

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

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LYNN NOTTAGE'S NEW DRAMA *SWEAT*  
MAKES EAST COAST DEBUT AT ARENA STAGE  
UNDER DIRECTION OF KATE WHORISKEY  
JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 21, 2016

\*\*\* Returning cast members from critically-praised world premiere at Oregon Shakespeare Festival are joined by new cast members Johanna Day, Tara Mallen and Reza Salazar \*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) The new drama ***Sweat* by Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage** (*Ruined; By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*) comes to Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater following a critically-acclaimed debut at Oregon Shakespeare Festival as part of a co-commission between the two theaters. Hailed by *The New York Times* as an “extraordinarily moving drama” that “brims with the kind of ripe, richly imagined life associated with the work of the great August Wilson,” the play is directed by Nottage’s longtime collaborator **Kate Whoriskey** and runs **January 15-February 21, 2016 in the Kreeger Theater**.

*Sweat* is a result of extensive interviews conducted by Nottage and Whoriskey, who spent two years visiting and interviewing residents of Reading, Pennsylvania, which was named the nation’s poorest city in 2011. Set in 2000 and 2008, the play explores America’s industrial decline at the turn of the millennium with a look inside Reading, where a group of close friends shares everything: drinks, secrets and laughs. But when rumors of layoffs shake up the local steel mill, the fragile bonds of their community begin to fray and a horrific crime sends shock waves across two generations.

As previously announced, **Jack Willis** (Arena’s *Mother Courage and Her Children*, President Lyndon Baines Johnson in Arena’s upcoming *All the Way*) and Tony Award nominee **Kimberly Scott** (*Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* at Arena and on Broadway) reprise their roles of Stan and Cynthia, respectively. Also reprising roles they originated for the Oregon world premiere are **Kevin Kenerly** as Brucie, **Stephen Michael Spencer** as Jason, **Tramell Tillman** as Chris and **Tyrone Wilson** as Evan.

Joining the company for the D.C. production are Tony Award nominee **Johanna Day** (Broadway’s *You Can’t Take It With You*, Arena’s *Good People*) as Tracey, **Tara Mallen** as Jessie and **Reza Salazar** as Oscar.

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“Arena is excited to have partnered with Oregon Shakespeare Festival on the co-commissioning of *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage,” shares **Artistic Director Molly Smith**. “Lynn has written a deeply important play which speaks profoundly to the American working class, with a focus on a community of steelworkers. In the midst of a national conversation about unions and their function in our country, her play explodes with vitality and power. We’re thrilled to bring this production to our audience here in D.C., America’s most political city.”

“The genius in Lynn’s writing is that the style defines the subject,” says **Whoriskey**. “The how defines the what. In writing a play, it is customary to ask whose story it is. Usually, a single protagonist is identified, but in *Sweat*, Lynn decided that the community is the protagonist. In an age where unions are collapsing in favor of unbridled capitalism and self-marketing, Lynn changes the way we perceive character. She asks us not to choose a lead to empathize with but to watch individuals as a group going through crisis together.”

*Sweat* was created through Nottage’s project residency with Arena Stage, where playwrights are commissioned through the American Voices New Play Institute to develop a specific project that the theater will produce, and is a presentation of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production through their *American Revolutions: United States History Cycle*, which commissions new plays sprung from moments of change in United States history.

“I’m thrilled to be bringing *Sweat* to Arena Stage during this important election year,” adds **Nottage**. “The play is inspired by conversations that I had with union workers and members of the Reading community, all of whom are dealing with the devastating impact of economic stagnation on their communities.”

**Lynn Nottage** (*Playwright*) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and screenwriter. Her plays have been produced widely in the U.S. and throughout the world. They include *By The Way*, *Meet Vera Stark*; *Ruined*; *Intimate Apparel*; *Fabulation*, or *The Re-Education of Undine*; *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* and *POOF!* Lynn is the recipient of numerous honors including a MacArthur “Genius Grant” Fellowship, Steinberg “Mimi” Distinguished Playwright Award, Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award, inaugural Horton Foote Prize, Helen Hayes Award, Lee Reynolds Award, PEN/Laura Pels Award, Lucille Lortel fellowship and visiting research fellowship at Princeton University. She is the co-founder of the production company Market Road Films.

