

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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July 31, 2020

ARENA STAGE, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY & ANDREW R. AMMERMAN EXTEND MULTI-SEASON PARTNERSHIP

***** Gift from Andrew R. Ammerman enables three more years of artistic collaboration and shared resources in support of education and theater *****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater and Georgetown University Theater & Performance Studies Program are pleased to announce a generous gift by Andrew R. Ammerman, making possible a three-year continuation of the **Arena Stage, Georgetown University and Andrew R. Ammerman Partnership** now through 2023.

“Andrew Ammerman is a beautifully generous person, in philanthropy and in spirit,” shares **Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith**. “He is inspired by creating partnerships and Arena Stage and Georgetown University benefit immensely from this creative and educational partnership.”

Now entering its fifteenth year, this unique partnership highlights a shared commitment to artistic vigor, education, the development of new theatrical work and theater which engages beyond its traditional four walls. Partnership activities include guest lectures, shared artistic and dramaturgical expertise and unique learning opportunities for students including offering free or discounted tickets to students for Arena performances.

“Over the course of fifteen years, the visionary support of Andrew Ammerman has enabled so many extraordinary opportunities through this partnership, from convenings to festivals, co-productions and masterclasses, and has had a tremendous impact on the lives and careers of many of our students,” says **Georgetown University’s Department of Performing Arts Chair and Theater and Performance Studies Program Director Derek Goldman**. “His vision is inspiring us as we now embark on new forms of collaboration especially suited to this virtual environment and we look forward to many more years of working together.”

The renewed partnership will feature virtual programming designed to reach a wider audience – globally, nationally and locally for whom in-person attendance is difficult or impossible.

“Thanks to a tenacious nature, it was never in doubt to continue my family Partnership with The Arena Stage and Georgetown University,” shares **Andrew R. Ammerman**. “We have added a digital/virtual component that speaks to the times we are traveling through. The Arts have never been needed more than now; art has the power to speak with and to soothe the conscious and unconscious mind. We are indeed blessed with great leadership at both institutions.”

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The 2020/21 Partnership begins in the Fall with two enterprising projects created in response to COVID-19.

The Flash Acts Festival

Arena Stage and Georgetown University's Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics and Theater and Performance Studies Program have joined forces with The Forum for Cultural Engagement, the Lubimovka Young Playwrights Festival, the Center for Modern Drama in Yekaterinburg and the United States Embassy in Moscow to present **FLASH ACTS**, a 6-day online festival featuring newly commissioned short plays by twenty pre-eminent American and Russian playwrights. **FLASH ACTS** will premiere on October 8, 2020, and will feature productions in Russian and English; panel discussions with the playwrights, directors, designers and actors for each production; and the *FLASH ACTS Kultura Lounge* featuring original musical collaborations created and performed by young Russian and American musicians.

Playwrights Arena

In addition, this season, the two institutions will partner with Howard University on Playwright's Arena, a program focused on developing the dramaturgical practice and processes of theater makers. Six advanced students or recent alums from Howard and Georgetown Universities will work with Dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke from September through May in rigorous examination of their artistry. They will also receive opportunities to connect with the playwrights and directors of Arena Stage's 2020/21 Season.

Over the course of 15 seasons, the gift has allowed Georgetown students and faculty to engage with Arena staff and artists. Most recently in the 2019/20 Season, Georgetown students engaged in a master acting class taught by Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Director of Arena Stage's production of *Jitney*; Georgetown University Professor Soyica Colbert served as dramaturg on Arena's production of *Celia and Fidel*; and Georgetown University students sat in on rehearsals of *Mother Road* at Arena Stage and engaged in forums with playwrights, directors and cast members from Arena productions.

"Andrew Ammerman is a champion of innovative thinking and creative collaborations." says Arena Stage's Deputy Artistic Director Seema Sueko. "His support of this partnership in this time of COVID-19, is allowing Arena and Georgetown to define new, virtual and safe ways to provide meaningful opportunities for both students and artists to strengthen and expand their craft into new modalities."

Additional details about partnership activities will be announced at a later date and featured at arenastage.org and performingarts.georgetown.edu.

Playwrights Arena is supported, in part, by The Barbara R. Walton Endowment Fund for New Playwrights.

*Housed in the Davis Performing Arts Center, the **Georgetown University Theater & Performance Studies Program** features a nationally recognized faculty of leading scholar/artists and professional practitioners, with a dynamic interdisciplinary major that emphasizes the interaction of artistic and analytic inquiry. The Program's distinctive curriculum integrates the political and international character of Georgetown, a commitment to social justice, and high-quality, cutting-edge production seasons, including world premieres. In 2012, Backstage selected the Program as one of the top five college theater programs outside of New York. The Theater & Performance Studies Program provides unique focus on adapting, devising and developing new work, interdisciplinary research-to-performance projects such as senior theses, cross-cultural performance studies, and innovative approaches to design and multi-media, as well as playwriting, directing, dramaturgy, ensemble, and solo performance. The Program invests in a distinctive array of professional partnerships, and collaborations including the Laboratory of Global Performance and Politics, an initiative with the School of Foreign Service.*

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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.

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