tap to life, Hines brings The Diva Orchestra, an all-female nine-piece big band. Get ready to laugh, smile and tap your feet to the infectious song and dance of Maurice Hines!

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### ***Guess Who's Coming to Dinner***

**By Todd Kreidler / Based on the screenplay by William Rose / Directed by Kenny Leon**

**November 29, 2013–January 5, 2014 in the Fichandler Stage**

**Featuring Malcolm-Jamal Warner**

Broadway and Arena Stage favorite Kenny Leon (*every tongue confess*) returns to direct a new adaptation of the beloved film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. A progressive white couple's proud liberal sensibilities are put to the test when their daughter, fresh from an overseas romance, brings her African-American fiancé home to meet them. Personal beliefs clash with the mores of the late 60's in this warm and witty exploration of family and culture and knowing which of them has the greater hold on our hearts.

### **Tectonic Theater Project's World Premiere Presentation**

#### ***The Tallest Tree in the Forest***

**By Daniel Beaty / Directed by Moisés Kaufman**

**The Kansas City Repertory Theatre / La Jolla Playhouse production**

**January 10–February 16, 2014 in the Kreeger Theater**

Bursting with soulful music and poetic storytelling, *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* combines the theatrical talents of award-winning artist Daniel Beaty (*Emergence-See!*) with acclaimed director Moisés Kaufman (*33 Variations, The Laramie Project*). Discover the true story of Paul Robeson, hailed as the 'best known black man in the world' for his incomparable singing and acting, brought low by accusations of disloyalty to America. Backed by a live band, Beaty brings "his signature wit, grit and piercing lyricism" (*New York Times*) to more than 20 characters, asking the question, how does a man remain an artist when his soul cries out to be an activist?

### ***Mother Courage and Her Children***

**By Bertolt Brecht / Directed by Artistic Director Molly Smith**

**Starring Academy Award & Tony Award nominee Kathleen Turner**

**January 31–March 9, 2014 in the Fichandler Stage**

**Featuring Nicholas Rodriguez and Erin Weaver**

Tough-as-nails matriarch Mother Courage profits off the very war that steals her children from her one by one. But will the cost of war be higher than she's prepared to pay? Artistic Director Molly Smith helms this unique in-the-round staging of Brecht's powerhouse anti-war play fusing politics, satire and music into an epic theatrical experience. Kathleen Turner returns to Arena Stage after her sold-out run of *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins* to star in the mother of all roles.

### ***Camp David***

**World Premiere by Pulitzer Prize winner Lawrence Wright / Directed by Artistic Director Molly Smith**

**March 21–May 4, 2014 in the Kreeger Theater**

Sixty-two miles north of Washington, D.C., nestled in Catocin Mountain Park, lies the clandestine retreat known as Camp David. For 13 tumultuous days, President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn host Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in an attempt to create the impossible: peace in the Middle East. How could such a massive thing be done in such a short amount of time? Artistic Director Molly Smith directs the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Lawrence Wright's incredible new play based on incredibly true events. *Camp David* is part of Arena Stage's distinctive American President's Project, which investigates the lives and legacies of our nation's Presidents and their families.

### ***Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller***

**By Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller / Directed by Randy Johnson / Choreographed by Parker Esse**

**April 25–June 8, 2014 in the Fichandler Stage**

**Featuring E. Faye Butler and Nova Y. Payton**

Staged by Randy Johnson, the visionary behind *One Night with Janis Joplin*, *Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller* transports us to the Golden Age of Rock, Rhythm and Blues showcasing nearly 40 popular

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hits from Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame legends Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Bursting with infectious tunes like "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," "Stand By Me," "Love Potion #9" and "On Broadway," it's no wonder this electrifying show received seven Tony Award nominations and became the longest-running musical revue in Broadway history. Get ready to raise the roof at Smokey Joe's Café!

### ***Healing Wars***

**World premiere created and directed by MacArthur "Genius" Fellow Liz Lerman**

**Featuring Bill Pullman**

**June 6–29, 2014 in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

A pioneer in the world of contemporary dance, Liz Lerman's newest theatrical dance piece explores the experiences of the healers tasked with treating the physical and psychic wounds of battle. Joined by Bill Pullman (*Independence Day, 1600 Penn*), an ensemble of dancers represent medics and soldiers from the Civil War to today. Called "the source of an epochal revolution in the scope and purposes of dance art" (*Washington Post*), Lerman's work has been performed throughout the U.S. and abroad. After 34 years as founding artistic director of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Lerman presents her singular aesthetic to audiences in this exciting world premiere about how we experience and recover from war.

*\*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](http://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 seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org).*

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