**Kate Whoriskey** (*Director*)’s New York credits include Public Studio shows *Ping Pong* and *Manhatta* (The Public), *Tales From Red Vienna* and *Ruined* (Manhattan Theatre Club, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel Award nominations), *The Miracle Worker* (Broadway’s Circle in the Square), *How I Learned to Drive* (Second Stage Theatre), *The Piano Teacher* (Vineyard Theatre), *Oroonoko* (Theatre for a New Audience), the world premieres of *Fabulation* and *Inked Baby* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Massacre* (Labyrinth Theater Company). International credits include *Magdalena* at Theatre du Chatelet in Paris and Teatro Municipal de Sao Paulo. Regional credits include Goodman Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, American Repertory Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Huntington Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Center Stage, Sundance Theatre Lab and New York Stage and Film, among others.

### **Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)**

**Johanna Day** (*Tracey*) won a Helen Hayes Award for her starring role in Arena Stage’s *The Rainmaker*. Additional Arena credits include *Quality of Life* and *Good People*. She was a Drama Desk Award nominee for Second Stage Theatre’s *Peter and Jerry*, Tony Award nominee for *Proof* at the Walter Kerr Theatre and won an Obie Award for *Appropriate* at Signature Theatre. On Broadway, Johanna played Mrs. Kirby in the 2014 revival of *You Can’t Take It With You*, opposite James Earl Jones and Elizabeth Ashley, and Barbara Fordham in *August: Osage County*. She appeared in the world premieres of Westport Country Playhouse’s *Oblivion* and Yale Repertory Theatre’s *The Realistic Joneses*. Prior to joining *Sweat*, she created the role of Zippy in *Choice*. Johanna currently has recurring roles on CBS’ *Madam Secretary* and Showtime’s *The Knick*.

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**Kevin Kenerly** (*Brucie*) has spent 19 seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival where his credits include *The Great Society*, *All the Way*, *Two Trains Running*, *The Liquid Plain*, *Trilussa and Cressida*, *Julius Caesar*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Throne of Blood*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Fences*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Tartuffe*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Gibraltar*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Playboy of the West Indies*, *As You Like It*, *Life Is a Dream*, *Stop Kiss*, *Seven Guitars*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, *Les Blancs*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Henry IV, Part 2*. Additional credits with Studio Theatre, Hilberry Theatre and Attic Theatre (Detroit). Kevin received his B.A. from Olivet College.

**Tara Mallen** (*Jessie*) is artistic director at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, a professional Chicago-based company. Recent stage credits include the world premieres of Rivendell's *Look, we are breathing* and *Rasheeda Speaking*; Steppenwolf for Young Adults' *How Long Will I Cry*; *The Walls*; and *Self Defense, or death of some salesmen*. She received two Joseph Jefferson Awards for her work in *WRENS* (Best Supporting Actress and Best Ensemble) and was nominated for Best Actress for *My Simple City*. Tara co-conceived and directed the critically-acclaimed premiere of *Women at War*, an exploration of women in today's military that played to sold-out houses at Rivendell in the fall of 2014 and is now touring. Screen credits include Steven Soderbergh's film *Contagion*, *Boss*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago P.D.*, the Netflix series *Sense8* and the CBS/Sony Pictures pilot *Doubt*.

**Reza Salazar** (*Oscar*) makes his Arena Stage debut. Off-Broadway he was seen in *My Mañana Comes* (Playwrights Realm), directed by Chay Yew and nominated for both Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Awards for Best Play. Additional theater credits include Khan in the workshop of *The Petrol Station* by Sulayman Al-Bassam; *In The Cypher* (Nuyorican Poets Cafe); *Mariela en el Desierto* and *Por Gusto* (Repertorio Español); and *Marco* (The Invisible Dog Art Center). As a playwright, he debuted his first play *Incognito* at Thespis Theater Festival. His TV credits include *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *Daredevil* (Netflix), *The Blacklist*, *Believe*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Louie* and *Nuestro Barrio*. Film credits include *The Imperialists Are Still Alive!*, *See Girl Run* and *The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz*.

