

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES ITS VIRTUAL SPRING/SUMMER SEASON, *LOOKING FORWARD*

*****Arena's virtual events series expands with two world premiere films, masterclasses and an artists' marketplace*****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the expansion of its online programs and events through August 2020. Arena Artistic Director **Molly Smith** has curated a diverse and engaging Spring/Summer Season, *Looking Forward*, connecting artists and audiences locally and nationally. In addition to the popular and in-demand Gifts of Art, Molly's Salons, Broadway dance classes and Civil Dialogues, Smith has created a robust line-up of programming.

"I had a major realization a few weeks after we closed our physical doors that without plays happening on our stages at Arena, the best way to communicate with our audiences is online," says Artistic Director Molly Smith. "We are thrilled to share the Spring/Summer Season of *Looking Forward*. What makes us different from anyone else? We will always be in high touch with you even online and we promise to engage you intellectually, politically, emotionally and spiritually just like we do in the theater."

Arena will premiere two films that capture the heartbeat and spirit of the D.C. region's response to COVID-19. Arena's education program, Voices of Now, moved its rehearsals online following the closure of schools and adapted their traditional original theater showcase to film. *Inside Voices: a film by Arena Stage's Voices of Now ensembles* is a time capsule created by 120 student artists' through a devised theater process.

May 22, 2020 is a filmed docudrama inspired by our shared and very different experiences to COVID-19 in our region of the country. The subjects of the docudrama will be ten residents of the D.C.-Maryland-Virginia area ranging in age from 18 – 80, from a variety of backgrounds including a hospital emergency nurse and a beekeeper. Each will be interviewed by 10 area playwrights on May 22, 2020. Each playwright will write a monologue based on their interview and the monologues will be filmed with Washington actors on June 6. The completed film will capture a slice of each life as a snapshot of radically changed lives in our region of the country.

The newly announced **masterclasses** will focus on playwriting, acting, stage management and design. Geared for adults, each class is two to three hours long twice per week on Wednesdays and Fridays. In an intimate setting of no more than 10 – 16 people per class, it is an exciting opportunity for community members to connect with experts in the field to hone their craft or be inspired to learn a new skill.

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Page 2 — Arena Stage Announces Its Spring/Summer Season

Featured masterclass instructors include Arena Power Play commissioned playwrights **Karen Zacarías** (*Native Gardens, Destiny of Desire*), **Craig Lucas** (*Light in the Piazza, Prelude to a Kiss*), **Eduardo Machado** (*Celia and Fidel*), and veteran Washington theater actor **Edward Gero** (*The Originalist*). Designer **Alejo Vietti** (*Celia and Fidel, Disney's Newsies*) and Arena Stage Costume Director **Joseph Salasovich** will lead classes on the process and business of costume design.

Additional instructors include members of Arena Stage's talented artistic and production team. Arena Properties Director **Jenn Sheetz** will focus on bringing props and set pieces from a script to life on stage. Seasoned stage manager **Kurt Hall** (*Mother Road, Jubilee, The Pajama Game*) with more than 20 years of experience will teach the fundamentals of theater stage management as a career. **Seema Sueko**, Arena's Deputy Artistic Director (*The Heiress, Right to be Forgotten*) will take students through the basics of directing.

Arena Stage Theater Artists Marketplace trailblazes a new model for regional theaters to connect art, artists and their artistry directly with patrons. Seventy years ago, Arena Stage was one of the pioneers of the regional theater movement. The Marketplace reimagines this art-delivery system in this unique time of social distancing. Patrons will have the opportunity to commission or purchase a gift of art from the artists and artisans who have graced Arena's stages. Participating artists include actors **Marsha Mason, Edward Gero, Nicholas Rodriguez, Dawn Ursula, Lise Bruneau, Kristen Wyatt**, designers **Ken MacDonald, Ivania Stack, Paige Hathaway, Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew**, Broadway Fight Master **David S. Leong**, Fight and Intimacy Choreographer **Jenny Male**, Voice and Dialect Coach **Lisa Nathans** and production department artisans and technicians **Deborah Nash** and **Timothy Thompson**. The Marketplace will launch in June.

Additional information and registration details on these programs can be found here: arenastage.org/lookingforward.

Upcoming Schedule

Masterclasses

The two-part classes feature different subjects including playwriting, costume design, acting, stage management and more. **Each class meets twice, starting at 5 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays via zoom.**

June 24 and 26 from 5 – 8 p.m.

Playwriting: Nuts and Bolts with Craig Lucas

Taught by the award-winning Craig Lucas, emerging playwrights will discover the nuts and bolts of conceiving a new play, strategies for mapping out the work, helpful tools for compressing and focusing the action.

Craig Lucas' plays include *Reckless, Blue Window, Prelude to a Kiss, Ode to Joy* and *I Was Most Alive With You*. He wrote libretti for *The Light in the Piazza, An American in Paris* and *Two Boys* (opera). He directed the world premiere of *The Light in the Piazza, Harry Kondoleon's Saved or Destroyed* and *Play Yourself*, as well as the films *The Dying Gaul* and *Birds of America*. Awards include NY Film Critics Best Screenplay, Sundance Audience Award, Excellence in Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters as well as three Obie Awards.

