

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 18, 2013

FULL COMPANY ANNOUNCED FOR
MUSIC-FILLED ADAPTATION OF BERTOLT BRECHT'S
MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN
STARRING ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE KATHLEEN TURNER
DIRECTED BY MOLLY SMITH
JANUARY 31-MARCH 9, 2014

*** Noted actor Jack Willis joins previously announced Rick Foucheux, Meg Gillentine, Nehal Joshi, Nicholas Rodriguez and Erin Weaver in epic production featuring more than 10 pieces of original music ***

(Washington, D.C.) Artistic Director Molly Smith tackles a unique, in-the-round staging of Bertolt Brecht's powerhouse anti-war play *Mother Courage and Her Children* at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater. Iconic stage and screen actress and Academy Award nominee Kathleen Turner returns to Arena Stage following her sold-out run of *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins* to make her professional singing debut as the tough-as-nails matriarch Mother Courage—a single mother determined to keep her family alive and her business afloat during war. Using the David Hare translation, the show fuses politics and satire to paint an unforgettable and provocative portrait of war, incorporating more than 10 pieces of original music composed in a rollicking, gypsy-punk style and performed by cast members doubling as musicians. *Mother Courage and Her Children* runs January 31-March 9, 2014 in the Fichandler Stage.

In a cast brimming with Arena Stage favorites, Mother Courage's children are played by Nehal Joshi (Arena's *The Music Man*, *Oklahoma!*) as youngest son Swiss Cheese, Nicholas Rodriguez (Arena's *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma!*) as eldest son Eilif and local talent Erin Weaver (Folger Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Arcadia*) in her Arena Stage debut as daughter Kattrin. The cast also features D.C.-area native Rick Foucheux (Arena's *Ah, Wilderness!*) as The Chaplain and Meg Gillentine (Arena's *Cabaret*, *Damn Yankees*) as Yvette along with the return of Jack Willis (Broadway's *Julius Caesar*), who last appeared at Arena Stage in *Book of Days* and most recently has been a leading company member of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as The Cook. Nathan Koci leads the ensemble as Music Coordinator along with Monalisa Arias, Lise Bruneau, Jed Feder, Rayanne Gonzales, Jacobi Howard, Dan Istrate, James Konicek, Jesse Terrill and John Leslie Wolfe.

"To stage *Mother Courage and Her Children* with Kathleen Turner and this host of artists is a galvanizing experience," shares Smith. "People who believe that they've seen *Mother Courage* before should forget everything that they've ever known about this show. We've assembled a dream team cast who, together with James Sugg's brilliant music, David Leong's imaginative movement work and Todd Rosenthal's rough and expansive use of the Fichandler, will make this an epic production. We are creating something that will be absolutely vital and exhilarating and terrifying."

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Full company announced for *Mother Courage and Her Children* at Arena Stage—Page 2

Smith joins forces with Composer and Musical Supervisor **James Sugg** (Pig Iron Theatre Company), who has created a wild and raucous score. Building on the reality that soldiers must often carry all of their belongings with them as they travel, cast members doubling as musicians will be wearing and carrying their instruments on their backs throughout the course of the show. A sampling of the boisterous onstage band will include Foucheux on tuba, Koci on accordion and trumpet, Arias on guitar, Feder on percussion, Istrate on accordion, Konicek on trombone and Terrill on viola, among others. Movement Director **David Leong** has constructed playful and dark movement pieces paired with Sugg's score. Leong led a series of workshops at Arena Stage throughout the past year featuring company members and more than a dozen colleagues and former students from Virginia Commonwealth University to create a specific movement vocabulary for this production.

Bertolt Brecht (*Playwright*) was born in Augsburg, Germany in February 1898 and was one of the country's most influential playwrights, poets and directors. He established himself as a playwright during the 1920s and early 1930s with plays such as *Baal*, *Man is Man*, *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Mother*. In 1933, as Hitler came to power in Germany, Brecht fled to Scandinavia before eventually settling in the USA where he remained until 1947. During the war years, he wrote many of his best known plays, including *The Life of Galileo*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. He returned to Europe in 1947 and shortly after his arrival formed the Berliner Ensemble. He died in Berlin on August 14th, 1956 but remains a hugely influential theater practitioner.

David Hare (*Translator*) has been called “one of the great post-war British playwrights.” Along with co-founding Portable Theatre Company and Joint Stock Theatre Group, he served as Resident Dramatist at the Royal Court Theatre in London and Resident Dramatist at the Nottingham Playhouse. His first play, *Slag*, was performed at the Hampstead Theatre Club in 1970. Subsequent works include *Knuckle*, *Fanshen*, *Plenty*, *Pravda: A Fleet Street Comedy*, *The Secret Rapture*, *Skylight*, *Amy's View* and *The Judas Kiss*. He has been Associate Director of the National Theatre since 1984 and was knighted in 1998.

