

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren McMillen/Samantha Schneider  
[press@arenastage.org](mailto:press@arenastage.org), 202-600-4055

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<https://www.arenastage.org/press-room/press-kits/1920-press-kits/mother-road-press-kit/>

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES FULL CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM  
FOR THE EAST COAST PREMIERE OF OCTAVIO SOLIS' *MOTHER ROAD*  
FEBRUARY 7 – MARCH 8, 2020

\*\*\* Mark Murphey and Tony Sancho reprise their original roles and join director Bill Rauch in Arena Stage's production of *Mother Road*\*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces casting for Octavio Solis' *Mother Road*, a sequel to John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. *Mother Road* premiered at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2019 and will run at Arena Stage from **February 7 – March 8, 2020 in the iconic in-the-round Fichandler Stage.**

The story follows the terminally ill William Joad and his quest to pass down his Oklahoma family farm to a descendant among the Joads who migrated west. When he discovers that the Joad's are now Mexican-American Jodes', he and his only living heir, Martín, must confront their ideas of family, legacy and America. Inspired by Steinbeck's classic, the two men travel from California back to Oklahoma, making an epic and entertaining journey on the Mother Road all while forging an unlikely bond and coming to terms with their brutal past.

This powerful new play, written by **Octavio Solis** (*El Paso Blue*, *Quixote*), examines the crossroads of family, immigration and the American dream.

"I have been a fan of Octavio Solis for many years," stated Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "*Mother Road* is a wonderfully original sequel to *The Grapes of Wrath* told from a contemporary point of view. This is a powerful story about land, family and survival which rocks the characters' world—and ours. We're pleased to be partnering with Oregon Shakespeare Festival to bring it to Arena audiences."

Making their Arena Stage debuts and reprising their roles from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production are **Mark Murphey** (Syracuse Stage's *To Kill a Mockingbird*) as William Joad, **Tony Sancho** (Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *La Comedia of Errors*) as Martín Jodes, **Amy Lizardo** (California Shakespeare Theater's *The Tempest*) as Mo and **Cedric Lamar** (Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *The Wiz*) as James/Cook.

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Also making their Arena Stage debuts are **David Anzuelo** (Woolly Mammoth's *Oedipus El Rey*) as Abelardo/Ranch Hand, **Natalie Camunas** (Cleveland Playhouse's *Native Gardens*) as Amelia/Chorus Leader, **Ted Deasy** (Broadway's *The Great Society*) as Roger/William's Father/State Trooper/ Ranch Hand/Chorus, **Derek Garza** (Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *Othello*) as Curtis/Abelardo's Father and **Kate Mulligan** (Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *Hairspray*) as Ivy/William's Mother/Police Officer.

"*Mother Road* was born out of a remarkable road trip that Octavio Solis undertook in 2013 with the Steinbeck National Center," stated director **Bill Rauch**. "In traveling the exact same route that the Joads took from Sallisaw, Oklahoma to the migrant farmworker camp in Weedpatch, California, Octavio opened his eyes and ears and heart to how things have and haven't changed in the 80 years since John Steinbeck captured our nation's class-rooted divisions in his celebrated novel. Octavio's work is rooted in the same moral outrage about economic injustice that makes *The Grapes of Wrath* a beloved American classic. The play proposes the inevitability of a diverse new American family that draws parallels between who we have been and who we are becoming."

In addition to Rauch, the creative team includes Set Designer **Christopher Acebo**, Costume Designer **Carolyn Mazuca**, Lighting Designer **Pablo Santiago**, Original Music and Sound Design **Paul James Prendergast**, Projection Designer **Kaitlyn Pietras**, Wig Designer **Anne Nesmith**, Associate Director **Kareem Fahmy**, Fight Director **U. Jonathan Toppo**, Movement Consultant **Jaclyn Miller**, Vocal Coach **Anita Maynard-Losh**, Casting Director **Joy Dickson**, Stage Manager **Kurt Hall** and Assistant Stage Manager **Emily Ann Mellon**.

