

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January 25, 2018

ARENA STAGE TO DEBUT WORLD-PREMIERE MUSICAL
DAVE
BOOK BY THREE-TIME TONY AWARD WINNER THOMAS MEEHAN
AND TONY AWARD NOMINEE NELL BENJAMIN
MUSIC BY TWO-TIME TONY AND PULITZER PRIZE AWARD WINNER TOM KITT
LYRICS BY TONY AWARD NOMINEE NELL BENJAMIN
JULY 13 – AUGUST 19, 2018

*** Director Tina Landau to helm world-premiere production
based on blockbuster Academy Award-nominated White House comedy, *Dave* ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the world-premiere musical production of *Dave* by three-time Tony Award winner **Thomas Meehan** (*Annie*, *Hairspray*, *The Producers*), Tony Award nominee **Nell Benjamin** (*Mean Girls*, *Legally Blonde*) and Pulitzer Prize and two-time Tony Award winner **Tom Kitt** (*Next to Normal*, *If/Then*). The world-premiere engagement is produced by special arrangement with Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures, Doshudo Productions and Larger Than Life. Inspired by the Academy Award-nominated American political comedy film, *Dave* will run July 13-August 19, 2018 in the Kreeger Theater.

Director **Tina Landau** (*SpongeBob SquarePants: The Broadway Musical*) joins the creative team of *Dave*, with a book by the late Thomas Meehan and Nell Benjamin, lyrics by Nell Benjamin and music by Tom Kitt. Based on Gary Ross' 1993 Oscar-nominated White House comedy, *Dave* tells the story of high school teacher (and presidential lookalike) Dave Kovic, who is hired by the Secret Service as a stand-in for the Commander-in-Chief. When the President falls ill under less than "presidential" circumstances, Dave is thrust into the Oval Office to avoid a national scandal, and must find a way to gain the trust and love of the American people...and the First Lady.

"Whoever said politics can't be very funny? It's time in D.C. to make that happen big time with this new musical adapted from the movie *Dave*," shares **Molly Smith**. "With Tina Landau at the helm who just directed *SpongeBob SquarePants* on Broadway, this production will be sure to energize, delight and move us in unexpected ways."

"I'm thrilled to be part of the team that will bring *Dave* to Arena Stage, as it's a story I've been wanting to tell, at a theater I've been wanting to work at (but haven't yet). And the moment for *Dave* is certainly now," says **Landau**. "The show offers a hilarious critique of our current political state of affairs and it offers a compelling love story – but more than anything for me, the show offers an invitation to hope again and believe again during times when that often feels difficult. It's a reminder of our ideals and the necessity of integrity in both our political actions and our personal relationships. It's about Dave of course – well, the Dave in all of us - an ordinary citizen who thinks he doesn't matter in the big scheme of things, but comes to discover that, with his principles and his passion, he can make a difference in the world. And must. Now that's a musical for our times!"

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Additional creative team members and casting to be announced at a later date.

World-premiere musical comedy

DAVE

based on the Warner Bros. motion picture written by Gary Ross

by special arrangement with Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures, Doshudo Productions and Larger Than Life

Book by Thomas Meehan and Nell Benjamin, Lyrics by Nell Benjamin and Music by Tom Kitt

Directed by Tina Landau

In the Kreeger Theater / July 13-August 19, 2018

From a Tony and Pulitzer Prize award-winning creative team, comes the world-premiere musical comedy *Dave*, adapted from the Oscar-nominated film. *Dave* tells the story of high school teacher (and presidential lookalike) Dave Kovic, who is hired by the Secret Service as a stand-in for the Commander-in-Chief. When the President falls ill under less than “presidential” circumstances, Dave is thrust into the Oval Office to avoid a national scandal, and must find a way to gain the trust and love of the American people...and the First Lady.

Thomas Meehan (*Book Writer*) won the 2003 Tony Award co-writing the book for *Hairspray* as well as the 2001 Tony Award for co-writing the book for *The Producers*. He received his first Tony Award in 1977 for writing the book of *Annie*, his first Broadway show, and later wrote the books for the musicals *I Remember Mama*, *Ain't Broadway Grand* and *Daddy Warbucks*. In addition, he was a long-time contributor of humor to *The New Yorker*, an Emmy-award winning writer of television comedy, and a collaborator on a number of screenplays, including Mel Brooks' *Space Balls* and *To Be or Not To Be*.

Nell Benjamin (*Book Writer/Lyricist*) co-wrote the score to the musical *Legally Blonde* with her husband, Laurence O'Keefe. Nell and Larry have also written *Huzzah!* and *Life of the Party*. Nell has written book and/or lyrics for *Mean Girls*; *Halftime*; *Because of Winn Dixie*; *Pirates! (or Gilbert and Sullivan plunder'd)*; *Sarah, Plain and Tall*; *Cam Jansen*; *I Want My Hat Back*; *How I Became a Pirate*; and *The Mice*. She has written a play, *The Explorers Club*, as well as the New York Philharmonic New Year's Eve and Young Peoples' concerts. TV credits include *Unhappily Ever After*; *Whoa! Sunday with Mo Rocca*; the new *Electric Company*; *Best Time Ever with Neil Patrick Harris*; *Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*; and *Julie's Greenroom*. She is the grateful recipient of a Kleban Foundation Award, a Jonathan Larson Foundation Grant, and is a member of ASCAP and the Dramatists Guild of America.