**Kimberly Scott** (*Cynthia*) last appeared at Arena Stage as Molly in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. In the role on Broadway, she was nominated for Tony and Drama Desk Awards. Her most recent theater credits include *Head of Passes* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre) and *Familiar* (Yale Repertory Theatre). She spent six seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) playing roles in *Henry IV Part 2*, *Ruined*, *As You Like It*, *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. As part of OSF's *American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle*, she created the roles of Dembi in *The Liquid Plain*, Amira in *Party People*, Viola Pettus in *American Night* and Cynthia in *Sweat*. Kimberly's film credits include *Love and Other Drugs*, *World Trade Center*, *The Abyss* and many TV credits. Twitter: @kimaileen.

**Stephen Michael Spencer** (*Jason*) makes his Arena Stage and D.C. debut. Regional credits include *Sweat* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Heart of Robin Hood* (Mirvish Productions); *Yentl*, *A Carol for Cleveland* and *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor* (Cleveland Play House); *Go West*, *Clybourne Park*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *As You Like It* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *Tartuffe* (Triad Stage); *The Tempest* (North Carolina Shakespeare Festival); *Go, Dog. Go!* (North Carolina Theatre for Young People); and *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings*, *The Misanthrope* and *Twelfth Night* (Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland Play House). Stephen holds a B.F.A. in acting from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and an M.F.A. in acting from Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland Play House. Instagram: @stephenmspencer. [stephenmichaelspencer.com](http://stephenmichaelspencer.com)

**Tramell Tillman** (*Chris*) is a native of the D.C.-metro area and this show marks his debut at Arena Stage. Tillman received his M.F.A. from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2014. Notable credits include Red Bull Theater's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Off-Broadway); New Stage Theatre's *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Soldiers Play*; Chautauqua Theater Company's *The Tempest* and *A Raisin in the Sun*; and Clarence Brown Theatre's *The Whipping Man*, *Spamalot* and *A Christmas Carol*. Tramell is grateful for the opportunity to tell such a riveting, relevant story in American history. He gives credit to God and thanks his family, friends and supporters for their unwavering love and encouragement. To whom much is given, much is required. Enjoy the journey. [tramelltillman.com](http://tramelltillman.com)

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**Jack Willis** (*Stan*) returns to Arena Stage after appearing in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Book of Days*, *Of Mice and Men* and *Agamemnon and His Daughters*. Broadway credits include *Julius Caesar*, *The Crucible*, *Art and The Old Neighborhood*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *World of Mirth*, *The Iphigenia Cycle* and *Valhalla*. He has appeared in more than 200 productions worldwide and been a company member at Oregon Shakespeare Festival (for the past five years), American Conservatory Theater, American Repertory Theater, Trinity Repertory Company and Dallas Theater Center. Film and TV credits include *Toy Story 3*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *The Out-of-Towners*, *Love Hurts*, *I Come in Peace*, *Problem Child*, *Law & Order*, *Ed* and *Dallas*. Jack was awarded a Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship through the Ten Chimneys Foundation.

**Tyrone Wilson** (*Evan*) appeared on Broadway in *Lettice and Lovage*. For the last 22 years, he has been a company member at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and has performed in nearly 50 productions. His favorite credits include the Friar in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Abernathy in *All the Way* and *The Great Society*, Vincentio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Elbow in *Measure for Measure*, Christian in *Ruined*, Joe Stoddard in *Our Town*, Sebastian in *The Tempest*, Carl in *Bus Stop*, Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*, Menelaus in *Troilus and Cressida*, Godfrey in *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, Abioseh in *Les Blancs*, Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* and Caliban in *The Tempest*. Tyrone holds an M.F.A. (Yale School of Drama) and B.A. (Middlebury College). Twitter: @ashlandbardman, Instagram: @tyronewilsonoregon, Facebook: Tyrone K Wilson.

