

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Greta Hays/Kirstin Franko
press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4056

April 2, 2015

ARENA STAGE SEARCHES FOR YOUNG D.C.-AREA ACTORS TO FILL TITLE AND ENSEMBLE ROLES IN *OLIVER!* AT OPEN AUDITIONS HELD SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2015

(Washington, D.C.) On Saturday, May 2, 2015, the casting office of Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater will hold a citywide casting call for actors ages 10-18 to appear in next season's production of the gold-standard musical *Oliver!*, which runs October 30, 2015-January 3, 2016 in the Fichandler Stage and is directed by Artistic Director Molly Smith. The creative team will be looking for two young boys to rotate in the title role, along with 9 young actors (1 girl and 8 boys) to fill the ensemble roles. Singing auditions and callbacks will be held at the Mead Center (1101 Sixth St., SW), with registration in the Molly Smith Study.

"Being a home for American theater means being a home for artists of all ages, shapes and sizes," shares **Smith**. "Our experiences with Camp Arena Stage and the Musical Theater Academy have demonstrated that the greater Washington area has a wealth of talented young people. We have been delighted to highlight several young people from the area on Arena's stages, including my own productions of *Oklahoma!* and *The Music Man*. I just know we will find some fabulous *Olivers* and ensemble players through this open call."

Last season, brothers John and Leo Manzari reunited with their mentor in *Maurice Hines is Tappin' Thru Life*, following Hines' 2010 discovery of them to tap alongside him in *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*. The Manzaris came full circle when they had the opportunity to help cast and mentor 13-year-old twins Max and Sam Heimowitz, who were selected from the open dance call at Arena Stage. In 2012, five local youth were selected from open auditions for *The Music Man* starring Kate Baldwin, including then elementary school students Ian Berlin as Winthrop and Heidi Kaplan as Amaryllis. Audiences may also remember June Schreiner's performances first as Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!* and then Muriel in *Ah! Wilderness* after she was discovered as a high school student through Arena Stage's Musical Theater Academy. And in 2009, 21-year-old Zurin Villanueva, then a senior at Howard University, was selected to be Yolanda in Arena Stage's production of *Crowns*.

Actors from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to audition. Arena Stage Casting Director Amelia Powell will be conducting the auditions with Smith and Musical Director Paul Sportelli. Please see below for the audition schedule for Saturday, May 2, 2015.

Schedule for *Oliver!* Young Actor Open Auditions

12:00-1:00 p.m.: Registration in the Molly Smith Study

1:00-6:00 p.m.: Singing auditions and callbacks

Note: The first 60 people who register will be guaranteed an audition, and the creative team will see additional actors on a standby basis until 4:30 p.m. All auditions are first come, first served.

Prepare: Bring two copies of headshot and resume. Come prepared to sing a 30-45 second song (16 bars). An accompanist will be provided, so sheet music is encouraged, though a cappella singing is acceptable.

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Open youth auditions for *Oliver!* held May 2, 2015—Page 2

Select auditioners will be asked to stay for additional choreography and scene work. Jazz shoes or comfortable dance shoes and attire is encouraged.

Character Descriptions

OLIVER (M, 10-16 with unchanged voice) A workhouse orphan. Oliver is an innocent and charming young boy, despite the cruelty that surrounds him. He is scrappy and resourceful.

THE ARTFUL DODGER (M, 16-23 to play teen) Fagin's brightest pupil. He is a clever thief who is charming and witty.

CHARLEY BATES (M, 13-16) A boy in Fagin's establishment. He is the protégée of The Artful Dodger, following in his footsteps and learning his every trick.

NOAH CLAYPOLE (M, 16-23 to play teen) The undertaker's pimply apprentice who taunts and teases Oliver. Also plays ensemble roles.

WORKHOUSE BOYS (M, 10-16) Orphans in the workhouse and members of Fagin's band of thieves.

CHARLOTTE (F, 13-21) The undertaker's daughter. She is rude and spoiled. Also plays ensemble roles.

Rehearsals for *Oliver!* begin Tuesday, September 29, 2015, and performances run October 30, 2015-January 3, 2016. For questions about the casting call, please e-mail jhall@arenastage.org. Media interested in attending should e-mail press@arenastage.org.

Production Information

Oliver!

Music and lyrics by Lionel Bart

Directed by Molly Smith

In the Fichandler Stage

October 30, 2015-January 3, 2016

Consider yourself invited to the theatrical event of the holiday season. Charles Dickens' unforgettable characters burst to life in this classic Tony Award-winning musical about an innocent orphan thrown into the dark world of double-dealing thieves and conmen of 19th-century London. Bursting with jubilant songs, including "You've Got to Pick a Pocket or Two," "Consider Yourself," "Where is Love?" and the scrumptious "Food, Glorious Food," director Molly Smith (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oklahoma!*) will serve up a musical feast for the eyes and ears that will have every theater-lover calling out for "More!"

For more information, 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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