Molly Smith (*Director*) has served as Artistic Director of Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. since 1998. Her directing credits include *Oklahoma!*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Great White Hope*, *The Music Man*, *Orpheus Descending*, *Legacy of Light*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Cabaret*, *An American Daughter*, *South Pacific*, *Agamemnon and His Daughters*, *Coyote Builds North America*, *All My Sons* and *How I Learned to Drive* at Arena Stage. Her directorial work has also been seen at the Shaw Festival in Canada, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, Centaur Theatre in Montreal and Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska, which she founded and ran from 1979-1998. Molly has been a leader in new play development for over 30 years. She is a great believer in first, second and third productions of new work and has championed projects like *How I Learned to Drive*; *Passion Play*, a cycle and *Next to Normal*. She has worked alongside playwrights Sarah Ruhl, Paula Vogel, Wendy Wasserstein, Lawrence Wright, Karen Zacarias, John Murrell, Eric Coble, Charles Randolph-Wright and many others. She led the re-invention of Arena Stage, focusing on the architecture and creation of the Mead Center for American Theater and by positioning Arena Stage as a national center for American artists. During her time with the company, Arena Stage has workshopped more than 100 productions, produced 22 world premieres, staged numerous second and third productions and been an important part of nurturing six projects that went on to have a life on Broadway. Following *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Molly will direct the world premiere of *Camp David* by Lawrence Wright at Arena Stage and *The Velocity of Autumn* on Broadway following its acclaimed run at Arena Stage in fall 2013.

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The cast of *Mother Courage and Her Children* (in alphabetical order)

Rick Foucheux (*The Chaplain*) appeared in Arena Stage's 2012 Eugene O'Neill Festival as the patriarch Nat Miller in *Ah, Wilderness!*. His many other appearances here include *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia*; *The Chosen* (with Theater J); *R. Buckminster Fuller*; and as Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. Rick was seen recently in *The Apple Family* rep at Studio Theatre, *Glengarry Glen Ross* at Roundhouse Theatre and *Stupid Fucking Bird* at Woolly Mammoth where he is a company member. Last fall he portrayed Alexander Graham Bell in the one-man show *Bell* at the National Geographic Society. Later this season he will appear as the title character in *Freud's Last Session* at Theater J. Rick is a Helen Hayes Awardee and a Lunt-Fontanne Fellow of the Ten Chimneys Foundation.

Meg Gillentine (*Yvette*) is thrilled to be back at Arena Stage where she was last seen as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* (Helen Hayes Nomination, Best Actress) and Lola in *Damn Yankees* (Helen Hayes Award, Best Actress). On Broadway she played Cassandra in *Cats*, and also appeared in *Fosse* and *The Frogs*. She was in both the first national tours of *Fosse* and *The Producers*. She has also performed regionally at Baltimore Center Stage (Gladys in *The Pajama Game*), Reprise (Lola in *Damn Yankees*, Bianca/Lois in *Kiss Me Kate*, Ovation Nomination, Best Actress), Pasadena Playhouse (*Dangerous Beauty*) and Atlanta Lyric (Ulla in *The Producers*). Film credits include *The Producers*, *Madea's Witness Protection* with Tyler Perry and *Every Little Step*. TV credits include *Sleepy Hollow*. She is a graduate of New York University.

Nehal Joshi (*Swiss Cheese*) has appeared at Arena Stage in *The Music Man*, *Oklahoma!* and *Señor Discretion Himself*. Select D.C. credits include *Mister Roberts* (Kennedy Center), *Recent Tragic Events* (Woolly Mammoth), *Carousel* (Olney) and *Mad Dancers* (Theater J). Broadway credits include *Les Misérables* (original revival cast) and *The Threepenny Opera* (Roundabout). Off-Broadway he has been seen in *Working* (Prospect/59e59) and *Falling for Eve* (York). Select regional credits include *The Jungle Book* (Goodman Theatre/Huntington Theatre), *Working* (original 2008 revision; Old Globe, Asolo Rep), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Dallas Theatre Center) and the 25th and 26th annual Humana Festival of New American Plays (Actors Theatre of Louisville). Film/TV credits include roles in *Blackout* (BET), *The Wire* (HBO) and *Submissions Only*. Video game credits include *World of Warcraft: Cataclysm*. He is a graduate from Robinson Secondary School and James Madison University. He was the recipient of a Drama Desk Award last year.

