

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER ANNOUNCES PARTICIPATING PROJECTS FOR THE 2014/15 KOGOD CRADLE SERIES

**\*\*\* Selected projects include a contemporary opera from UrbanArias, a two-person drama from The Wild Root Company and a musical play about the life of Tennessee Williams \*\*\***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces three projects that have been selected for the 2014/15 Kogod Cradle Series as part of the American Voices New Play Institute. Focused on the development of new and emerging work by artists from throughout Greater Washington and around the country, this series of readings and workshops invites artists and audiences to actively explore the development process.

The Series will feature staged, developmental workshop presentations of all three projects and will kick off with **Room at the End of the Hall**, a two-person play by Rocco Natale about estranged twin brothers and their troubled past, produced by The Wild Root Company. This will be followed by **Blue Viola**, a contemporary opera from UrbanArias featuring a libretto by Matt Boresi and a blues-infused score by Peter Hilliard about the theft of a supposedly priceless viola. The Series concludes with Moon Lake Productions' **A House of Glass**, a musical play about the life of Tennessee Williams, featuring a book and lyrics by Shelley Herman Gillon and Harriet McFaul Pilger and music by Paul Leavitt.

"One of my favorite parts of Arena's mission statement is, 'We produce and present all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit,'" says Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "That is what the Kogod Cradle Series is all about. Nurturing this developing work gives new voices a forum to explore and experiment. I'm eagerly looking forward to hearing these voices and watching them soar."

The selected artists will benefit from the opportunity to rehearse, workshop, perform and discuss their work in the Mead Center's intimate 200-seat Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle, a space specifically designed to support the development of new American theater, and will also receive support from Institute Dramaturg **Jocelyn Clarke**.

"I am ecstatic that we have the opportunity to share our resources with these extraordinary artists," adds Director of Artistic Programming **Robert Barry Fleming**. "Their work is sure to inspire audiences who share my enthusiasm for the inventive work traditionally associated with the Kogod Cradle Series, an initiative dedicated to the process of inquiry that is essential to the development of innovative new work."

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### **2014/15 Kogod Cradle Series\***

#### **The Wild Root Company's *Room at the End of the Hall***

**By Rocco Natale**

**January 15-18, 2015**

A gripping new 75-minute two-hander from emerging playwright Rocco Natale, currently in development in collaboration with The Wild Root Company, *Room at the End of the Hall* transports audiences to the late-night shore of a weathered lake house on Cape Cod where estranged brothers Doug and Malky have returned to bury the ashes of their childhood caretaker. But tonight, a simple act of closure unearths the remains of a troubled past and an unsettling force that must be reckoned with before daybreak. [wildroot.org](http://wildroot.org)

#### **UrbanArias' *Blue Viola***

**Libretto by Matt Boresi**

**Score by Peter Hilliard**

**Directed by Tazewell Thompson**

**January 31-February 1, 2015**

*Blue Viola* is a newly-commissioned opera with a libretto by Matt Boresi and a score by Peter Hilliard. *Blue Viola* tells the true story of a supposedly priceless viola that was stolen from a player of the Chicago Symphony in the 90's. UrbanArias, the commissioning and producing company, is at the forefront of American opera companies that produce new work, and is constantly seeking compelling and vibrant sung stories to produce. [urbanarias.org](http://urbanarias.org)

#### **Moon Lake Productions' *A House of Glass***

**Book and lyrics by Shelley Herman Gillon and Harriet McFaul Pilger**

**Music by Paul Leavitt**

**Directed by Matt Cowart**

**Featuring Joshua Morgan as Tennessee Williams**

**February 5-8, 2015**

This musical play about the life of Tennessee Williams---the complex, driven, flamboyant and prolific genius who created many of the seminal works of the American stage and screen---explores his family archetypes, his agent and his longtime companion and how they gave rise to his indelible characters. *A House of Glass* also examines his sexual compulsion, his long, hard slide into addiction and his redemption through the power of his work. The music covers a wide range in the American canon, from ballads, ragtime, Dixieland, rhythm & blues and full-on Broadway musical numbers. [tomtotenn.com](http://tomtotenn.com)

Tickets for the Kogod Cradle Series are \$10 and free to subscribers and members. For up-to-date information on the Series and to purchase tickets, visit [arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/the-cradle-series/index.shtml](http://arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/the-cradle-series/index.shtml). Tickets may also be purchases by phone at 202-488-3300.

**The Kogod Cradle Series is generously sponsored by Arlene and Robert Kogod.**

*\*Titles, artists and dates are subject to change.*

***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 thousands of 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](http://arenastage.org).

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