**Octavio Solis** (*Playwright*) is a playwright and author whose works *Mother Road*, *Quixote Nuevo*, *Se Llama Cristina*, John Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven*, *Ghosts of the River*, *Lydia*, *June in a Box*, *Lethe*, *Gibraltar*, *The Ballad of Pancho and Lucy*, *Bethlehem*, *Dreamlandia*, *El Otro*, *Man of the Flesh*, *Prospect*, *El Paso Blue*, *Santos & Santos*, *La Posada Mágica* and *Cloudlands* (with music by Adam Gwon) have been mounted in theatres across the country such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the California Shakespeare Theatre, the Center Theatre Group, Yale Repertory Theatre, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the Magic Theatre, South Coast Repertory Theatre, El Teatro Campesino, Campo Santo, INTAR and Cornerstone Theatre. His short stories have been published in *Zyzyva*, *Catamaran*, *Huizache* and the *Chicago Quarterly Review*. Solis has received numerous awards including the United States Artists Fellowship for 2011 and the 2014 Pen Center USA Award for Drama. His new book *Retablos* is published by City Lights Publishing.

**Bill Rauch** (*Director*) has previously directed *Roe*, *Equivocation* and *A Community Carol* at Arena Stage. His work as a theater director has been seen across the nation, from low-income community centers to Broadway in the Tony Award-winning *All The Way*, as well as *The Great Society*. Bill is the inaugural artistic director of the Perelman Performing Arts Center, currently under construction at the World Trade Center in New York City. For the past 12 years, he was artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and before that he co-founded the community-based Cornerstone Theater Company where he served as artistic director for 20 years. Bill is the proud recipient of a Helen Hayes Award. He dedicates his work on this production to the memory of his nephew Christopher.

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### Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)

**David Anzuelo** (*Abelardo/Ranch Hand*)'s Off-Broadway credits include: *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven* (Atlantic Theater); *Fish Men*; *Se Llama Cristina* (Intar Theater); *Intimacy* and *Aunt Dan & Lemon* (New Group). He performed locally in Woolly Mammoth's *Oedipus El Rey* (Helen Hayes Award Nomination best ensemble). Regional credits include: *The Motherf#cker With the Hat* (Kitchen Theater); *Frost/Nixon* (Geva); *Our Town* (Northern Stage); *Stand-Up Tragedy* (Apple Tree Theater, Joseph Jefferson Award, best supporting actor); and Peter Sellars *The Merchant Of Venice* (International tour: Goodman Theater, Chicago; RSC, London; Thalia, Hamburg; MC93 Bobigny, France). Film credits include: *A Walk Among the Tombstones*; *Remember Me*. TV credits include: *Succession*; *Strangers*; *The Americans*; *Elementary*; *Blue Bloods*; *White Collar*; *Deadbeat*; and *Mercy*. He's a member of Labyrinth Theater Company and Rising Phoenix Rep.

**Natalie Camunas** (*Amelia/Chorus Leader*) is thrilled to be making her Arena Stage debut. She is a native Los Angeleno, USC graduate, queer second-generation Latinx actor, playwright and voice-over artist. Natalie works regionally in theatres across the country, favorites include: *Native Gardens* at the Cleveland Playhouse and originating the role of Gabby Orozco in the World Premiere co-production of *American Mariachi* at the Old Globe Theatre & Denver Center for the Performing Arts. Recent TV credits include: *Goliath* opposite Billy Bob Thornton on AMAZON and *Speechless* on ABC. As a voice over artist you can hear Natalie's voice in promo spots for Fox's *911* and in NY Times recommended podcast *PANG!* (@pangpodcast) available on iTunes. As a playwright, Natalie's plays have been produced in Los Angeles, New York and Ireland. [nataliecamunas.com](http://nataliecamunas.com)

**Ted Deasy** (*Roger/William's Father/State Trooper/Ranch Hand*) is making his Arena Stage debut. Other credits include: Broadway's *The Great Society*, the National Tour of Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* and Off- Broadway's productions of *Julius Caesar* (TFANA); *Days to Come* (Mint); and *7th of October* (Working Theatre). Ted was as a company member with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for nine seasons, spanning the past 24 years, with roles in 21 productions. Other Regional credits include: American Players Theatre, California Shakespeare Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St Louis, Dallas Summer Musicals, Cincinnati Playhouse, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Milwaukee Rep, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Syracuse Stage, Berkeley Rep, Yale Rep, Geva Theatre Center, Indiana Rep and Two River Theatre. Television and film credits include: *To the Flame Prophet of Evil* and *Secret Bodyguard*.

