

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHOTO EDITORS: For high-resolution pre-production publicity images, visit the online press room here:
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FULL COMPANY ANNOUNCED FOR *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*
WITH BOOK BY STEVEN LEVENSON AND MUSIC AND LYRICS BY BENJ PASEK & JUSTIN PAUL,
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MICHAEL GREIF

LAURA DREYFUSS, RACHEL BAY JONES, JENNIFER LAURA THOMPSON & MICHAEL PARK
AMONG CAST JOINING PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED BEN PLATT
IN THE ORIGINAL WORLD-PREMIERE MUSICAL

AT ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER
JULY 10- AUGUST 23, 2015

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, announces the full cast and creative team for *Dear Evan Hansen*. The original musical, featuring a score by Tony Award nominees **Benj Pasek & Justin Paul** (Broadway's *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical*; *Dogfight*), a book by **Steven Levenson** (*Masters of Sex*) and directed by three-time Tony Award nominee **Michael Greif** (Broadway's *Rent*, *Next to Normal*, *If/Then*), is a contemporary, intimate story of hope, heartache and the things in life we all need—friends, family and a place to call home. With choreography by **Danny Mefford** and music supervision, orchestrations and dance arrangements by Tony Award winner **Alex Lacamoire**, *Dear Evan Hansen* runs **July 10-August 23, 2015** in the Kreeger Theater.

As previously announced, **Ben Platt** (*Pitch Perfect*, Broadway's *The Book of Mormon*) stars in the title role. Platt is joined by **Rachel Bay Jones** (Broadway's *Pippin*), **Laura Dreyfuss** (*Glee*, Broadway's *Once*), Tony Award nominee **Jennifer Laura Thompson** (Broadway's *Wicked*, *Urinetown*) and Emmy Award winner **Michael Park** (*As the World Turns*, Broadway's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*). Rounding out the company are **Mike Faist** (Broadway's *Newsies*), **Alexis Molnar** (59E59's *Harbor*) and **Will Roland** (Center Theatre Group's *The Black Suits*).

The creative team for *Dear Evan Hansen* also includes scenic design by **David Korins**, costume design by **Emily Rebholz**, lighting design by **Japhy Weideman**, sound design by **Clive Goodwin**, projection design by **Peter Nigrini**, music direction by **Ben Cohn**, New York casting by **Tara Rubin**, stage manager **Judith Schoenfeld** and assistant stage manager **Michael McGoff**.

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On Dear Evan Hansen:

“This is a new musical speaking to our times in the language of now, and of course that is what great theater is. It’s a pleasure to be working with talented artists like Michael Greif, Steven Levenson, Benj Pasek & Justin Paul. Arena is grateful to the producing team led by Stacey Mindich who brought this vibrant new musical to Arena. Creative partnerships like these help make great new musicals even better.”

–Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith

“It’s been a thrill to work alongside Benj, Justin and Steven in bringing this exciting new musical to the stage. I was drawn to *Dear Evan Hansen* by qualities that I’ve always gravitated towards, most specifically, telling a story where the stakes are so high that it feels like the characters are singing for their lives. Needless to say, I look forward to collaborating with our extraordinary cast and creative team as we continue to develop the show and put it in front of the very smart audiences at Arena Stage.”

–Michael Greif

“We are so honored to be working and collaborating with some tremendous artists on this piece at Arena Stage. These actors are doing truly beautiful work in their roles, bringing them to life in a way we could never have imagined. We are so excited to share this piece and their performances with the Arena audiences!”

–Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

“As a native Washingtonian, I grew up going to Arena Stage. It is truly thrilling to have the opportunity to bring *Dear Evan Hansen*, with this incredible creative team and this dream cast, to a theater that played such a formative role in my life.”

–Steven Levenson

Steven Levenson (*Book*) is an award-winning playwright, currently at work as a writer and co-producer on Showtime’s Emmy and Golden Globe-nominated *Masters of Sex*. His plays include *The Unavoidable Disappearance of Tom Durnin* (Roundabout Theatre Company, Outer Critics Circle Award), *Core Values* (Ars Nova, Drama Desk Nominee for Best Play), *The Language of Trees* (Roundabout) and *Seven Minutes in Heaven* (Colt Coeur; Emerging America Festival/Huntington Theatre Company). His work has been seen and developed by Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Atlantic Theater Company, MCC Theater, Hartford Stage, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival and the Araca Group. His plays are published by Dramatists Play Service and Playscripts. A graduate of Brown University and former Artist in Residence at Ars Nova, he has received new play commissions from Roundabout, Lincoln Center, MCC and Ars Nova. He is a founding member of Colt Coeur and an alumnus of MCC’s Playwrights Coalition and Ars Nova’s Play Group.