Nathan Koci (*Music Coordinator/Ensemble*) makes his Arena Stage debut. He was last seen in D.C. as the Instrumental Songman in the first national tour of *War Horse* at the Kennedy Center. Other theater credits include a roving NYC production of *Days of the Commune* in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement and the role of the Big Stone, as well as composer/music director, in Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* at PURE Theatre in Charleston, SC. A relative newcomer to playing music on the stage, Nathan is most often a Brooklyn-based composer and musician, performing in a variety of settings from folk music and jazz to Broadway pits and experimental chamber music.

Nicholas Rodriguez (*Eilif*) was recently seen at Arena Stage as Freddy in *My Fair Lady*, Fabrizio Nacarelli in *The Light in the Piazza* and Curly in *Oklahoma!* (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical). On Broadway he performed the title role in *Tarzan*. Off-Broadway, he has appeared in *The Toxic Avenger*, *Almost Heaven*, *Bajour* and *Collete Collage*. Tours include *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Jesus), *Evita* (Che) and *Hair* (Claude). Regional credits include *The Ten Commandments* (Kodak Theatre); *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *Damn Yankees*; *Cinderella*; *South Pacific*; *Master Class*; *Love, Valour, Compassion!*; and *The King and I*. He was in the film *Sex and the City 2* and featured on the film's soundtrack. He is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Nick Chavez on ABC's *One Life to Live* (GLAAD Media Award). Nicholas is the Artistic Director of the Broadway Dreams Foundation and volunteers for The Harvey Milk School in New York City and SMYAL in Washington, D.C., for which he received the 2011 Outstanding Community Ally Award. He holds a BM and MM in Vocal Performance from the University of Texas at Austin.

Full company announced for *Mother Courage and Her Children* at Arena Stage—Page 4

Kathleen Turner (*Mother Courage*) returns to Arena Stage after starring in last season's box office hit *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins*. She also starred as Molly Ivins in the world premiere of the production at Philadelphia Theatre Company, as well as performances at Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. Kathleen has starred on Broadway in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, for which she received a Tony nomination; *Indiscretions*, *The Graduate* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, for which she received a second Tony nomination. She also starred on Broadway in the world premiere of a play called *HIGH* and completed a tour of *HIGH* in various cities all over the country. Last year she directed and starred in *The Killing of Sister George* at The Long Wharf Theatre. As a screen icon Kathleen has garnered critical acclaim for her performances in various movies including *Body Heat*, for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe; *Romancing the Stone* and *Prizzi's Honor*, which earned her a Golden Globe Award for each; *Peggy Sue Got Married*, which brought Kathleen both an Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe nomination; and *War of the Roses*, and yet another Golden Globe nomination. Kathleen's extensive film credits also include *The Man with Two Brains* with Steve Martin; *Jewel of the Nile* with Michael Douglas; *The Accidental Tourist*; *V.I. Warshawski*; John Waters' *Serial Mom*; *Naked in New York*; *Moonlight and Valentino*; *The Real Blonde*; and Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides*. She had a starring role in *The Perfect Family*, which opened in movie theaters in 2011, and received great reviews for the film. Kathleen had a major recurring role in Showtime's hit series *Californication*. In addition to her stage and film credits, Kathleen wrote of her many accomplishments and life experiences in her 2008 autobiography *Send Yourself Roses: Thoughts on My Life, Love, and Leading Roles*, which secured a position on the *New York Times* Best-Seller List.

Erin Weaver (*Katrin*) makes her Arena Stage debut. This past fall she portrayed Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Folger Theatre where she also appeared as Luciana in *The Comedy of Errors* and Thomasina in *Arcadia* (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Supporting Actress). Other area performances include Amy in *Company*, Cathy in *Last Five Years* and Kira in *Xanadu* (Helen Hayes nomination) all at Signature Theatre; as well as Meg in *A Wrinkle in Time* at Round House Theatre. Erin started her professional career playing young Cosette/Eponine in the first national tour of *Les Misérables* and went on to perform regionally at the California Shakespeare Theater, Arden Theatre, People's Light and Theatre Company (where she received a Barrymore Award for their production of *Cinderella*, Best Ensemble) among others.

Jack Willis (*The Cook*) returns to Area Stage, where he previously appeared in *Book of Days*, *Of Mice and Men* (Helen Hayes nomination) and *Agamemnon and His Daughters*. Recent work includes three seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival appearing in *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, *The White Snake*, *All the Way*, *Henry IV, Part Two* and *Love's Labor's Lost*. On Broadway he has been seen in *Julius Caesar*, *The Crucible*, *'Art'* and *The Old Neighborhood*. His off-Broadway credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *World of Mirth*, *The Iphigenia Cycle* and *Valhalla*. He has appeared in more than 200 productions worldwide and has been a member at American Conservatory Theater, American Repertory Theater, Trinity Repertory Company and Dallas Theater Center. Film and TV credits include *Toy Story 3*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *The Out-of-Towners*, *Love Hurts*, *I Come in Peace*, *Problem Child*, *Law & Order*, *Ed* and *Dallas*. Jack was awarded a Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship in its inaugural year at Ten Chimneys Foundation.