**Derek Garza** (*Abelardo's Father/Curtis*) is a First Nations/Latino Chicago-based actor with his M.F.A in Acting from Penn State University. He recently finished two seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where he was seen in *Othello*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *As You Like It* and the world premiere of *Between Two Knees*. This marks Derek's Arena Stage debut and he couldn't be more thrilled! Other theatres he has worked with include: Native Earth, American Repertory Theater, TimeLine Theatre, Mortar Theatre Company, Victory Gardens, Chicago Dramatist, Video Cabaret and Steppenwolf to name a few. Derek can also be seen in TV/film's like ABC's *Betrayal*; NBC's *Chicago Fire*, *Jimortal* (Pilot) and *Canal Street*. Thanks to all his friends, family, his beautiful babies Blaze & Storm and B! Twitter: @derekgarza, Instagram: @native\_samurai

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**Cedric Lamar** (*Cook/James*) has been an acting company member at Oregon Shakespeare Festival for the past six seasons playing roles in *Oklahoma*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Hamlet*, *The Wiz*, *Off the Rails*, *La Comedia of Errors*, *Pericles* and more. This past season Cedric was also the composer of *Alice in Wonderland*. You can stream and download his album, *Sketches of Alice: A Wonderland Mixtape*, at [cedriclamar.bandcamp.com](http://cedriclamar.bandcamp.com) and find his debut solo album, *Kingdoms and Tall Grass*, on Spotify and iTunes. Regional theatre credits include: Folger Theatre, Guthrie Theatre, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Festival LA, Unicorn Theatre and The Acting Company.

**Amy Lizardo** (*Mo*) is an actor, singer and teaching artist. Most recently she was seen as Adriana in *La Comedia of Errors* and Mo in *Mother Road* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Before she joined the OSF acting company, Amy was based on the San Francisco Bay Area. Some of her favorite roles include: Handsome Carl in *The Unfortunates* and Hawkins in *Men on Boats* with American Conservatory Theatre; Juana in *Quixote Nuevo*; Ariel in *The Tempest* with California Shakespeare Theatre; Clara in *Party People* with Berkeley Repertory Theatre; and Yitzhak in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* with Boxcar Theatre. Amy received her Masters degree from San Jose State University in 2010.

**Kate Mulligan** (*Ivy/William's Mother/Police Officer*) has appeared in 12 seasons with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival performing in *Hairspray*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *The Book of Will*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Twelfth Night*, *Roe*, *Fingersmith*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Animal Crackers*, *Welcome Home* and more. New York credits include: *Embedded* (The Public Theater) and *Bunny Bunny* (New York Stage & Film). Regional credits include: *O.P.C.* (The A.R.T.); *Euphoria*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Four Roses*, *Mephisto*, *The Dressing Room* (Actors' Gang); *Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* (South Coast Repertory); *Living Out* (Mark Taper Forum); and *Fall* (Taper Too). Film/TV credits include: *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *Seinfeld*, *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, *NYPD Blue*, *ER*, *Embedded*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Judging Amy*, *Being John Malkovich* and others.

**Mark Murphey** (*William Joad*) recently appeared as Duncan in New York Classical Theatre's production of *Macbeth*. Other most recent credits include Will in *Mother Road* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Giles Corey in *The Crucible* (Arkansas Rep.) Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Syracuse Stage). He spent 33 seasons with The Oregon Shakespeare Festival in such roles as Robert MacNamara/Wilbur Mills in *The Great Society and All the Way*, Mr Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Hamlet in *Hamlet*, Friar Lawrence and Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Iago in *Othello*, and contemporary roles such as Michael Bern in *Daughters of the Revolution*. Other Theatres include 6 seasons with ACT, Seattle Rep., Utah Shakes, Milwaukee Rep, among others.

