

# 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 65TH SEASON FEATURING  
FIVE WORLD PREMIERES, TWO MUSICALS, THREE COMEDIES AND  
A 25-WRITER COMMISSION FOR THE NATIONAL CIVIL WAR PROJECT

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith reveals the 2014/15 season lineup for the company's 65th season and fifth year in the Mead Center for American Theater. As a national center focused on showcasing American voices and artists, this season is designed with range through productions that are emotional, uplifting, funny and thought-provoking.

"It is remarkable to think of Arena Stage's contribution to the American theater over the past 64 seasons, and our 65th year aims to honor that history and revel in creating new and inspiring work that challenges us to keep pursuing excellence for our committed Washington audiences," Smith states.

She continues, "The season boasts five world premieres: **Katori Hall's** beautiful family-drama *The Blood Quilt*, **Ken Ludwig's** murderously funny adventure *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, **Morris Panych's** raucous comedy *The Shoplifters* and *The Originalist*, **John Strand's** masterful play about Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, which I will direct starring local favorite **Edward Gero**, as well as *Our War*—an epic commission of 25 writers as part of the [National Civil War project](#).

"It also marks the D.C. premiere of the winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Play, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* by **Christopher Durang**, which will be directed by **Aaron Posner** in his Arena debut, and our sixth production of August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle with the classical American drama *King Hedley II*, directed by **Timothy Douglas**. The American gold-standard musical returns in a big way with *Fiddler on the Roof*, which I am privileged to direct in the year of its golden anniversary, and audiences are in for another treat with *Five Guys Named Moe*, a musical directed by **Robert O'Hara** featuring the infectious music of Louis Jordan."

***Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater 2014/15 Schedule\****

***The Shoplifters***

World-premiere comedy

Written and Directed by Morris Panych

In the Kreeger Theater / September 5 – October 19, 2014

Meet Alma, a career shoplifter who prefers the "five-finger discount" over some lousy senior citizen deal, whose elaborate life of petty crime is halted by an overzealous rookie security guard and his affable mentor who's seen it all. With an expertly drawn cast of oddball characters, *The Shoplifters* is full of surprises and sparks with a surprisingly high-stakes battle of wills over increasingly thought-provoking issues. Don't miss Morris Panych's biting, world premiere comedy about society's haves and have-nots and how much they might *actually* have in common.

—continued—

***Our War***

National Civil War Project theatrical event

Commissioned writers as of February 26, 2014:

Maria Agui Carter, Lydia Diamond, Amy Freed, Diane Glancy, Joy Harjo, Samuel D. Hunter, Naomi Iizuka, Aditi Kapil, Dan LeFranc, David Lindsay-Abaire, Ken Ludwig, Taylor Mac, Ken Narasaki, Lynn Nottage, Robert O'Hara, Heather Raffo, Charles Randolph-Wright, Tanya Saracho, Betty Shamieh, John Strand, Tazewell Thompson, William S. Yellow Robe, Jr., Karen Zacarias and two students from George Washington University: Zinhle Essamuah and Nicholas Ong

Directed by Anita Maynard-Losh

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle / October 21 – November 9, 2014

An esteemed collection of some of America's finest playwrights, including winners of the Pulitzer Prize, Tony Award and Olivier Award, has been assembled to create a dynamic new theatrical event reflecting on the repercussions of the U.S. Civil War. Through a rich tapestry of short monologues, a core ensemble of gifted actors, accompanied by notable Washingtonians, give voice to far-reaching questions about the war, its aftermath and its reverberations in our lives today. *Our War*, commissioned by Arena Stage for the National Civil War Project, uses the power of live theater to bring new understanding to the shades of Blue and Gray that define one of the most significant periods of American history.

***Fiddler on the Roof***

Book by Joseph Stein / Music by Jerry Bock / Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick

Directed by Molly Smith

In the Fichandler Stage / October 31, 2014 – January 4, 2015

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of an American classic! More than just a poor milkman, Tevye is a humble Jewish father who finds his devotion to God severely tested by his headstrong daughters who want to be their own matchmakers and the increasingly ruthless government forcing him from his land. With a jubilant and masterful score including "If I Were a Rich Man," "Sunrise, Sunset," "Matchmaker, Matchmaker" and "Tradition," *Fiddler on the Roof* is a celebration of family, community and life's unexpected miracles, large and small.