Benj Pasek & Justin Paul (*Music and Lyrics*)’s Broadway credits include *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical* (Lunt-Fontanne Theatre), which received Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Outstanding New Broadway Musical. Off-Broadway credits include *Dogfight* (Second Stage Theatre), the Lucille Lortel Award-winner for Best New Musical. Other theater credits include *James and the Giant Peach* (Kennedy Center, Goodspeed Musicals and Seattle Children’s Theatre) and *Edges*. In TV, their original songs were featured on season two of NBC’s *Smash* and rose to the top 25 on the iTunes pop charts. They have also written songs for *Sesame Street* (PBS) and *Johnny and the Sprites* (Disney Channel). Other songwriting honors include the Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theatre from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; Sundance Institute Fellowship; ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award; ASCAP Songwriters Fellowship Award; Dramatists Guild Fellowship; Jonathan Larson Award; and Billboard Magazine Top 5 Broadway Songwriters. Benj and Justin work actively as teachers conducting master classes at top theater programs and universities around the world. Both are graduates of the University of Michigan and members of the Dramatists Guild of America.

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Arena Stage announces full company for *Dear Evan Hansen*—Page 3

Michael Greif (*Director*)'s work was last seen at Arena Stage when he directed *Next to Normal*. Broadway credits include *If/Then*, starring Idina Menzel, Anthony Rapp and LaChanze; *Next to Normal*; *Grey Gardens*; *Rent* (Tony Award nominations) and *Never Gonna Dance*. At the Delacorte, *Winter's Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Off-Broadway credits include new plays, musicals and revivals at Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Class Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, NY Shakespeare Festival/Public, NYTW, Roundabout, Second Stage and Signature, including Katori Hall's *Our Lady of Kibeho*, the 2010 revival of *Angels in America* (Lortel Award), Kushner's *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...* (Public), Guare's *Landscape of the Body* (Signature) and musical adaptations of *Giant* (Public) and *Far From Heaven* (Playwrights Horizons). He received Obie Awards for *Machinal* and *Dogeaters* (Public) and for *Rent* (NYTW). Regional credits include Williamstown (nine seasons), La Jolla Playhouse (Artistic Director 1995-99), Center Stage, Goodman, Guthrie, CTG/Taper, DTC and Trinity Rep. Education: Northwestern (BS), UCSD (MFA). Upcoming: *The Tempest* (Delacorte).

Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)

Laura Dreyfuss (*Zoe*) is happy to return to D.C. in this beautiful production. She was previously seen at the Kennedy Center in *Hair* (first national tour and Broadway). Other New York credits include *Once* (Broadway) and the New York Theater Workshop production of *What's it all About?* (Off-Broadway). She was most recently seen on television as Madison McCarthy in the sixth and final season of *Glee*. She received her BFA in theater from The Boston Conservatory.

Mike Faist (*Connor*) is originally from Columbus, Ohio and moved to New York when he was 17 to pursue acting. Mike made his Broadway debut in *Newsies* as an original cast member—he created the role of Morris Delancey for the regional premiere and continued through the Broadway transfer. This winter he starred Off-Broadway opposite Taylor Schilling and Peter Dinklage in *A Month in the Country* at Classic Stage Co (dir. Erica Schmidt). Other theater credits include *Appropriate* (Signature Theatre Company, dir. Liesl Tommy), *A Wind in the Willows* and *Christmas* (Two Rivers Theater, dir. Daniella Topol). Films include *Mania Days* (dir. Paul Dailo, prod. Spike Lee), *Lake City* (dir. Aaron Fisher-Cohen), the upcoming indie *License Plates* (dir. Marc Lucas) and *The Grief of Others* (dir. Patrick Wang), which recently premiered at SXSW and will be having its international premiere in L'ACID program in the Cannes Film Festival later this month.

Rachel Bay Jones (*Heidi*)'s Broadway credits include *Pippin* (Catherine), *Hair* (Mother, Buddhadalirama) and *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (u/s Lucia). Off-Broadway credits include *Hello Again* (the Actress) with Transport Group. National tour of *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical* (Mother). Regional credits include *Sylvia* (Sylvia) and *The King and I* (Anna), among others. For television, *Louie*. Solo album: *ShowFolk*. By day, Rachel is the mother to a 12-year old girl.

