

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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November 30, 2015

ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER  
ANNOUNCES THE 2015/16 KOGOD CRADLE SERIES  
AS PART OF THE AMERICAN VOICES NEW PLAY INSTITUTE

\*\*\* Selected playwrights include Obie Award winner Caridad Svich, Kevin Armento and current members of Playwrights' Arena Steven Butler, Patricia Davis, Joshua Ford, Liz Maestri and David Mitchell Robinson \*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces three projects that have been selected for the **2015/16 Kogod Cradle Series** as part of the American Voices New Play Institute. Focused on the development of new plays and devised work by artists from the Greater Washington, D.C. area and around the country, this series of readings and workshops invites artists and audiences to actively explore the new work development process.

The Series will feature staged, developmental workshop presentations of three projects and will begin with **Sanctuary (American Psalm)**, an epic poem for the stage by Obie Award-winning playwright Caridad Svich about how we find spaces of sanctuary within our lives, directed by John Moletress of D.C.-based ensemble force/collision. This will be followed by **Good Men Wanted**, a new drama by Kevin Armento and directed by Jaki Bradley (assistant director for Arena Stage's *Dear Evan Hansen* and Broadway's *Fool for Love*) about five women who disguise themselves as men and fight in the American Civil War. Concluding the Series will be 20-minute excerpts from works by five of the current members of **Playwrights' Arena**—Steven Butler, Patricia Davis, Joshua Ford, Liz Maestri and David Mitchell Robinson—who were announced and began meeting in February 2015.

Arena Stage provides artists with access to the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle with no rental fee, technical support, a listing of the production on the Arena Stage website and the necessary staff support to reserve tickets and manage attendance of the public presentations, as well as support from American Voices New Play Institute Dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke.

"A big part of Arena's mission is nurturing new work, and that new work comes from many sources," says **Artistic Director Molly Smith**. "We are excited to welcome these innovative artists into the Kogod Cradle and allow them the opportunity to take risks. In this Series, there is no failure, as work develops and improves, it is only success."

"Caridad is a renowned artist whose innovative work has intrigued us for some time, and I'm delighted we have an opportunity to bring her into the Arena fold with *Sanctuary*," shares **Director of Artistic Programming Robert Barry Fleming**. "*Good Men Wanted* director Jaki Bradley is one of the smartest and most inventive up-and-coming collaborators I've encountered. Both developmental projects challenge traditional forms and utilize interpretive approaches that are inspired in their interdisciplinary nature and richly original thematic content. Our final Kogod Cradle Series installation will feature our second cohort of Playwrights' Arena with selections from their new

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works that have evolved from our investigation of their process and dramaturgical practice and their monthly readings. I expect our audiences to be challenged and electrified by all the work offered in the 2015/16 Kogod Cradle Series.”

### 2015/16 Kogod Cradle Series\*

#### ***Sanctuary (American Psalm)* by Caridad Svich**

**Directed by John Moletress**

**Featuring Jocelyn Kuritsky and John Moletress**

**January 28–31, 2016**

*Sanctuary (American Psalm)* is an epic poem for the stage by Obie Award-winning playwright Caridad Svich that explores how we are born, how we live and how we come to terms with and find spaces of sanctuary in our lives, whether you are a migrant, ghost, worker, child, elder or the voice of the earth itself. Call it the cry of the one percent, call it a shout-lullaby, *Sanctuary* is offered as a healing balm for performance during these troubled times. This work-in-progress presentation of the piece will feature the collaboration of director/performer John Moletress of D.C.-based ensemble force/collision and New York-based actor Jocelyn Kuritsky. [caridadsvich.com](http://caridadsvich.com)

#### ***Good Men Wanted* by Kevin Armento**

**Directed by Jaki Bradley**

**Choreographed by Ani Taj**

**February 11-14, 2016**

*Good Men Wanted* brings to life the true stories of five women who fought in the Civil War disguised as men, blending drama, movement and modern pop music to chronicle this untold chapter of American history. The play is based on the letters, memoirs and historical accounts of the more than 400 women—Union and Confederate alike—who ditched their petticoats for uniforms, serving their country in the bloodiest war in American history before they could even vote. [jakibradley.com](http://jakibradley.com), [kevinarmento.com](http://kevinarmento.com)

#### **Playwrights’ Arena**

**Featuring works by Steven Butler, Patricia Davis, Joshua Ford, Liz Maestri and David Mitchell Robinson**

**April 21-24, 2016**

This presentation will feature 20-minute excerpts from works by five of the current members of Playwrights’ Arena, a new play initiative developed by the American Voices New Play Institute. Centering on a small, collaborative group of local playwrights dedicated to the support and development of each other’s work, Playwrights’ Arena, facilitated by Director of Artistic Programming Robert Barry Fleming, meets throughout the year to investigate each other’s work and develop their dramaturgical practice as playwrights while creating new work. Playwrights’ Arena launched at Arena Stage in January 2013 and began a second round in February 2015. [arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/playwrights-arena/](http://arenastage.org/artistic-development/new-play-institute/playwrights-arena/)

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 purchased 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.

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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 over 10,000 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](http://arenastage.org)

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