

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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December 12, 2013

FOLLOWING SOLD-OUT, CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED RUN AT ARENA STAGE

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
ESTELLE PARSONS
AND
TWO-TIME TONY AWARD® WINNER
STEPHEN SPINELLA
STAR IN
THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN
A NEW AMERICAN PLAY BY ERIC COBLE

TO OPEN AT BROADWAY'S BOOTH THEATRE APRIL 21, 2014
PREVIEWS BEGIN APRIL 1, 2014

DIRECTED BY ARENA STAGE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MOLLY SMITH
IN HER BROADWAY DEBUT

(Washington, D.C.) Following a sold-out, critically acclaimed run at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater in the Fall of 2013, **Larry Kaye and HOP Theatricals** and **Van Dean and The Broadway Consortium** announce that the new American play *The Velocity of Autumn* will begin previews Tuesday, April 1, 2014, at Broadway's **Booth Theatre** (222 West 45 Street) for a limited engagement. *The Velocity of Autumn* is a 90-minute powder keg dark comedy by **Eric Coble** that stars Academy Award winner **Estelle Parsons** (*Bonnie and Clyde*, "Roseanne") and two-time Tony Award winner **Stephen Spinella** (*Angels In America*, *Spring Awakening*), is directed by **Molly Smith** and will open Monday, April 21, 2014. *The Velocity of Autumn* will mark the Broadway debuts of Playwright **Eric Coble** and Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith**.

"Without a doubt, this is a big moment," comments **Smith**. "I could not be more excited to be at the helm of the 20th production from Arena Stage to move to Broadway in the company's 63-year history as a pioneering not-for-profit resident theater. It is a pleasure to be part of the small group of women who have had the opportunity to direct on Broadway."

She continues, "Eric's funny and moving story is alive in living rooms all over the country—these characters are having the discussions about life and old age with the clarity we wish we could have in our own lives. Estelle and Stephen are splendid, and Eric's play reminds us of our own crazy humanity."

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The Velocity of Autumn had its world premiere at Boise Contemporary Theatre in Idaho in April 2011, and played to sold-out audiences at Cleveland's Beck Center for the Arts in Ohio in April 2012. The Arena Stage production, featuring the same cast and creative team as the scheduled Broadway run, ran from September 6 through October 20, 2013 in the Kreeger Theater to critical and popular acclaim.

The Velocity of Autumn swirls around Alexandra, a 79-year-old artist in a showdown with her family over where she'll spend her remaining years. In Alexandra's corner are her wit, her volcanic passion and the fact that she's barricaded herself in her Brooklyn brownstone with enough Molotov cocktails to take out the block. But her children have their own secret weapon: estranged son Chris who returns after 20 years, crawls through Alexandra's second floor window, and becomes the family's unlikely mediator. No sooner are the words "Hi, Mom" uttered than the emotional bombs start detonating. ***The Velocity of Autumn*** is a wickedly funny and wonderfully touching discovery of the fragility and ferocity of life.

The Velocity of Autumn has scenic design by **Eugene Lee**, costume design by **Linda Cho**, lighting design by **Rui Rita**, sound design by **Darron L. West**, wig design by **Paul Huntley**, and casting by **Geoff Josselson**. ***The Velocity of Autumn*** is produced by **Larry Kaye & HOP Theatricals; Van Dean & The Broadway Consortium; Joan Raffé & Jhett Tolentino**; and **Rob Hinderliter & Dominick LaRuffa, Jr.**, in association with **KIRN Productions** and **Jonathan Demar**.

