

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

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ARENA STAGE AND AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR THEATRE AND EDUCATION
HOST DEVISE AND CONQUER SYMPOSIUM
FOR EDUCATORS AND PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

JANUARY 8-10, 2016
AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER

*** Symposium features keynote address by Michael John Garcés, artistic director of Cornerstone Theater Company, and presenters from the Alliance Theatre, Arena Stage, dog & pony dc, Double Edge Theatre, Ping Chong + Company, Pointless Theatre Co and the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) will host the [Devise and Conquer Symposium January 8-10, 2016](#), a hands-on symposium to explore a variety of approaches to devising original theater. The three-day event brings together arts educators and professional artists from across the country for three days of interactive workshops, discussions and performances in Washington, D.C. at the Mead Center for American Theater (1101 Sixth St., SW).

Targeted toward educators and artists interested in creating within an ensemble and/or adding devising techniques to their theater curriculum, the symposium provides collaborative opportunities and investigates significant devising projects and programming among populations ranging from students and community members to professional artists.

To register for the symposium and for additional details, visit aate.com/devise.

“This conference is great for many reasons,” shares Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. “One of my favorites is the number of ways to engage with the idea of devising theater. Theater can be so much more than a linear story, and it is fitting that Arena has partnered with the AATE so that both teachers and theater professionals can experience the power of students, artists and ensembles finding their voices. I’m excited to see what fabulous ideas and discussions come out of this conference.”

“Arena Stage is the perfect home for artists interested in creating collaborative theater,” adds **Alexis Truitt**, director of operations for AATE. “Through Voices of Now, they use devised theater to reach and give voice to diverse communities and populations. I’m thrilled that AATE is able to partner with Arena for this unique symposium focused on devised work, and together we’ve cultivated an amazing lineup of presenters from across the United States.”

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The symposium will kick off with a reception and keynote address from **Michael John Garcés**, artistic director of Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles. The weekend will feature breakout sessions that explore various techniques used to devise original theater, including devising based on existing text, from interviews, with puppets, with grieving populations in collaboration with clinicians, with international communities, in process with other artists, inspired by visual art and in hip-hop theater.

Presenters include playwright and author **Pearl Cleague** with the **Alliance Theatre's Palefsky Collision Project**; representatives from **Arena Stage's internationally-recognized drama program Voices of Now**, **dog & pony dc**, **Double Edge Theatre**, **Ping Chong + Company**, **Pointless Theatre Co** and the **Wendt Center for Loss and Healing**; director, playwright and actor **Psalmayene 24**; and **Natsu Onoda Power**, associate professor for Georgetown University's Department of Performing Arts.

Symposium attendees will have the opportunity to devise in real time and create an original autobiographical play as part of a culminating performance on Sunday afternoon, led by staff members from Arena Stage's [Voices of Now](#) program.

Registration remains open until January 8, 2016 and is \$150 for members, \$250 for non-members and \$100 for students and seniors. One-day passes may be purchased for \$50. The symposium officially begins at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, January 8 and runs through 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 10.

Media interested in covering the symposium should email press@arenastage.org.

Keynote Speaker

Michael John Garcés (*Artistic Director, Cornerstone Theater Company*) has been at Cornerstone since 2006, where his directing credits include *California: The Tempest* by Alison Carey, *Plumas Negras* by Juliette Carrillo, *Café Vida* by Lisa Loomer, *Making Paradise* by Tom Jacobson, *La Puma* by Shishir Kurup and Deborah Wicks, *3 Truths* by Naomi Iizuka, *Someday* by Julie Marie Myatt, *attraction* by Page Leong and *The Falls* by Jeffrey Hatcher (at Guthrie Theater). For Cornerstone he has also written *Consequence*, out of story circles with students, teachers, administrators and parents in South Kern County, and *Los Illegals*, created in residence with communities of day laborers and domestic workers and subsequently produced by Teatro Bravo in Phoenix (also published in *Theatre Magazine*, Yale School of Drama/Duke University Press). Directing credits at other theaters include *Seven Spots on the Sun* by Martin Zimmerman (Boston Court Theatre), *Lights Rise on Grace* by Chad Beckim (Woolly Mammoth), *Wrestling Jerusalem* by Aaron Davidman (Intersection for the Arts), Stephen Adly Guirgis' *The Motherfucker with the Hat* (South Coast Repertory) and *red, black and GREEN: a blues* by Marc Bamuthi Joseph (premiered at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, toured nationally to Z Space, REDCAT and Brooklyn Academy of Music). His full-length plays include *THE WEB* (needtheatre), *points of departure* and *customs* (INTAR Theatre), *Acts of Mercy* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater) and the solo performance *agua ardiente* (The American Place Theatre). His short plays include *A Parable* (Great Plains Theatre Festival), *Grief* (Active Cultures), *hymn in three parts* (Chalk Repertory Theatre), *inhabited* and *in the Zone* (Red Fern Theatre Company), *tostitos* (EST Marathon of One-Act Plays), *on edge* and *the ride* (Humana Festival), *audiovideo* (Directors Project) and *sandlot ball* (Mile Square). He collaborated with composer Alexandra Vrebalov on the oratorio *Stations*, which received its premiere at the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra and was also performed at the NOMUS Festival in Novi Sad, Serbia. Michael is on the executive board of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and is a recipient of the Rockwood Arts and Culture Fellowship, Princess Grace Statue, Alan Schneider Director Award, TCG/New Generations Grant and Non-Profit Excellence Award from the Center of Non-Profit Management. He is a Southern California Leadership Network Fellow, company member at Woolly Mammoth and a proud alumnus of New Dramatists.

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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

The American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE), among the most recognized arts education organizations, works to ensure that every young person experiences quality theatre arts in their lives provided by proficient, talented artists and educators. AATE is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Through its membership of theatre artists, in-service and pre-service teachers, professors, directors, scholars and playwrights, AATE serves more than a million students in 48 U.S. states and 19 countries worldwide. aate.com

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