The creative team for *Mother Courage and Her Children* also includes Set Designer **Todd Rosenthal**, Costume Designer **Joseph P. Salasovich**, Lighting Designer **Nancy Schertler**, Sound Designer **Timothy M. Thompson**, Wig Designer **Anne Nesmith**, Dramaturg **Mark Bly**, Assistant Fight & Movement Consultant **Brad Willcuts**, Stage Manager **Susan R. White**, Assistant Stage Manager **Kurt Hall** and Assistant Stage Manager **Marne Anderson**.

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

For video of Turner discussing this production visit arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/mother-courage-and-her-children/media/.

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Full company announced for *Mother Courage and Her Children* at Arena Stage—Page 5

Mother Courage and Her Children is generously sponsored by Hank & Charlotte Schlosberg, Margot Kelly and WAMU.

Mother Courage and Her Children Special Events

The Art of War—Saturday, March 1, 2014 following the 2:00 p.m. matinee

The artistic response to war over the centuries has run the gamut, from the patriotic history plays of Shakespeare to the protest songs of the Vietnam War. It is through the arts—theater, visual arts, dance, music—that we are best able to express the agony and triumph of battle, the bonds of the men and women who serve and the strength and sacrifice of the families who stay behind. Join us after the 2:00 p.m. matinee of Brecht's masterful anti-war play for a look at artists' reactions to war over the years. Panelists include production dramaturg **Mark Bly**; Director of the Center for the Study of Modern Art and Curator at Large for The Phillips Collection **Klaus Ottmann**, Ph.D.; Coordinator of Composition Program and Music Theory Studies at Howard University **Dr. Anthony Randolph** and The Washington Ballet Artistic Director **Septime Webre**.

Piano Bar—Wednesday, February 26, 2014 following the 7:30 p.m. performance

Following the success of last season's post-show piano bars, Arena Stage continues the popular piano bar tradition this season by hosting a free event during the run of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Grab a drink and gather 'round the piano for show tunes hosted by Joshua Morgan with special guests in the Grand Lobby. No ticket necessary.

Post-Show Discussions with Artists and Staff

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation. February 11, 12 & 19 following the noon matinee; February 20 following the 8:00 p.m. performance and February 25 following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

Production Information

Mother Courage and Her Children

By Bertolt Brecht

Translated by David Hare

Directed by Molly Smith

January 31-March 9, 2014 in the Fichandler Stage

ABOUT: 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. 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.

CAST:

The Chaplain: Rick Foucheux

Yvette: Meg Gillentine

Swiss Cheese: Nehal Joshi

Eilif: Nicholas Rodriguez

Mother Courage: Kathleen Turner

Katrin: Erin Weaver

The Cook: Jack Willis

Ensemble:

Nathan Koci (Music Coordinator)

Monalisa Arias

Lise Bruneau

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Jed Feder
Rayanne Gonzales
Jacobi Howard
Dan Istrate
James Konicek
Jesse Terrill
John Leslie Wolfe

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director: Molly Smith
Composer & Musical Supervisor: James Sugg
Movement Director: David Leong
Set Designer: Todd Rosenthal
Costume Designer: Joseph P. Salasovich
Lighting Designer: Nancy Schertler
Sound Designer: Timothy M. Thompson
Wig Designer: Anne Nesmith
Dramaturg: Mark Bly
Assistant Fight & Movement Consultant: Brad Willcuts
Stage Manager: Susan R. White
Assistant Stage Manager: Kurt Hall
Assistant Stage Manager: Marne Anderson

Plan Your Visit

TICKETS: Tickets for *Mother Courage and Her Children* are \$50-\$99, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. 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.
Weekday matinees at noon on Tuesday, 2/11; Wednesday 2/12 & Wednesday, 2/19
Full calendar: tickets.arenastage.org/single/psDetail.aspx?psn=16033

Open-captioned performance: 2/19 at 7:30 p.m. & 2/27 at 8:00 p.m.

Audio-described performance: 3/1 at 2:00 p.m.

CATWALK CAFÉ: Prix fixe meals are now available at the Catwalk Café and include a choice of soup or salad, main entrée and dessert. Pre-ordered meals are only \$21 (\$23 if purchased that day). To pre-order and see the menu, call 202-488-3300 or visit arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/the-cafe/. The Catwalk Café opens two hours before the show, and reservations are recommended.

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To **pre-order drinks** from the Catwalk Café for up to 50% savings (\$5 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.

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 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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