

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional press materials, visit the online press room:  
[arenastage.org/about/press-room/press-kits-photos/productions/hold-these-truths/](http://arenastage.org/about/press-room/press-kits-photos/productions/hold-these-truths/)  
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**JEANNE SAKATA'S *HOLD THESE TRUTHS*  
TO MAKE D.C. PREMIERE AT ARENA STAGE  
FEBRUARY 23-APRIL 8, 2018**

**\*\*\* As previously announced, Ryun Yu reprises the role he originated as Gordon Hirabayashi, in a performance hailed as “fine-grained tour de force” by *Los Angeles Times* \*\*\***

(Washington, D.C.) **Jeanne Sakata's** one-man drama *Hold These Truths* tells the true story of Gordon Hirabayashi, the American son of Japanese immigrants who defied an unjust court order when America placed its own citizens in internment camps during World War II. Midway through Arena Stage's 2017/18 season, *Hold These Truths* brings an untold story to the stage that represents the diversity of our country and examines what it means to be an American. Under the direction of **Jessica Kubzansky**, *Hold These Truths* runs February 23-April 8, 2018 in the Kogod Cradle.

As previously announced, **Ryun Yu**, who in 2007 “brilliantly portrayed” (*Huffington Post*) and originated the role of Gordon Hirabayashi in *Hold These Truths*, and has since traveled across the country with the show, will reprise his performance. In addition to playing Hirabayashi, Yu portrays an additional 36 supplemental characters throughout the production. Kubzansky directed the world premiere in 2007, and many subsequent productions starring Yu.

“One of the biggest mistakes we make as Americans is to forget to learn from the past,” shares **Molly Smith**. “The atrocities committed against our own people in Japanese Internment Camps during World War II are experienced first-hand in Jeanne Sakata's stirring *Hold These Truths*. It's an important time to tell this story—Americans are not immune to fear and allowing fear to take over reason. This is a powerful performance with Ryun Yu as Gordon Hirabayashi under the deft direction of Jessica Kubzansky, and the Kogod Cradle is the perfect intimate setting to chronicle this event in our history.”

“It's fascinating how plays change with time and speak to us in wholly different ways as the world changes around us,” says **Kubzansky**. “When we did the world premiere in 2007, *Hold These Truths* was a piece of sadly neglected history about a little-known and largely unsung Japanese-American hero. Now, it feels like a screaming cautionary tale we all need to witness, as our country could be on the precipice of repeating a variation on this shameful episode in our nation's past. Today, the text that keeps resonating loudly in my head is something Gordon says late in the play, ‘I'll say it again, *ancestry* is not a crime.’”

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## Page 2— D.C. premiere of Jeanne Sakata's *Hold These Truths* at Arena Stage

**Jeanne Sakata** (*Playwright*) is honored to bring *Hold These Truths* to Arena Stage. After premiering at East West Players in 2007, the play had its Off-Broadway debut with Epic Theatre Ensemble in 2012 (Drama Desk nomination, Outstanding Solo Performance) and has since earned rave reviews at Pasadena Playhouse, Lyric Stage Company, Hang A Tale at the Sheen Center, The Guthrie, Portland Center Stage, ACT, Perseverance Theatre, PlayMakers Repertory and Honolulu Theatre for Youth. As an actor, Jeanne has performed with The Public, the Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory, People's Light, Northlight Theatre and the Intiman Theatre, among others. Recent film/TV credits include *Advantageous*, *Dr. Ken*, *Big Hero 6* and *True Fiction*. She received a Los Angeles Ovation Award for Outstanding Lead Actress and a Lee Melville Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Los Angeles Theatre Community. [www.jeannesakata.com](http://www.jeannesakata.com)

**Jessica Kubzansky** (*Director*) is the Co-Artistic Director of The Theatre @ Boston Court Performing Arts Center in Pasadena and an award-winning director. She developed and directed the world premiere of *Hold These Truths* at East West Players and has directed many subsequent productions. Recent credits include *Orange* (South Coast Repertory); *Stupid Fucking Bird* (A Contemporary Theatre); *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* (*The Getty Villa*); *Colony Collapse, The Children and RII*, her own three-person *Richard II* (Boston Court Performing Arts Center); *Pygmalion* (Pasadena Playhouse); Sheila Callaghan's *Everything You Touch* (Rattlestick at The Cherry Lane); *Hamlet* with Leo Marks and *The Winter's Tale* (Theater 150); *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Illinois Shakespeare Festival); *Macbeth* (Antaeus Company); and *Glass Menagerie, Toys in the Attic* and *Heartbreak House* (The Colony Theatre). Jessica received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Sustained Excellence in Theatre.