July 8 and 10 from 5 – 7 p.m.

From Page to Stage with Arena Stage Properties Director Jenn Sheetz

Have you ever wondered how a prop gets to stage? This class consists of the main aspects of Properties Direction from making a prop list from the script, researching the time period, creating conversations with designers, director and choreographer to bringing the final prop design to Opening Night. Perfect for anyone interested in Properties or Set Design.

Page 3 — Arena Stage Announces Its Spring/Summer Season

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Jenn Sheetz has been Arena Stage's Properties Director for the past 2 seasons after twelve seasons as Properties Director at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. She began her theatrical career at Arena Stage, working as a Properties Assistant for 9 seasons in the Kreeger Theatre. She has also designed properties for Norwegian Cruise Line (*Rock of Ages*, *Legally Blonde*, *Million Dollar Quartet*), Comedy Central, and Showtime.

July 15 and 17 from 5 – 8 p.m.

ZOOM-o-logues: Acting for the Virtual Space with Edward Gero

As Zoom Theater becomes the platform for presenting live works for the foreseeable future, this master class for working professionals focuses on the work of adjusting stage techniques for this particular Hollywood Squares playing environment, identifying the obstacles and opportunities of the virtual stage on screen.

A Washington theater community veteran, **Edward Gero**, is a sixteen-time nominee and four-time recipient of the prestigious Helen Hayes Award. His most recent work includes a ZOOM theater reunion reading of *King Lear* with Stacy Keach, Falstaff in *1HenryIV* at The Folger Theatre and as Pulitzer in *Newsies* at Arena Stage. In 2015, he created the role of Justice Antonin Scalia in the world premiere of Molly Smith's acclaimed production of John Strand's play *The Originalist* and toured with it in 2017 and 2018 to Asolo Rep in Sarasota, Florida, The Pasadena Playhouse, Chicago's Court Theatre, and 59E59 Theatres in New York Off-Broadway. He is Professor of Theater and Head of Performance for the School of Theater at George Mason University and a faculty member of The Academy for Classical Acting at George Washington University.

July 22 and 24 from 5 – 7 p.m.

Stage Management: Behind the Scenes with Kurt Hall

This two-part course will immerse the emerging stage manager into the professional world of stage management. This master class will give students the opportunity to ask questions as well as learn about the day-to-day realities of stage management. Topics to be discussed are Actors Equity Association, working at regional theaters, Broadway, national tours, and corporate events, as well as other relevant issues. Arena Stage's Kurt Hall will lead the course, drawing on his many years of experience and will also involve other established stage managers to discuss the rewards and pitfalls of this challenging career. Special Guests include **Cheryl Mintz** (Resident Production Stage Manager at McCarter Theatre, Broadway's *Anna and the Tropics*, *The Road to Mecca* and others), **Michael J. Passaro** (Broadway's *Moulin Rouge*, *The Cher Show*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and many others.), **Amber Dickerson** (Broadway's *Motown*, National Tours – *Dreamgirls*, *Kinky Boots*, *Falsettos*. Additional regional theater work, including over 15 years at Arena Stage) and **Kathryn L. McKee** (Broadway's *Hello Dolly*, *The Crucible*, *9 to 5* and many others). This master class will leave participants with a better appreciation and understanding of the special skillset needed for an integral aspect of theater production – stage management.

July 29 from 5 – 7 p.m. & July 31 from 5 – 8 p.m.

Playwriting: Dialogue with Eduardo Machado

This writing workshop focuses on developing the dramatic voice and style through exploration of characters, dramatic needs, using sense memory, emotional recall and other theatrical and psychological techniques.

Page 4 — Arena Stage Announces Its Spring/Summer Season

Eduardo Machado was born in Cuba and came to the United States when he was nine. He is the author of over 40 plays, including *The Cook*, *Havana is Waiting*, *The Modern Ladies of Guanabacoa*, *Fabiola*, *Broken Eggs* and *Stevie Wants to Play the Blues*. His plays have been produced at Seattle Repertory, The Goodman, Hartford Stage, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Mark Taper Forum, Long Wharf, Hampstead Theatre in London, The Cherry Lane Theatre, Theater for the New City and Repertorio Español, among many others. He was formerly artistic director of INTAR Theatre in NY and has been a Professor of Playwriting at NYU Tisch and Columbia. He is the co-author of *Tastes Like Cuba: An Exile's Hunger for Home* and his plays are published by Samuel French and TCG.

August 5 and 7 from 6 – 7 p.m.

Costume Design: The Journey of a Designer with Alejo Vietti

Costume designer Alejo Vietti designs for theater and opera all over the world. In this two-part class, learn about his journey as a costume designer and how he has developed a career that spans resident theater, Broadway and opera. Learn about the life of a professional costume designer and how to develop a viable career in the field.