The creative team for *Sweat* includes Set Designer **John Lee Beatty**, Costume Designer **Jennifer Moeller**, Lighting Designer **Peter Kaczorowski**, Sound Designers **Michael Bodeen** and **Robert Milburn**, Projection Designer **Jeff Sugg**, Fight Director **U. Jonathan Toppo**, Assistant Directors **Molly Houlihan** and **Rebecca Wear**, Stage Manager **Kurt Hall** and Assistant Stage Manager **Jana Llynn**.

For creative team bios please visit [arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/sweat](http://arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/sweat).

*Sweat* is generously sponsored by Margot Kelly, Jeri and Gary Epstein and the National Endowment for the Arts' Art Works program.

### **Sweat Special Events**

#### ***American Dream/American Identity***

Join Arena Stage in a three-part conversation around identity and the American Dream. Beginning with Lynn Nottage's *Sweat* and continuing with Anthony Giardina's *The City of Conversation* and Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced*, explore how these three unique voices are wrestling with what it means to be American in the 21st century. In Nottage's "scorching" (*The New York Times*) world-premiere play, the identity of an entire community is determined by the battle between the middle-class workers who built this country and the progress of modern-day capitalism. Dates and times will be announced on Arena Stage's website.

### **Post-Show Conversations**

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff—January 27, February 3 & February 9 following the noon performance; January 28 following the 8:00 p.m. performance; and February 2 following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

### **Production Information**

#### **Sweat**

By Lynn Nottage

Directed by Kate Whoriskey

In the Kreeger Theater / January 15-February 21, 2016

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**ABOUT:** A group of close friends shares everything: drinks, secrets and laughs. But when rumors of layoffs shake up the local steel mill, the fragile bonds of their community begin to fray and a horrific crime sends shock waves across two generations. This gripping world premiere by acclaimed Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage (*Ruined*) explores America's industrial decline at the turn of the millennium by examining the inhabitants of one Pennsylvania town who still struggle to reclaim what's lost, find redemption and redefine themselves in a new century. Co-commissioned with Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

### CAST:

Tracey: Johanna Day  
Brucie: Kevin Kenerly  
Jessie: Tara Mallen  
Cynthia: Kimberly Scott  
Jason: Stephen Michael Spencer  
Chris: Tramell Tillman  
Stan: Jack Willis  
Evan: Tyrone Wilson  
Oscar: Reza Salazar

### CREATIVE TEAM:

Playwright: Lynn Nottage  
Director: Kate Whoriskey  
Set Designer: John Lee Beatty  
Costume Designer: Jennifer Moeller  
Lighting Designer: Peter Kaczorowski  
Sound Designers: Michael Bodeen & Robert Milburn  
Projection Designer: Jeff Sugg  
Fight Director: U. Jonathan Toppo  
Assistant Director: Rebecca Wear  
Stage Manager: Kurt Hall  
Assistant Stage Manager: Jana Llynn

### Plan Your Visit

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *Sweat* 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, family fun packs, Southwest Nights and hero's discounts, visit [arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs](http://arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs).

Tickets may be purchased online at [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org), by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth St., SW, D.C.

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 matinees at noon on Wednesday, 1/27; Wednesday, 2/3; and Tuesday, 2/9  
Full calendar: [tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=20668](http://tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=20668)



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**Open-captioned performances:** 1/27 at 7:30 p.m. & 2/4 at 8:00 p.m.

**Audio-described performances:** 1/23 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-café/](http://arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/the-café/). 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](http://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 \$19 or on the day of the performance for \$22 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.

**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.

*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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**Twitter:** @arenastage, follow Sweat with #SweatArena

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**YouTube:** [youtube.com/arenastage1](https://youtube.com/arenastage1)

**Pinterest:** [pinterest.com/arenastage](https://pinterest.com/arenastage)

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