

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

*****PLEASE NOTE:** This release has been updated as of 5/28/14 to reflect that Paul Hurley has joined the company of *Healing Wars*.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Greta Hays/Kirstin M. Franko
press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4056

May 13, 2014

ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER
ANNOUNCES THE FULL COMPANY FOR *HEALING WARS*
THE WORLD-PREMIERE THEATRICAL DANCE EVENT
CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY LIZ LERMAN AND FEATURING BILL PULLMAN

JUNE 6 – JUNE 29, 2014
IN THE ARLENE AND ROBERT KOGOD CRADLE

(Washington, D.C.) A pioneer in the world of contemporary dance, MacArthur “Genius Grant” recipient **Liz Lerman**’s new theatrical dance piece *Healing Wars* examines healing in wartime, the nature of damage that continues when battles are over and the question of how individuals and societies absorb the pain and impact of war. The production features a company of performers in multiple roles, including **Marjani Forte**, **George Hirsch**, **Ted Johnson**, **Tamara Hurwitz Pullman**, **Alli Ross**, **Samantha Speis**, **Keith A. Thompson**, renowned stage and film actor **Bill Pullman** and United States Navy veteran **Paul Hurley**, who lost part of his leg during his time serving in Bahrain in 2006. The limited engagement, world-premiere production of *Healing Wars* runs June 6 – June 29 in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater.

“*Healing Wars* is a powerful piece designed to help us build a dialogue around war and healing through art,” says Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. “Liz leads us with her innovative collaborative style merging dance, theater and music.”

Through movement and dialogue set to a soundscape by Tony Award-winning Sound Designer **Darron L. West** and a haunting scenic environment and costumes crafted by **David Israel Reynoso** with lighting design by **Heidi Eckwall** and video by **Kate Freer**, *Healing Wars* vividly catapults audiences into the immediate aftermath of war. Soldiers, nurses, surgeons and spirits migrate between the American Civil War and conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. This multidisciplinary work was conceived and directed by Lerman, with choreography developed by Lerman and Thompson in collaboration with the performers.

“I started *Healing Wars* while artist-in-residence at Harvard in 2011, and am so happy to now be bringing the premiere to Arena Stage,” **Lerman** shares. “This project grew out of my sense of the value of present commemorations of past events, most especially the American Civil War. After pursuing questions about women and their activities in that war I found myself investigating warfare’s relationship to innovation in medicine and the role of the healers themselves in conflict. At an intimate scale, this work is about bodies: what they bear, what they cannot bear, how we hide them and honor them when they die, how we patch them up while they live.”

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Full company announced for *Healing Wars* at Arena Stage—Page 2

A truly collaborative endeavor, *Healing Wars* is part of The National Civil War Project and has involved the participation of veterans, artists, clinicians, medical historians and military experts. *Healing Wars* has been developed through major commissioning support from The George Washington University and various creative residencies at Harvard's Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, the Maggie Allesee Center for Choreography at Florida State University, the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, Peak Performances at Montclair State University (NJ) and the Atlantic Center for the Arts.

The National Civil War Project is a radical multi-city, multi-year collaboration between four universities and five performing arts organizations to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War. The National Civil War Project includes the commissioning of 12 original works for the stage as well as the creation of new arts-integrated academic programs. Locally, Arena Stage is in partnership with Lerman and The George Washington University. The overarching goal of the project is to find ways to continually interweave performance and scholarship, crossing traditional boundaries by bringing together the perspectives and resources of the artistic and academic communities in a wide-ranging, humanities-based exploration of civil conflict. For more information visit www.civilwarproject.org.

Liz Lerman (*Director/Choreographer*) is a choreographer, performer, writer, educator and speaker, and the recipient of numerous honors, including a 2002 MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship, a 2011 United States Artists Ford Fellowship in Dance and the 2014 Dance/USA Honor Award. A key aspect of her artistry is opening her process to various publics from shipbuilders to physicists, construction workers to ballerinas, resulting in both research and outcomes that are participatory, relevant, urgent and usable by others. She founded Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 1976 and led it until 2011. Current projects involve *Healing Wars*; the genre-twisting work *Blood Muscle Bone* with Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Urban Bush Women; and an online project called *The Treadmill Tapes: Ideas on the Move*. In 2013 she curated Wesleyan University's symposium "Innovations: Intersection of Art and Science," bringing together teams of artists and scientists from North America to present their methods and findings. She teaches her Critical Response Process around the world. Her third book, *Hiking the Horizontal: Field Notes from a Choreographer*, was published in 2011 by Wesleyan University Press.