***Five Guys Named Moe***

Book by Clarke Peters / Music and Lyrics by Louis Jordan / Directed by Robert O'Hara

A co-production with Cleveland Play House

In the Kreeger Theater / November 14 – December 28, 2014

The boys are back in town, with a brand new look: bigger, bolder and badder than ever. Classics like "Let the Good Times Roll" and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" have been remixed for an explosive, re-imagined tribute to "King of the Jukebox" Louis Jordan. Led by the fearless mind that stunned audiences with *Bootycandy*, director Robert O'Hara (*The Mountaintop*) is back at Arena Stage and once again "shaking up the world, one audience at a time" (*The New York Times*). Come and dance the blues away with Eat Moe, No Moe, Four-Eyed Moe, Big Moe and Little Moe, as big band meets boy band in this dynamic, dazzling musical revue.

***Ken Ludwig's Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery***

World-premiere adaptation

By Ken Ludwig / Directed by Amanda Dehnert

A co-production with McCarter Theatre Center

In the Kreeger Theater / January 16 – February 22, 2015

Get your deerstalker cap on—the play's afoot! From the Tony Award-winning mastermind of mayhem, Ken Ludwig (*Lend Me a Tenor*), comes a fast-paced comedy about everyone's favorite detective solving his most notorious case. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson must crack the mystery of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" before a family curse dooms its newest heir. Watch as our intrepid investigators try to escape a dizzying web of clues, silly accents, disguises and deceit as five actors deftly portray more than 25 characters. Does a wild hellhound prowl the moors of Devonshire? Can our heroes discover the truth in time? Join the fun and see how far from elementary the truth can be.

***King Hedley II***

**By August Wilson / Directed by Timothy Douglas**

**In the Fichandler Stage / February 6 – March 8, 2015**

King Hedley has returned, but to reign for how long? With an angry scar down the length of his face and seven years of prison haunting him, King has a chance to lock away his past and achieve an entrepreneurial dream. But Pittsburgh's Hill District is an unforgiving place, and the return of Elmore, a scheming conman armed with a derringer and family secrets, could strike a fatal blow to King's second coming. The eighth installment of August Wilson's acclaimed play cycle examining Black America, *King Hedley II* is one of his most stirring and ferocious explorations of fate, honor and the daily struggles of American life.

***The Originalist***

**World-premiere political drama**

**By John Strand / Directed by Molly Smith**

**In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle / March 6 – April 26, 2015**

Four-time Helen Hayes Award winner Edward Gero (*Red*) returns to Arena Stage as one of America's most brilliant and polarizing figures: Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. When a bright, liberal, Harvard Law School graduate embarks on a nerve-wracking clerkship with Justice Scalia she discovers him to be both an infuriating sparring partner and an unexpected mentor. How will their relationship affect one of the most incendiary cases ever to reach the nation's highest court? From Charles MacArthur Award winner John Strand (*Lovers and Executioners*) comes this daring new work about passionate people risking heart and soul to defend their version of the truth.

***Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike***

**By Christopher Durang / Directed by Aaron Posner**

**In the Fichandler Stage / April 3 – May 3, 2015**

Winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Play (*and* the Outer Critics Circle *and* the Drama League *and* the Drama Desk), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* is a "sunny new play about gloomy people" (*New York Times*). Siblings Vanya and Sonia live out their days in an endless, bleak tableau in Bucks County, PA. All seems numbingly mundane until in sweeps hurricane Masha, their fading movie star sister, with her shiny new boy toy and a big announcement. Satirizing characters and themes from Chekhov's classics, Christopher Durang's latest madcap masterpiece serves up family drama with comic savagery and poses the question: if you could choose your family, would you necessarily choose *your* family?

***The Blood Quilt***

**World-premiere family comedy-drama**

**By Katori Hall / Directed by Kamilah Forbes**

**In the Kreeger Theater / April 24 – June 7, 2015**

Welcome to the Jernigan Gals' Quilting Corner. Gathering at their childhood island home off the coast of Georgia, four disconnected sisters meet to create a family quilt to honor their recently deceased mother. When their reunion turns into a reading of their mother's will, everyone must grapple with a troubling inheritance. Stitched with history and ritual, laughter and tears, will their "blood quilt" bind the family together or tear them apart forever? Inaugural resident playwright Katori Hall (*The Mountaintop*) is once again "fearlessly redefining theater" (*Washington Post*) with this funny and fierce world premiere.

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

**Subscription packages are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Arena Stage Sales Office at 202-488-3300 or by visiting [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org).**

**Arena Stage announces 2014/15 season—Page 4**

***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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