**Tony Sancho** (*Martín Jodes*) is thrilled to reprise his role as Martín Jodes at Arena Stage after his run with Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Other credits include: *La Comedia of Errors* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Mother F\*cker with the Hat* (South Coast Repertory, Ojai Playwrights Conference); *Pookie Goes Grenading* and *Junie B. in Jingle Bells*, *Batman Smells* (South Coast Repertory); *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Aurora Theatre Company, Geffen Playhouse); *Prometheus Bound* (The Getty Villa); *The Web* (NeedTheater); *Lydia* (Mark Taper Forum); *The House on Mango Street* (Steppenwolf); and *La Posada Magica*, *Dreamlandia*, *Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner* (Teatro Vista). TV/Film credits include: *NCIS*, *Snowfall*, *East Los High*, *Bones*, *Isabel* project, *The Baby Makers*, *The Bridge*, *The Forgotten*, *ER*, *On the Downlow* and *The Trouble with Dee Dee*. Training: Steppenwolf; BA in Acting, Columbia College.

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For company biographies, please visit [arenastage.org/tickets/1920-season/mother-road/](http://arenastage.org/tickets/1920-season/mother-road/)

*Mother Road* is generously sponsored by the **David Bruce Smith Foundation**.

### Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff on February 19, 25 and March 2 following the 12 p.m. performance; March 3 following the 7:30 p.m. performance; and February 20 following the 8 p.m. performance.

### PRODUCTION INFORMATION

**The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Production of**

***Mother Road***

**Written by Octavio Solis**

**Directed by Bill Rauch**

**In the Fichandler Stage | February 7 – March 8, 2019**

**ABOUT:** The story follows the terminally ill William Joad and his quest to pass down his Oklahoma family farm to a descendant among the Joads who migrated west. When he discovers that the Joad's are now Mexican-American Jodes', he and his only living heir, Martín, must confront their ideas of family, legacy and America. Inspired by Steinbeck's classic, the two men travel from California back to Oklahoma, making an epic and entertaining journey on the Mother Road all while forging an unlikely bond and coming to terms with their brutal past.

### **CAST:**

Abelardo/Ranch Hand: David Anzuelo  
Amelia/Chorus Leader: Natalie Camunas  
Roger/William's Father/State Trooper/ Rach Hand/: Ted Deasy  
Abelardo's Father/Curtis: Derek Garza  
Cook/James: Cedric Lamar  
Mo: Amy Lizardo  
Ivy/William's Mother/Police Officer: Kate Mulligan  
William Joad: Mark Murphey  
Martín Jodes: Tony Sancho

### **CREATIVE TEAM:**

Director: Bill Rauch  
Set Designer: Christopher Acebo  
Costume Designer: Carolyn Mazuca  
Lighting Designer: Pablo Santiago  
Original Music and Sound Design: Paul James Prendergast  
Projection Designer: Kaitlyn Pietras  
Wig Designer: Anne Nesmith  
Associate Director: Kareem Fahmy  
Fight Director: U. Jonathan Toppo  
Movement Consultant: Jaclyn Miller  
Vocal Coach: Anita Maynard-Losh  
Casting Director: Joy Dickson  
Stage Manager: Kurt Hall  
Assistant Stage Manager: Emily Ann Mellon

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### **PLAN YOUR VISIT**

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *Mother Road* are on sale and are \$41-95, 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/tickets/savings-programs](http://arenastage.org/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 Street, SW, D.C.

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

### **PERFORMANCE DATES:**

Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Weekday matinees at noon on Wednesday, February 19, Tuesday, February 25 and Wednesday, March 4.

**Open-captioned performance:** Thursday, March 5 at 8 p.m.

**Closed captioning:** GalaPro begins Friday, February 14

**Audio-described performance:** Saturday, February 22 at 2 p.m.

**Full Calendar:** [arenastage.org/tickets/calendar](http://arenastage.org/tickets/calendar)

**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 \$29, and a la carte options are also available. To pre-order and see the menu, call 202-488-3300 or visit [arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/prix-fixe](http://arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/prix-fixe). The café opens two hours before the show. To view the concessions menu, visit [arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/concessions](http://arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/concessions).

**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 \$17. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$20 or on the day of the performance for \$24 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 \$15.

**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.

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For complete 2019/20 Season details, visit: [arenastage.org/tickets/subscriptions](https://arenastage.org/tickets/subscriptions).

**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 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](https://arenastage.org)

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