The company of *Healing Wars* (in alphabetical order), as of 5/13/14:

Marjani Forte is a former member of Urban Bush Women and co-founder of LOVE|FORTÉ. Marjani has taught master classes and workshops across the U.S. and beyond including the American Dance Festival, South America and Germany. Choreographically, she has presented for Danspace Project, Kelly Strayhorn Theatre and New York Live Arts as a Fresh Tracks Resident Artist. Marjani was a resident artist at Washington D.C.'s Dance Place and is a recent recipient of the LMCC Manhattan Community Arts Fund Grant, Foundation of Contemporary Arts Grant for her work *being Here*. She is currently serving as Adjunct Lecturer at Hunter College City University of New York.

George Hirsch graduated from the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, receiving an Honors Degree in Dance. Since then he has had the privilege of dancing for Artichoke Dance Company, dance-Tactics, David Capps/Dances, Daniel Gwirtzman Dance, Eva Dean Dance, GoCo, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Liz Lerman and Regina Nejman and Company. He has taught workshops at Hunter College, Wesleyan and University of Nevada-Las Vegas. When he is not dancing, you can find George teaching yoga at various studios around NYC.

Paul Hurley is a Washington, D.C. native and graduated from Duke Ellington School of the Arts in 2004. Following this, he joined the Navy as a Gunners Mate (GM) with ambitions of becoming an elite Navy SEAL. Paul was injured overseas while attached to Mobile Security Squadron 3 Detachment, Bahrain and was flown back to the states where he recovered at Walter Reed and Bethesda Military Hospitals. After medically retiring from the Navy in 2009, he graduated from George Mason University with a degree in Geospatial Communication in 2011. Currently, Paul works for MITRE, a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), and is working to launch a distribution brewery in Northern Virginia called CasaNoVa Brewing LLC.

Full company announced for *Healing Wars* at Arena Stage—Page 3

Ted Johnson has danced with Liz Lerman since 2001, performing in and around D.C. in many works, including *Small Dances About Big Ideas*, *Ferocious Beauty: Genome* (as Gregor Mendel) and *The Matter of Origins*. He spent over two years in Punchdrunk's off-Broadway sensation *Sleep No More* at the McKittrick Hotel. A fixture in the downtown dance scene in NYC for more than two decades, he performed in the companies of Bebe Miller and Ralph Lemon, as well as many independents including David Alan Harris, Sarah Pogostin, Laurie DeVito, Eun Me Ahn, Cheng Chieh-Yu, Colleen Thomas and Bill Young. His improvisational work has been featured in collaborative ventures onstage with Kirstie Simson, Gabriel Forestieri and Kayoko Nakajima. He has been a student of Klein Technique with Barbara Mahler and Susan Klein for over two decades and maintains a practice in contact improvisation.

Bill Pullman started acting professionally in the New York theater in 1983 and shortly after began his film career which currently spans over 60 features including *Independence Day*, *Lost Highway* and *Bottle Shock*. In D.C., he has performed at the Kennedy Center (Helen Hayes nomination) and the Folger Theatre. Recently he was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for his performance in NYC last fall in Beth Henley's play *The Jacksonian* (with Ed Harris and Amy Madigan, named in *The New York Times* "10 Best Plays of 2013"). Currently he is shooting *American Ultra* (with Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart). Movies to be released in the coming year are *The Equalizer* (with Denzel Washington) and *Cymbeline* (with Ethan Hawke). He is married to Tamara Pullman and they have three children.

Tamara Hurwitz Pullman has been dancing with Liz Lerman since 2005. In the D.C.-area she performed in Liz's work *A Matter of Origins* and Peter DiMuro's *Funny Uncles*. She has also danced with companies including the Jose Limon Dance Company (New York), Ann Vachon Dance Conduit (Philadelphia), Pacific Dance Ensemble and Rosanna Gamson Worldwide (Los Angeles). As a dance educator, Tamara has taught dance in many different settings ranging from dance conservatories to rural storefronts and urban YMCAs. *Healing Wars* marks the first theater project that she and her husband, Bill Pullman, have worked on together in 35 years.

Alli Ross is a performing and teaching artist residing in Boston, MA. *Healing Wars* is her Washington D.C./Arena Stage debut and her first performance project with Liz Lerman. Alli originated the role of Lady Macduff in *Sleep No More*, the immersive dance theater production (American Repertory Theater/Punchdrunk/Emursive). In Boston, Alli is a recent recipient of two grants that have launched Excavate, a dance theater collective making outdoor site-specific performance. She teaches Movement for Actors at Boston Conservatory, holds a BA in Anthropology and Dance and a MEd from HGSE in Arts in Education.