Alexis Molnar (*Alana*) is thrilled to be a part of bringing *Dear Evan Hansen* to D.C. Theater credits include Off-Broadway's *Harbor* by Chad Beguelin (Lottie) at 59E59 Theater; *Pack of Lies* (Julie) and *Harbor* (Lottie, winner of Connecticut Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Performance) at Westport Playhouse and *The Seagull* (Masha) at Pace. Television credits include Comedy Central's *Boyz n the Zoo*, *SNL w/ Paul Rudd* and *The Next Big Thing* on Oxygen TV. Film credits include *Outliving Emily* with Olympia Dukakis, *Sharknado 2* and *Admissions*. Live performances at 54Below, Joe's Pub, Le Poisson Rouge and Laurie Beechman. Training at Pace MT, RADA London and Second City Chicago, BAA.

Michael Park (*Larry*)'s recent stage credits include *Tuck Everlasting* (Alliance Theatre). Broadway credits include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Gooper), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Mr. Bratt), *Carousel* (Billy), *Smokey Joe's Café* (original cast) and *Little Me* (Lucky). Off-Broadway credits include *Threepenny Opera* (ATC), *Hello Again* (Lincoln Center), *Violet*, *The Burnt Part Boys* (Playwrights Horizons), *Bloomer Girl*, *Applause* (City Center Encores!) and *Middletown* (Vineyard Theatre). Michael is best known for his work as Jack Snyder on *As the World Turns*, for which he received two consecutive Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series. He recently appeared on NBC's television broadcast of *Peter Pan Live*. Other recent noteworthy television appearances include NBC's presentation of *The Sound of Music Live!* and arcs on Netflix's *House of Cards* as well as *Chicago PD* for NBC.

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Ben Platt (*Evan*) is best known for starring as Benji Applebaum in Universal Pictures' smash hit *Pitch Perfect* and will reprise his role in *Pitch Perfect 2* to be released in May. This summer, Platt can be seen alongside Meryl Streep in the film *Ricki and the Flash*. He most recently made his Broadway debut as Elder Cunningham in *The Book of Mormon*, for which *The New York Times* called his performance “sensational.” Platt first took on the role to critical acclaim in the show’s Chicago run in 2012, earning him a Broadway World Chicago Award for Best Actor in a Touring Production. This past fall, Platt sold out his first solo cabaret show at 54 Below. National tour credits include *Caroline, or Change* (directed by George C. Wolfe and Tony Kushner). Regional credits include *The Black Suits* (Barrington Stage Company), *The Power of Duff* (New York Stage and Film, Stephen Belber), *Dead End* (directed by Nicholas Martin, Ahmanson Theatre), *The Music Man*, *Mame*, *Camelot* and *The Sound of Music* (Hollywood Bowl, directed by Gordon Hunt). Workshops/readings of *Breaking Bobby Stone* (directed by Peter Scolari), *Murder at the Gates* (directed by Peter Dubois, Steven Sater), *Alice By Heart* (Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik), *Irma La Douce* (directed by Rob Ashford, starring Katie Holmes) and *Bridges of Madison County* (directed by Bartlett Sher, Jason Robert Brown).

Will Roland (*Jared*) is a Brooklyn-based actor/singer/human. Recent credits include *The Black Suits* at Center Theatre Group and Barrington Stage Company, *The Bus* at 59E59, *Billy Witch* with Studio42 and *The Joe Iconis Christmas Spectacular*. Will is passionate about new work, having helped develop work through 2nd Stage, La Jolla and Arena Stage, as well as NYMF, various Fringe festivals and bunches of concerts. Will is a Studio 42 resident artist and board member (stu42.com) and Musical Theatre Factory founding member (musicaltheatrefactory.org).

Jennifer Laura Thompson (*Cynthia*) makes her Arena Stage debut. Broadway credits include *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (Eileen Evergreen); *Lend Me a Tenor* (Diana); *Urinetown* (Hope Cladwell; Tony nomination); *Footloose* (Ariel Moore, original cast) and *Wicked* (Glinda, first replacement). Off-Broadway credits include *Company* (filmed for PBS: Live from Lincoln Center). She has had the pleasure of doing several *Encores!* productions at New York City Center and has sung with symphonies across the country and Europe. TV/film credits include *Law & Order: SVU*, *Person of Interest*, *Company* and *Construction*. Graduate of the University of Michigan, BFA, musical theater.

To hear a preview of the song “Waving Through a Window” as sung by Ben Platt and for creative team biographies, visit arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/dear-evan-hansen.

Dear Evan Hansen is the recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.

Dear Evan Hansen Special Events

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE, but reservations are strongly encouraged by calling 202-488-3300.

An Evening with Ben Platt & Screening of *Pitch Perfect 2* – May 19, location and timing details to come

Join actor Ben Platt for a special screening of the new film *Pitch Perfect 2*. Following the movie, the audience will be invited to stay for a moderated Q&A with Platt about the film and his upcoming role in *Dear Evan Hansen*.