### **Cast Biographies**

**Ryun Yu** (*Gordon Hirabayashi*) makes his Arena Stage debut. He originated the role of Gordon Hirabayashi at East West Players in 2007, and has since performed it at ACT, Portland Center Stage and Pasadena Playhouse. Ryun collaborated with David Henry Hwang while starring in the play *Yellow Face* (the first adaptation of a major theatrical play for YouTube) and on the film adaptation of the play *Bondage*. Additional credits include Kimber Lee's *Tokyo Fish Story* (South Coast Repertory); Richard Greenberg's *Take Me Out* (Geffen Playhouse); the world premiere of Lloyd Suh's *American Hwangap* (Magic Theatre); and Art and Julia Cho's *The Language Archive* (East West Players). Ryun directed and will star in the upcoming feature film *The Last Tour*. TV appearances include *Fuller House*, *Castle* and the upcoming *Animal Kingdom*. He is the first theater major from MIT. Twitter/Instagram: @RealRyunYu.

The creative team for *Hold These Truths* includes Set and Lighting Designer **Ben Zamora**, Costume Designer **Cierra Coan** based on Original Costume Design by **Soojin Lee**, Sound Designer **John Zalewski** and Stage Manager **Christi B. Spann**.

For full company bios please visit [arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/hold-these-truths/](http://arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/hold-these-truths/).

*Hold These Truths* is generously sponsored by Joan and David Maxwell. Additional support is provided by Susan and Steven Bralove.

### **Post-Show Conversations**

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff—March 7, March 27 and April 4 following the noon performance; March 13 following the 7:30 p.m. performance; and March 22 following the 8:00 p.m. performance.

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**Production Information**

***Hold These Truths***

**By Jeanne Sakata**

**Directed by Jessica Kubzansky**

**In the Kogod Cradle | February 23-April 8, 2018**

**ABOUT:** Reeling from the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, and driven by fear and prejudice, America placed its own citizens of Japanese ancestry in internment camps. A play for our times, *Hold These Truths* tells the true story of Gordon Hirabayashi, the American son of Japanese immigrants who defied an unjust court order to uphold the values on which America was founded. Filled with hope and buoyed by unquenchable patriotism, Hirabayashi's unflinching defiance will leave you cheering the strength of the individual and his dedication to his own unalienable rights. "Surprisingly humorous and openhearted." (*Seattle Times*)

**CAST:**

Gordon Hirabayashi: Ryun Yu

**CREATIVE TEAM:**

Playwright: Jeanna Sakata

Director: Jessica Kubzansky

Set and Lighting Designer: Ben Zamora

Costume Designer: Cierra Coan based on Original Costume Design by Soojin Lee

Sound Designer: John Zalewski

Stage Manager: Christi B. Spann

**Plan Your Visit**

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *Hold These Truths* 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](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 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday at 2 p.m.

Weekday matinees at noon on Wednesday, 3/7, Tuesday, 3/27 and Wednesday, 4/4

Full calendar: [tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=24720](http://tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=24720)

**Open-captioned performances: 3/21 at 7:30 p.m., 3/29 at 8 p.m. & 4/7 at 2 p.m.**

**Audio-described performances: 3/24 at 2 p.m.**

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## Page 4— D.C. premiere of Jeanne Sakata's *Hold These Truths* at Arena Stage

**ARENA STAGE CAFÉ:** Prix fixe meals are available at Richard's Place, Arena Stage's casual dining 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 café opens two hours before the show, and reservations are recommended. To **pre-order drinks** 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 \$14.

**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 Director 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 and 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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