

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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ROBERT BARRY FLEMING JOINS ARENA STAGE AS DIRECTOR OF ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater's **Artistic Director Molly Smith** announces that theater artist **Robert Barry Fleming** has joined the company as Director of Artistic Programming as of April 2014. Fleming has worked extensively with theaters across the country as a director, writer, choreographer, producer and performer and has held positions at the University of San Diego and the University of Memphis. He returns to Arena Stage following his previous collaboration with Smith as assistant director for *The Music Man*.

"I have known Robert for years and am thrilled to have him join Arena Stage," says **Smith**. "He brings a wealth of experience both artistically and administratively. His is a strong and intelligent voice. I'm pleased that he has chosen to take the next step in his career with Arena."

As Director of Artistic Programming, Fleming reports directly to Smith and is responsible for implementing the artistic vision of Arena Stage by helping to develop the strategy and programming in order to advance the theater's position artistically, financially and in the field. He will lead the efforts of Arena Stage's Artistic Development department, which includes the American Voices New Play Institute, dramaturgy, casting and audience enrichment activities.

"Molly's vision of a national center for American Theater and Arena's mission, vision and core values have always been an inspiration to many of us who have followed the work of Arena Stage," shares **Fleming**. "I am honored to have the opportunity to contribute to that illustrious history and Arena's legacy of innovative leadership in the field of artistic development and programming."

Fleming joins the artistic team at Arena Stage this month and will continue with several artistic commitments elsewhere through the fall. He succeeds David Snider, who has transitioned to Cambridge, New York to become the Executive Director of Hubbard Hall Community Arts Center.

Fleming was an Associate Professor and Chair of the Theatre Arts and Performance Studies Department at the University of San Diego and served on the USD/Old Globe MFA Faculty. He was recently represented off-Broadway as an associate producer for the NYC revival of Tennessee Williams' *The Two-Character Play* starring Amanda Plummer and Brad Dourif. Robert's acting work includes the films *L.A. Confidential*, *Twilight of the Gods*, the Broadway shows *Stand-Up Tragedy* and *Ragtime* and the original production of George C. Wolfe's *Jelly's Last Jam*. A freelance director, writer and actor, he has worked in many of the leading resident theaters across the country including Arena Stage, The NYSF/Public Theater, Mark Taper Forum, Folger Theatre, Guthrie Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, A Contemporary Theatre, The Old Globe, Perseverance Theatre and Alabama Shakespeare Festival, as well as Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company and Center REP.

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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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