Tom Kitt (*Composer/Arranger/Orchestrator/Music Supervisor*) received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, as well as two Tony Awards for Best Score and Best Orchestrations for *Next to Normal*. *Next to Normal* also received the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Score. He is also the composer of *If/Then* (Tony nomination, Outer Critics nomination, Broadway); *High Fidelity* (Broadway); *Bring it On, The Musical* (co-composer with Lin-Manuel Miranda, Broadway); Disney's *Freaky Friday*; *The Winter's Tale*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Cymbeline* (The Public's NYSF); *From Up Here* and *The Madrid* (MTC); *Orphans* (Broadway); *The Retributionists* (Playwrights Horizons); and *As You Like It* (Toho Co., Japan). Tom is the music supervisor, arranger, orchestrator and composer of additional music for *SpongeBob Squarepants: The Broadway Musical*. In addition, he is the music supervisor for the new NBC drama, *Rise*, and was responsible for the music supervision, arrangements and orchestrations for *Grease Live!* and Green Day's *American Idiot on Broadway*. His work with Green Day also includes additional arrangements for their Grammy Award-winning album *21st Century Breakdown* and their album trilogy, *¡Uno!* *¡Dos!* *¡Tré!* Tom received an Emmy Award as co-writer (with Lin-Manuel Miranda) for the 2013 Tony Award opening number, *Bigger*. Other TV songwriting credits include a musical episode of *Royal Pains*, and songs for *Penny Dreadful*, *Sesame Street* and *Julie's Greenroom*. As a musical director, conductor, arranger and orchestrator, credits include the *Pitch Perfect* films, *2Cellos featuring Lang Lang (Live and Let Die)*, *The Kennedy Center Honors, 13*, *Debbie Does Dallas*, *Everyday Rapture*, *Hair*, *Laugh Whore*, *Pippin* (Deaf West) and *These Paper Bullets*.

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Tina Landau (*Director*) is a writer and director whose work has been produced on Broadway and Off-Broadway, internationally and regionally, and most frequently at Steppenwolf Theatre where she is an ensemble member. Broadway credits include *SpongeBob Squarepants: The Broadway Musical* (also conceiver), Tracy Lett's *Superior Donuts* and the revival of *Bells Are Ringing*. Off-Broadway credits include *Old Hats*, *Big Love* and *Iphigenia 2.0* (Signature Theatre); *A Civil War Christmas* (NYTW); *Wig Out!* (Vineyard Theatre); and the musicals *Floyd Collins* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Dream True* (Vineyard Theatre), both of which she co-wrote. Steppenwolf productions include *Head of Passes* (also The Public, Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Repertory), *The Brother/Sister Plays*, *The Wheel*, *The Tempest*, *Time of Your Life* (also ACT Seattle), *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Ballad of Little Jo*, *Berlin Circle*, and her own play, *Space* (also The Public, Mark Taper Forum). Regionally, Tina's productions include *Sycamore Trees* (Signature Theatre VA), *Antony and Cleopatra* (Hartford Stage) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (McCarter, Paper Mill). Tina teaches regularly and co-authored *The Viewpoints Book* with Anne Bogart.

Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures (WBThV) develops and produces first-class musicals and stage productions from the company's expansive catalogue. The division is currently readying *A Star is Born* (Director: Bill Condon), *Beetlejuice* (Director: Alex Timbers), *Dave* (Score: Tom Kitt & Nell Benjamin) and *Dog Day Afternoon* (Playwright: Stephen Adly Guirgis) for the stage. WBThV was previously represented on the West End and Broadway by the Olivier Award-winning musical *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and on Broadway by the holiday hit *Elf* and Tony Award Best Play winner *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. WBThV also licenses third-party stage rights including such productions as *The Bodyguard*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Hairspray*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Color Purple* and *42nd Street*.

Doshudo Productions is owned and run by Lauren Shuler Donner and Richard Donner. Lauren is a Film Producer with such credits as *Mr. Mom*, *Ladyhawke*, *St. Elmo's Fire*, *Pretty in Pink*, *Dave*, *Free Willy 1-3*, *You've Got Mail*, *Hotel For Dogs*, *The Secret Life of Bees* and all ten *Xmen* movies. Currently she is Executive Producing two TV series – *Legion* for FX and *The Gifted* for Fox TV; Broadway musicals based on her films *Dave* and *Secret Life of Bees*, as well as a new immersive theater experience based on *Goonies*, one of Richard Donner's most beloved films. She has served on the Executive Board of the Producers Branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures for the past ten years.

Larger Than Life Productions. Allison Thomas is a theater and film producer. As a partner in Larger Than Life Productions, Allison produced *The Tale of Despereaux*, executive-produced Oscar-nominated *Seabiscuit* and co-produced *Pleasantville*. In theater, Allison was a producer of the Tony-nominated musical *Beautiful; ANN*, based on the life of Ann Richards; and *The Last Goodbye* (regional). She is currently developing a children's musical based on *The Tale of Despereaux*, among other film and television projects. Prior to producing, Allison was active in government, working as a Staff Assistant for Public Outreach in the Carter White House and heading technology initiatives for Governor Jerry Brown during his first term. She also headed public relations for Steve Jobs' NeXT Computer and Pixar, among other technology startups in the 80s and 90s.

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.
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