Samantha Speis has worked with Gesel Mason, The Dance Exchange and Deborah Hay (as part of the Sweet Day curated by Ralph Lemon at the MoMA). She has been a member of the internationally acclaimed dance company Urban Bush Women since 2008. She was the 2012 recipient of the Alvin Ailey New Directions Choreography Lab. Her work has been featured in venues nationally and internationally, including the Kennedy Center (Millennium Stage) and Dance Place. Samantha's solo, *The Way It Was, and Now*, commissioned by Jerome Foundation, was performed at Danspace Project for the Parallels Platform Series and was later invited to the Kaay Fecc Dance Festival in Dakar, Senegal. She has been a guest artist and taught workshops throughout the U.S., South America, Senegal and Europe. Upcoming projects include Jawole Zollar and Liz Lerman's *Blood Muscle Bone*.

Keith A. Thompson danced internationally for Trisha Brown Dance Company from 1992-2001 and currently serves on faculty at Mason Gross School of the Arts. He performs and rehearsal directs for Liz Lerman; has his own company, danceTactics performance group; and teaches globally including as master company teacher for Sasha Waltz & Dancers (Berlin) and TsEKh Summer Dance School in Moscow, Russia. Keith has been on faculty at American Dance Festival and at several national universities and his choreography has been featured at Harvard University, Montpellier International Dance Festival, Dance Theater Workshop Guest Artist Series in New York, The Wilma Theater in Philadelphia, Dixon Place in NYC, Jersey Moves Festival at NJPAC in Newark and the 2011 Annual Aging in America Conference.

Full company announced for *Healing Wars* at Arena Stage—Page 4

The creative team for *Healing Wars* includes Set & Costume Designer **David Israel Reynoso**, Lighting Designer **Heidi Eckwall**, Sound Designer **Darron L. West**, Media Designer **Kate Freer**, Stage Manager **Olivia O'Brien** and Production Manager **Meg Kelly**.

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

Healing Wars was commissioned by The George Washington University. Additional commissioning support is provided by the David Bruce Smith Foundation along with the Maggie Allesee Center for Choreography at Florida State University and Peak Performances at Montclair State University (NJ).

The presentation of *Healing Wars* was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Healing Wars Special Events

Cell Phones for Soldiers

Throughout the run of *Healing Wars*, Arena Stage will host a collection drive for Cell Phones for Soldiers, a nonprofit dedicated to providing cost-free communication services to active-duty military members and veterans. Simply drop off used cell phones at Visitor Services when you come to see *Healing Wars* and Arena Stage will deliver all donations. Proceeds from the phones are used to purchase prepaid international calling cards for troops and provide emergency financial assistance to veterans.

Post-Show Conversation—Thursday, June 19 following the 8:00 p.m. performance

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff. Thursday, June 19 following the 8:00 p.m. performance.

Production Information

Healing Wars

Conceived and directed by Liz Lerman

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

ABOUT: 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*), 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 presents her singular aesthetic to audiences in this exciting world premiere about how we experience and recover from war.

COMPANY:

Marjani Forte
George Hirsch
Tamara Hurwitz Pullman
Ted Johnson
Bill Pullman
Alli Ross
Samantha Speis
Keith A. Thompson

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Full company announced for *Healing Wars* at Arena Stage—Page 5

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director/Choreographer: Liz Lerman
Set & Costume Designer: David Israel Reynoso
Lighting Designer: Heidi Eckwall
Sound Designer: Darron L. West
Media Designer: Kate Freer
Stage Manager: Olivia O'Brien
Production Manager: Meg Kelly

Plan Your Visit

TICKETS: For information on savings programs such as student discounts, Southwest Nights, Pay-Your-Age tickets and Hero's Discounts, visit 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**

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

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
Full calendar: tickets.arenastage.org/single/psDetail.aspx?psn=15870

Open-captioned performance: 6/26 at 8:00 p.m.
Audio-described performance: 6/28 at 2:00 p.m.

CATWALK CAFÉ: In lieu of regular Café service, convenient **boxed meals** are available for pre-order only for just \$17. These meals include a wrap or sandwich combined with a side item and dessert. Regular concessions will still be available for day-of purchase. To reserve, visit tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=1002.

To **pre-order drinks** for up to 50% savings (\$6 house wine and beer), visit tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=1007.

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.

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Full company announced for *Healing Wars* at Arena Stage—Page 6

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, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, 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. Arena Stage impacts the lives of more than 20,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org.

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