Alejo Vietti's Arena Stage credits include *Ella*, *The Pajama Game*, *Anything Goes* (Helen Hayes Award) and Disney's *Newsies*. New York credits include Broadway's *Holiday Inn*, *Allegiance* (Drama Desk nomination) and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (U.S. tour, West End – Olivier Award nomination, Australia, Japan and UK tour). He has designed for City Center Encores!, Radio City Rockettes, Roundabout Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Atlantic Theatre, among others. Opera credits include New York City Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Minnesota Opera, Wolf Trap Opera and Donesk Opera (Ukraine). Selected regional work includes Alley Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Ford's, Signature, Goodspeed, Guthrie, Hartford Stage, Paper Mill Playhouse and The Old Globe. Other credits include Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

August 12 and 14 from 5 – 8 p.m.

Costume Design and Technology: The Business of "the Business" with Joseph Salasovich

Joseph Salasovich, Arena Stage's Costume Director takes participants through how to put their best foot forward as an emerging artist or technician in a professional costume shop setting. This class is geared towards junior or senior undergraduates or recent graduates of colleges and universities who study any discipline within costume design, technology, or both.

Arena Stage Costume Director **Joseph P. Salasovich** has worked for 20 seasons in various capacities on over 150 productions. He most recently designed costumes for Molly Smith's *Snow Child* as well as *Mother Courage and Her Children* and the world premiere of *The Originalist*.

August 19 and 21 from 5 – 7 p.m.

Playwriting Inspiration: Honing in on your voice with Karen Zacarías

For beginner to experienced writers, this hands-on workshop shares some tools to "make something out of nothing" by mining the imagination and voice.

Karen Zacarías has been named by American Theater Magazine as one of the most produced playwrights in the U.S. Her plays at Arena Stage include *Destiny of Desire*, *Native Gardens*, *The Book Club Play* and *Legacy of Light* (directed by Molly Smith). Karen is a core-founder of the Latinx Theatre Commons; She is a 2019 Washingtonian of the Year; 2019 Sine Fellow for Policy Innovation.

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Page 5 — Arena Stage Announces Its Spring/Summer Season

August 26 and 28 from 5 – 7 p.m

Directing Snapshot with Seema Sueko

This snapshot of stage directing is for beginning directors and other interested adults. Sessions will focus on the components and skills of directing.

Seema Sueko currently serves as Deputy Artistic Director where she drives the season planning process, directs plays and oversees artistic programs. Her R&D work includes developing the Consensus Organizing for Theater methodology, creating the Green Theater Choices Toolkit and researching the neuroscience of theater. Prior, she was Associate Artistic Director at Pasadena Playhouse and Executive Artistic Director of Mo`olelo Performing Arts Company, which she co-founded in San Diego. She has directed and acted at theaters across the U.S. including Arena Stage, Denver Center, Ford's Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, People's Light, The Old Globe, Yale Rep, 5th Avenue Theatre, Native Voices and Mo`olelo, among others.

Ongoing Series

Gifts of Art

These small unique Gifts of Art come from Arena artists all over the country. There are over 40 wonderful pieces and counting to view on the Arena website.

Molly's Salon

Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith continues to interview a variety of artists and leaders to discuss new ideas they are excited about, life in the pandemic and glimmers of hope for the future. **Molly's Salons take place on Thursdays via Zoom from 7-7:30 p.m.**

May 28

A Disney's *Newsies* Reunion. Actors from the production join Molly's Salon.

Daniel J. Maldonado (Jack Kelly), **Erin Weaver** (Katherine Plumber) and **Joe Montoya** (Crutchie)

June 4

It's all about the Artistic Directors

Stephanie Ybarra, Artistic Director, Baltimore Center Stage, **Barry Edelstein**, Artistic Director, The Old Globe Theatre and **Mark Clements**, Artistic Director, Milwaukee Repertory Theater

June 11

Molly will host a one-on-one interview with Huntington Theatre's Artistic Director **Peter Dubois**.

June 18

Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director, National Playwright's Conference at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center

Robert Raben, President and Founder, The Raben Group

Andy Shallal, activist, Founder and CEO, Busboys and Poets

Civil Dialogues

Arena Stage hosts conversations for members of the community to engage in civil discourse about social and political issues so that people of diverse viewpoints can have fruitful dialogues with one another. **The Civil Dialogues take place on Mondays via Zoom from 4 – 5:30 p.m.**

May 25

Politics in the COVID-19 Age: How to Make Democracy Work During the Pandemic.

Featured Dialogue Starters include **Professor Tabatha Abu El-Haj**, Associate Professor of Law at Drexel University; **William Galston**, Ezra K. Zilkha Chair and Senior Fellow and Governance Studies at Brookings Institution; **Yascha Mounk**, Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins University and **Norman J Ornstein**, Resident Scholar at American Enterprise Institute

June 22

Is China the new enemy? Confront or Cooperate?

Dialogue Starters to be announced at a later date.

July 20

Health Care Rationing and End of Life Decisions: Who and How?

Dialogue Starters to be announced at a later date.

Broadway Dance Class

Choreographer Parker Esse (*Anything Goes*, *Newsies*) returns with toe-tapping workouts and Broadway musical theater dance combination classes. **The classes will take place on Tuesdays via Zoom from 6 – 7 p.m.**

May 26

June 9

June 23

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 impacting the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its eighth decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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