Building an American Musical: A Conversation with the Creative Team Moderated by Peter Marks July 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle

Steven Levenson, Michael Greif, Benj Pasek & Justin Paul discuss the exciting artistic process behind the creation of a new American musical. The conversation will be moderated by Peter Marks, chief theater critic at *The Washington Post*, and followed by an opportunity for questions from the audience.

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff, August 6 following the 8:00 p.m. performance and August 11 following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

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Arena Stage announces full company for *Dear Evan Hansen*—Page 5

Production Information:

[Dear Evan Hansen](#)

World-premiere musical

Book by Steven Levenson and Music and Lyrics by Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

Directed by Michael Greif

Choreographed by Danny Mefford

Music supervision by Alex Lacamoire

In the Kreeger Theater / July 10-August 23, 2015

ABOUT: A letter, a lie, a life he never dreamed he could have. Evan Hansen (*Pitch Perfect's* Ben Platt) is about to get everything he's ever wanted: the girl of his dreams, the perfect family he's always longed for and a chance to finally fit in. He just has to hope that his chance to connect isn't blown by the secrets he has to conceal. Featuring a score by Tony Award nominees Benj Pasek and Justin Paul (*A Christmas Story, Dogfight*), a book by Steven Levenson (*Masters of Sex*) and directed by three-time Tony nominee Michael Greif (*Rent, Next to Normal*), *Dear Evan Hansen* is a moving and original musical about more than how we share, like or friend; it's about how we love, feel and survive in the modern world.

CAST:

Zoe: Laura Dreyfuss

Connor: Mike Faist

Heidi: Rachel Bay Jones

Alana: Alexis Molnar

Larry: Michael Park

Evan: Ben Platt

Jared: Will Roland

Cynthia: Jennifer Laura Thompson

CREATIVE TEAM:

Book: Steven Levenson

Music and Lyrics: Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

Director: Michael Greif

Choreographer: Danny Mefford

Music Supervisor: Alex Lacamoire

Set Designer: David Korins

Costume Designer: Emily Rebholz

Lighting Designer: Japhy Weideman

Sound Designer: Clive Goodwin

Projection Designer: Peter Nigrini

Music Director: Ben Cohn

New York Casting Director: Tara Rubin

Stage Manager: Judith Schoenfeld

Assistant Stage Manager: Michael McGoff

Plan Your Visit

TICKETS: Tickets for *Dear Evan Hansen* are \$40-\$90, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as Pay-Your-Age tickets, student discounts, Southwest Nights, and Hero's Discounts, visit arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs/.

Tickets may be purchased online at arenastage.org, by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth St., SW, D.C.

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Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380
TTY for deaf patrons: 202-484-0247
Info for patrons with disabilities: 202-488-3300

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
Weekday matinee at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, 7/31
Full calendar: <http://tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=20329>

Open-captioned performances: 8/13 at 8:00 p.m. & 8/19 at 7:30 p.m.
Audio-described performance: 8/8 at 2:00 p.m.

CATWALK CAFÉ: Prix fixe meals are now available at the Catwalk Café and include a choice of soup or salad, main entrée and dessert. Pre-ordered meals are only \$22 (\$25 if purchased that day). To pre-order and see the menu, call 202-488-3300 or visit arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/the-cafe/. The Catwalk Café opens two hours before the show, and reservations are recommended.

To **pre-order drinks** from the Catwalk Café for up to 50% savings (\$6 house wine and beer), visit tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=1007.

METRO: Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is only one block from the Waterfront-SEU Metro station (Green Line). When exiting the station, walk west on M Street toward Sixth Street, and the main entrance to the Mead Center is on the right.

PARKING: Parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage. Subscribers may purchase parking in advance for \$16. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$18 or on the day of the performance for \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited handicapped parking is available by reservation. Advanced parking must be reserved by calling 202-488-3300. The entrance to the Mead Center garage is on Maine Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets, and the garage closes one hour after the day's last performance ends. Patrons can also park at the Public Parking Garage at 1101 Fourth Street, one block from the Mead Center, for \$11. Street parking is also available along Maine Avenue and Water Street.

VALET PARKING: Arena Stage offers valet service at no additional cost to patrons with accessibility needs who call 202-488-3300 in advance to request valet parking. On days when valet parking is being used for accessibility, it is also available to general patrons one hour prior to show time for \$25, based on availability. To use valet parking, pull up to the main entrance on Sixth Street.

For complete 2015/16 season details, visit: arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/index-15-16.shtml.

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.

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