

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ARENA STAGE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BLACK COALITION AGAINST COVID AND HOWARD UNIVERSITY'S WHUT-TV AND WHUR RADIO WILL PREMIERE *YOUTH VOICES & COVID-19*

\*\*\* Inspired by *Inside Voices: A film by Arena Stage's Voices of Now ensembles*, the hour-long broadcast explores the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of young people \*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is pleased to partner with the Black Coalition Against COVID (BCAC) and Howard University's WHUT-TV and WHUR radio to premiere *Youth Voices and COVID-19* on **October 9 at 8 p.m.** The special program will air at the same time and on the same date on television and on WHUR's sister station WHUR-World 96.3HD2. The hour-long broadcast will feature excerpts from the *Inside Voices* film and student responses.

The lives of youth have been upended and forever changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the special broadcast, young people will speak out about their concerns, fears and hopes. A distinguished panel of mental health professionals will provide their expert insights and offer support, guidance and enlightenment to assist young people throughout the community and their families in more effectively navigating these challenging times.

*Inside Voices: A film by Arena Stage's Voices of Now ensembles* which premiered in June 2020, inspired this unique program. It chronicled the personal experiences of over 130 students whose lives had been impacted by COVID-19. The student testimonials shared on the program are their responses to viewing the film. Arena's Community Engagement team selected the student responses based on film excerpts focused on anxiety, grief and loss and isolation.

"Arena Stage's Voices of Now provides a platform for young artists and activists to use their personal experiences to investigate their world and, through their work, pose questions vital to their communities, state *Inside Voices* co-directors **Arena Stage's Director of Education Ashley Forman and Community Programs Manager Mauricio Pita**. "Our hope is that these questions will spark a chain reaction. One that begins with productive conversations and ends with tangible, positive change. This broadcast is an example of the kinds of conversations that are possible when young people are invited to be part of the discussion."

This remarkable program is the culmination of a dynamic partnership between Arena Stage's Community Engagement Team, the Black Coalition Against COVID (BCAC), WHUT-TV Howard University Television and WHUR radio, the Washington Teachers' Union and the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing.

"We at the Black Coalition Against COVID have been privileged during this pandemic to listen attentively to the voices of young people", said **Reed Tuckson, M.D., former DC Commissioner of Public Health**. "Our colleagues at Arena Stage, The Wendt Center and members of the Washington Teachers Union have brought to us the anxieties, grief, isolation and other emotions that are being experienced by so many young people in our community. We hope that through this program, and the insights of our experts, we can offer some healing and hope for children and their families."

Broadcast partners WHUT and WHUR 96.3 are committed to serving the Washington Metropolitan community in ways that matter most with a proven track record of delivering educational, entertaining and intellectually stimulating programs.

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“We’ve spent the last 40 years cultivating amazing relationships and partnerships with organizations like Arena Stage and Black Coalition Against COVID,” states **Howard University Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations Debbi Jarvis**. “That is why it gives us great satisfaction to broadcast *Youth Voices and COVID-19*. This is just the type of presentation that reflects WHUT’s and WHUR 96.3’s ongoing commitment to positively impact the lives of DMV viewers. We are so proud to be part of this joint endeavor.”

***Youth Voices and COVID-19*** will be broadcast on WHUT-TV and WHUR’s sister station WHUR-World 96.3HD2 on **October 9 at 8 p.m.** with rebroadcasts on **Saturday, October 10 at 12:00 a.m., Sunday, October 11 at 9 a.m., Tuesday, October 20 at 9:00 p.m.** and **Wednesday, October 21 at 1:00 a.m.** The full film ***Inside Voices: A film by Arena Stage Voices of Now ensembles*** film can be viewed [here](#).

***The Black Coalition Against COVID (BCAC)*** is a community-focused group organized specifically to help uplift and save lives during this pandemic. We understand our work as being aligned with the vision of “The Beloved Community” as expressed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community leaders from across the city are essential in the fight to protect our city from this pandemic. The BCAC has chosen to accept the challenge of this fight and to do it with the urgency this crisis demands. [blackcoalitionagainstcovid.org](http://blackcoalitionagainstcovid.org)

Founded in 1867, **Howard University** is a private, research university comprised of 13 schools and colleges. Students pursue studies in more than 120 areas leading to undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. To date, Howard has awarded more than 120,000 degrees in the arts, the sciences, and the humanities. The historic main campus sits on a hilltop in Northwest Washington blocks from the storied U Street and Howard Theatre. Howard is two miles from the U.S. Capitol where many students intern, and scores of alumni shape national and foreign policy. [howard.edu](http://howard.edu)

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

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