

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Renée Littleton/Lauren McMillen
press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4055

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For additional information, visit:
arenastage.org/lovelettersexperience

ARENA STAGE LAUNCHES LOVE LETTER EXPERIENCE BASED ON KEN LUDWIG'S *DEAR JACK, DEAR LOUISE*

***** Delivered through the mail, patrons will relive the magic of this joyous, heartfelt drama about Ludwig's parents who met and fell in love by letter during World War II *****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is excited to announce a unique storytelling experience delivered directly to mailboxes across the country. Inspired by Tony Award-winning playwright **Ken Ludwig's** (Broadway's *Lend Me a Tenor, Crazy For You*) *Dear Jack, Dear Louise*, patrons will receive a series of nine letters in the mail that follow the love story of Ludwig's parents, Jacob S. Ludwig and Louise Rabiner. This intimate journey via post includes letters, personal photos and telegrams specifically designed and handcrafted with period details by Arena Stage's Properties Director Jenn Sheetz and Assistant Properties Director Lance Pennington.

"When Arena's Casting Director/Line Producer Teresa Sapien suggested we create a tactile experience based on Ken Ludwig's *Dear Jack, Dear Louise* for people to enjoy at home during the pandemic, we were excited," shares Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith**.

"We used to write letters all the time — emails are not the same. To watch this love affair grow over letters is intriguing and fun," **Smith** continues. "Ken Ludwig's *Dear Jack, Dear Louise*, based on the true story of how his parents met and courted, is a lovely play — and now a fun, exciting at-home experience. Whether or not you saw the play, experience this story recreated in real time through the mail."

This enchanting experience makes the perfect gift for your loved ones. For \$35, patrons will receive nine individual letters with special keepsakes related to the story. **The limited-time experience is available for purchase beginning January 14 by visiting [here](#).** Mailings will start in early March, with new letters placed in the mail twice a week. Recipients should expect to receive all nine packets within a six-week period.

Premiering at Arena Stage in 2019, Ken Ludwig's *Dear Jack, Dear Louise* is "utterly charming" (*Washington City Paper*). The play was awarded the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding Original New Play or Musical at the 2020 Helen Hayes Awards. Set in 1942 during World War II, Captain Jacob S. Ludwig and aspiring actress, Louise Rabiner, correspond through a series of letters and become pen pals. A romance soon begins to form and the two must find their way toward each other, even though they have never met.

This love story brings audiences back to an era when handwritten letters were the most important form of communication when physically separated. While audiences cannot gather and are isolated at home, this devised form of theater revitalizes a sense of personal connection to theatergoers' mailboxes.

"Letters give us a great insight into who we are. It's lovely to see this lost artform being renewed and sustained during this time of isolation," explains **Ludwig**. "There's a really interesting tension and spontaneity that exists in letters that make them so special. There are formalities that exist in the body of the correspondence itself which give a nice sense of distance and, at the same time, intimacy by talking directly to the heart of the person receiving the letter."

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Page 2 — Arena Stage Launches Love Letter Experience Based on Ken Ludwig's *Dear Jack, Dear Louise*

This limited-time experience is generously sponsored through the **Artistic Director's Fund**.

For more information and to purchase a love letter experience, visit [here](#).

Ken Ludwig has had six shows on Broadway and seven in London's West End, and many of his works have become a standard part of the American repertoire. *Lend Me a Tenor* won two Tony Awards and *Crazy For You* was on Broadway for 5 years and won the Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Musical. He has won two Olivier Awards, two Helen Hayes Awards, the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of the Year and the Edwin Forrest Award for Contributions to the American Theater. His other plays include *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Twentieth Century*, *Be My Baby*, *Baskerville*, *A Comedy of Tenors*, *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, *A Fox on the Fairway*, *Leading Ladies* and a stage version of *Murder on the Orient Express*. *Dear Jack, Dear Louise* won the 2020 Helen Hayes/MacArthur Award for Best New Play or Musical. His work has been performed in over 30 countries in more than 20 languages, and his plays are produced throughout the United States every night of the year. kenludwig.com

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 groundbreaking 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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