

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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**THE WASHINGTON POST THEATER CRITIC PETER MARKS
TO HOST THE SUMMIT
AN IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF D.C. THEATER IN THREE ACTS
FEATURING 17 RENOWNED THEATER ARTISTS
AT ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER**

***** Held February 17, March 24 and April 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle *****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces a rare opportunity for D.C.-area theatergoers to hear groups of distinguished actors, directors, playwrights and artistic directors discuss their work and the myriad challenges facing their art form, in a special series of three Monday evening panels entitled The Summit. Organized and moderated by *The Washington Post* Theater Critic **Peter Marks**, the three free installments will gather some of the region's most accomplished theater professionals to talk about everything from their passion for their craft to the problems of trying to lure new audiences to live theater.

Marks was approached last year by **Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith** with the idea of creating a series of evenings aimed at airing issues of particular concern to the American theater and its playgoers, in a convivial forum. "Out of Peter's own writing and through conversations with him it became clear that Washington is the perfect place to host in-depth discussions about the big issues we all face as a theater community," Smith shared.

"Nothing is more stimulating to me than conversations with smart theater people, and this feels like a great moment to talk about where Washington stands as a theater town," Marks added.

Joining Marks for the first edition of The Summit, **Monday, February 17**, will be some of the region's leading artistic directors. Along with **Smith**, participants will include **Michael Kahn** of the Shakespeare Theatre Company, **Ryan Rilette** of Round House Theatre, **Eric Schaeffer** of Signature Theatre, **Paul R. Tetreault** of Ford's Theatre and **Paata Tsikurishvili** of Synetic Theater.

Monday, March 24, The Summit will focus on actors. Gathering in the Kogod Cradle will be veteran stage, film and TV actress **Helen Carey**; Shakespeare and Studio Theatre stalwart **Tom Story**; Woolly Mammoth company member **Kimberly Gilbert**; Signature Theatre sensation **Nova Y. Payton**, who will be starring in Arena Stage's upcoming *Smokey Joe's Café*; and theater and TV star **Richard Thomas**.

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Peter Marks hosts in-depth D.C. theater exploration series The Summit—Page 2

For the final installment, **Monday, April 28**, The Summit will turn to playwrights and directors. The panel that evening will include **Rachel Grossman**, ringleader of the District's innovative audience participation troupe, dog & pony dc; **David Muse**, Studio Theatre artistic director and director of *Tribes*; frequent Woolly Mammoth director/playwright **Robert O'Hara** (*Antebellum* and *Bootycandy*); **Ari Roth**, Theater J artistic director and author of last season's *Andy in the Shadows*; and D.C.-area playwrights and members of Arena Stage's inaugural Playwrights' Arena collaborative writing group **Norman Allen** (*Nijinsky's Last Dance*) and **Jacqueline E. Lawton** (*The Hampton Years*).

Peter Marks is the theater critic for *The Washington Post*. Prior to joining *The Post* in 2002, he worked for a decade at *The New York Times*, where he served as the Off-Broadway drama critic. At *The Times*, he also worked as a theater reporter and covered the national news media in the 2000 presidential campaign. He previously was a reporter for the *Bergen Record* and *Newsday*, where he was on a team of reporters that shared a Pulitzer Prize for coverage of a New York subway accident. A graduate of Yale, he has also taught in the theater department and the honors program at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Follow him on twitter @petermarksdrama.

Plan Your Visit

TICKETS: Tickets for The Summit are **FREE**, but reservations are encouraged. Tickets may be reserved online at tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=40, by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth St., SW, D.C.

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.

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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