Tickets for ***The Velocity of Autumn*** are \$65 - \$135 and will go on sale through an exclusive Audience Rewards pre-sale Monday, December 16, 2013, at www.audincerewards.com. Tickets go on sale to the general public Friday, December 20, 2013, at Telecharge.com (212-239-6200 or 800-447-7400). The playing schedule for ***The Velocity of Autumn*** is as follows: Tuesday through Saturday at 8pm, with matinees Wednesday and Saturday at 2pm and Sunday at 3pm. Beginning April 22, 2014, the playing schedule is as follows: Tuesday and Thursday at 7pm, Wednesday at 7:30pm, Friday and Saturday at 8pm with matinees Wednesday and Saturday at 2pm and Sunday at 3pm. **Please note there will be no 2pm matinee Wednesday, April 2, and no performance Thursday, April 24.**

Of the Arena Stage production, critics raved:

"The team of Parsons and Spinella **feels right** for almost any occasion. You're in the presence of actors of the **top rank** under Molly Smith's **unassailable** direction." – ***The Washington Post***

"A **bracing, honest** and **deliciously funny** performance played with **wonderful grit** and **wit** by the **great actress** Estelle Parsons." – ***The New York Times***

"Estelle Parsons is **sublime** in a **delightfully nuanced performance** with **exuberance** and **sensitivity**." – ***Variety***

"Estelle Parsons **lights up the stage** in Eric Coble's **funny-bittersweet** new play." – ***The Baltimore Sun***

"**Funny, abrasive, and fierce**. Spinella is **flawless**." – ***Washingtonian***

"★★★★★ A **deliriously hilarious, wonderfully well-wrought** comedy, **exquisitely written**." – ***DC Metro Theater Arts***

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FOR THE VELOCITY OF AUTUMN WEBSITE PLEASE VISIT:

www.VelocityOfAutumnBroadway.com

BIOGRAPHIES

ESTELLE PARSONS (*Alexandra*) is most widely known for her Academy Award-winning performance in *Bonnie and Clyde* and her 10 years as Mother Bev on the hit sitcom “Roseanne.” In the theater, she is known for her portrayal of the tyrannical eighth grade teacher in Roberto Athayde’s classic about totalitarian power, *Miss Margarida’s Way*, which she performed on Broadway, all over the United States and in London, Dublin, Turkey and Australia. She has appeared in plays by the great writers of our time, including Edward Albee, Tennessee Williams, Dario Fo, Arthur Miller, Samuel Beckett, Paul Zindel and Horton Foote. Estelle starred in *August: Osage County* by Tracy Letts on Broadway for a year and on the road for a year. Most recently Estelle was seen in *Good People* by David Lindsay-Abaire and the George & Ira Gershwin musical, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* with Matthew Broderick. In 2012, she was directed by Neil LaBute in Marco Calvani’s *Things of This World*. As a director, she created the New York Shakespeare Festival Players for Joseph Papp in the 1980s. For two seasons, they performed Shakespeare on Broadway for New York City school students and their families in an effort to develop a multicultural audience for New York. She also directed Al Pacino in Oscar Wilde’s *Salome: the Reading* on Broadway. Estelle Parsons is a member of The Actors Studio and was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2004.

STEPHEN SPINELLA (*Chris*) won two consecutive Tony and Drama Desk Awards for the original Broadway productions of Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* plays, directed by George C. Wolfe; he was honored for playing the role of Prior Walter in both the first part (*Millennium Approaches*) and the second (*Perestroika*), which marked his Broadway debut. Stephen has since starred on Broadway in the Tony Award-winning musical *Spring Awakening*; revivals of *A View from the Bridge*, *Electra* and *Our Town* (with Paul Newman); and James Joyce’s *The Dead* (with Christopher Walken), for which he won a third Drama Desk Award, as well as an Outer Critics Circle Award, and was again a Tony nominee. Off-Broadway Stephen originated his role and won an Obie in *Love! Valour! Compassion!* with Nathan Lane. He also appeared in *A Question of Mercy*; and alongside Meryl Streep and Natalie Portman in *The Seagull*. In 2011 he starred in Tony Kushner’s new play *The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* and in 2012 he won a second Obie for *An Iliad*, a one-man retelling of Homer’s epic war poem created by Denis O’Hare and Lisa Peterson. His feature credits include *And the Band Played On*; *Virtuosity*; *Love! Valour! Compassion!*; *What the Deaf Man Heard*; *The Jackal*; *Great Expectations*; *Ravenous*; *Cradle Will Rock*; *Bubble Boy*; *Connie and Carla*; *And Then Came Love*; *Milk*; *Rubber*; and *Lincoln*. Stephen has guest-starred on television series such as “Frasier,” “Heroes,” “Grey’s Anatomy,” “Nip/Tuck” and “Alias.” He was a recurring character on “The Education of Max Bickford,” was seen in a guest arc on the Emmy Award-winning fifth season of “24,” and is currently a recurring character in USA Network’s “Royal Pains.”

ERIC COBLE (*Playwright*) Off-Broadway, Eric’s play *Bright Ideas* was produced by Manhattan Class Company directed by John Rando. Other plays include *A Girl’s Guide To Coffee*, *Stranded On Earth*, *Southern Rapture* and *My Barking Dog*, and have been performed in all 50 states as well as on five continents, including productions at Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, The Kennedy Center, Denver Center Theatre Company, Arena Stage, New York and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals, Alliance Theatre, Cleveland Play House, South Coast Repertory, Asolo Repertory, Indiana Repertory, Coterie Theatre and The Contemporary American Theatre Festival. Awards include an Emmy nomination, the AT&T Onstage Award, National Theatre Conference Playwriting Award, the AATE Distinguished Play Award for Best Adaptation, the Chorpensing Playwright Award for Body of Work, and the Cleveland Arts Prize and four Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants.

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MOLLY SMITH (*Director*) has served as Artistic Director of Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. since 1998. Smith's 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. Smith 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. This season at Arena, Ms. Smith directed *The Velocity of Autumn*, and will direct *Mother Courage and Her Children* with Kathleen Turner and the world premiere of *Camp David* by Lawrence Wright.

EUGENE LEE (*Set Designer*) is currently represented on Broadway and internationally by the musical *Wicked*. Recent Broadway credits include *The Other Place*, *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Eugene has been the production designer at *Saturday Night Live* since 1974. He holds BFA degrees from Art Institute of Chicago and Carnegie Mellon, an MFA from Yale and three honorary doctorates. He has received the Tony Award, American Theater Wing's Design Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award, Elliot Norton Prize for Sustained Achievement and Pell Award. He is a recent inductee into the Theater Hall of Fame. Eugene lives with his wife, Brooke, in Providence, RI where they raised their two sons.

LINDA CHO (*Costume Designer*) is currently represented on Broadway by *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. She has designed costumes for New York stages including Manhattan Theatre Club, Theater for a New Audience, Second Stage, Vineyard Theater, New York Theater Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company, Lincoln Center Theater and the Classic Stage Company. She has also designed for numerous regional theater companies including Arena Stage, The Guthrie, La Jolla Playhouse, Hartford Stage, The Goodman Theatre, The Old Globe, Washington DC's Shakespeare Theatre Company, Goodspeed Opera House and Long Wharf, as well as opera companies across the United States. Upcoming projects include *The Ghosts of Versailles* at LA Opera, *The Orphan of Zhao* at ACT. Linda holds a master of fine arts degree from the Yale School of Drama.

RUI RITA (*Lighting Designer*) Broadway design credits include *Present Laughter*, *Dividing the Estate*, *Old Acquaintance*, *Enchanted April*, *The Price* and *A Thousand Clowns*. His Off-Broadway premieres include Horton Foote's *The Old Friends* and *The Orphans' Home Cycle* (Hewes Award, Signature); *Nightingale* and *Moonlight and Magnolias* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Big Bill*, *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *Far East* and *Ancestral Voices* (Lincoln Center Theater); *The Day Emily Married* (Primary Stages); and *Dinner With Friends* (Variety Arts Center). Rui's Off-Broadway revivals include *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (Roundabout) and *Engaged* (Obie Award, Theatre for a New Audience). His additional Off-Broadway and regional credits include Second Stage, New York Shakespeare Festival/The Public Theater, Alley, American Conservatory Theater, Center Stages, Ford's Theatre, Goodman, Hartford Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, The Kennedy Center, mark Taper Forum, Old Globe, Westport Country Playhouse, Williamston Theatre Festival and Arena Stage.

DARRON L WEST (*Sound Designer*) is a Tony and Obie Award-winning sound designer whose work for theater and dance has been heard in over 500 productions on Broadway and Off, nationally and internationally. His other accolades include the 2010 Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award, the 2006 Lucille Lortel and

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AUDELCO Awards, the 2004 and 2005 Henry Hewes Design Award, the Entertainment Design Magazine EDDY Award and he is a proud recipient of the 2012 Princess Grace Statuette.

PAUL HUNTLEY (*Wig Designer*), London-born, has worked on hundreds of Broadway shows since his 1972 arrival in New York, most memorably the original productions of *Amadeus*, *Cats*, *Evita*, *Les Misérables*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Producers* and *Hairspray*. A recipient of the Drama Desk and Tony Awards, he has also worked with some of the most legendary leading ladies of the cinema, ranging from Bette Davis, Mae West, Marlene Dietrich and Vivien Leigh to Jane Fonda, Faye Dunaway, Glenn Close and Jessica Lange. Current shows include *Bullets Over Broadway*, *Big Fish* and *Cinderella*.

LARRY KAYE (*Producer*) is a Tony Award nominated Producer and the Principal of HOP Theatricals LLC. On Broadway, Larry has produced a wide variety of plays and musicals, including *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* starring Daniel Radcliffe and Tony Award winner John Larroquette; Green Day's *American Idiot*; and *Oleanna* starring Bill Pullman and Julia Stiles. Other Broadway projects include *The Trip to Bountiful*, starring Tony Award-winning actress Cicely Tyson, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Vanessa Williams; and *Blithe Spirit* starring Tony Award-winning actress Angela Lansbury. Larry was also a producer of Off-Broadway's *ROOMS*, a rock romance which received an Outer Critics Circle nomination. Earlier this year, Larry produced *Karaoke Night*, benefitting A BroaderWay Foundation, the charity dedicated to offering girls from urban communities an outlet for self-expression and creativity through art-centered programs, founded by Tony Award winner Idina Menzel and Taye Diggs. Larry is also a book writer and lyricist of *The Tapioca Miracle*, a new musical he has co-written with *The Velocity of Autumn* playwright Eric Coble and composer Dan Kazemi. Larry is a proud member of The Broadway League. He holds a law degree from the Washington College of Law at the American University, and has been a practicing employment law and civil rights litigation attorney for more than 20 years. Larry is a recipient of the Attorney of the Year award by the Washington, D.C. affiliate of the National Employment Lawyers Association.

VAN DEAN/THE BROADWAY CONSORTIUM (*Producer*) TBC was co-founded by Van Dean and Kenny Howard and is a Tony Award-winning producer of *The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess* and has 3 other Tony Award nominations for the revivals of *Evita*, Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Co-founder Van Dean has an additional Tony nomination for *Catch Me If You Can*. Other Broadway: *Matilda*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Chinglish*, and *Big Fish*. London: *Master Class* with Tyne Daly in the West End. Van Dean co-conceived and, with TBC, co-produced *From Broadway With Love: A Benefit Concert For Sandy Hook* featuring 100 Broadway stars, a 40 piece orchestra and 300 children from Newtown. *From Broadway With Love* was a one night only concert that was later aired on PBS and will soon be released on DVD, BluRay and CD. Van was a lead producer of Off-Broadway's *ROOMS* a rock romance (Outer Critics Circle and Helen Hayes Award nominations) as well as *Saint Heaven* and *Alive In The World*. Broadway Records, a division of The Broadway Consortium, received a 2014 Grammy nomination for their recording of *Matilda*, has released cast albums for shows such as *Bonnie & Clyde*, *How To Succeed...* (with Nick Jonas) and *Lysistrata Jones* and has executive produced solos albums from many notable Broadway artists including Patti LuPone, Norbert Leo Butz, Laura Osnes, Christiane Noll, Faith Prince, Aaron Tveit, Laura Benanti, Bebe Neuwirth, Sierra Boggess and Andrea McArdle. Van and Kenny are members of The Broadway League. Van is also a member of the Dramatist Guild and is Chairman of the Theater Arts Committee of the 12.14 Foundation which is dedicated to building a new performing arts center in Newtown, CT.

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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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