

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES PREMIERE OF *VETERANS DAY 2020*

*** *The short film based on the play War Words will air November 11* ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is pleased to partner with The Atlantic Council for the virtual premiere screening of *VETERANS DAY 2020*. This cinematic celebration of military service will debut on **Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 4:30 pm EST** and will remain available to the public for free for 26 weeks. This short film has been adapted from the stage play *War Words* by Michelle Kholos Brooks.

Written by Brooks and directed by Arena Stage's deputy artistic director, Seema Sueko, *VETERANS DAY 2020* tells the funny, strange, heroic, and heartbreaking stories of men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, based on the playwright's interviews with veterans of those wars and their families. Introduced by Atlantic Council Executive Vice Chair Adrienne Arsht—a leading impact philanthropist and business leader—and featuring keynote remarks from General David Petraeus, *VETERANS DAY 2020* marks the launch of the Council's campaign to promote a Veterans Day tradition of bringing staged readings of *War Words* to communities across the country.

"Being located in Washington, DC, Arena Stage is at the heart of American politics and power. We share community with our fellow Americans serving in the military—Arena's Mead Center is neighbor to Fort McNair and we have hosted an annual Thanksgiving event to celebrate military families for many years. For those outside this area, the military can be misconstrued by political misperceptions or misunderstanding. The Atlantic Council's excellent initiative to humanize the military experience through theater is an ideal partnership with Arena," shares Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith**.

"Director Seema Sueko has done a beautiful job with Michele Kholos Brooks' powerful play, based on interviews with veterans. The pandemic cannot stop getting this important message out, and Veteran's Day—or Armistice Day—is the perfect time to share their stories with the world—since now that this project is online the audience can be world-wide," continued **Smith**.

Working in collaboration with Brooks, who wrote the adaptation, Sueko's film achieves a succinct rendering of the play's essence and in a form that itself is a heartening testament to the resilience of creative minds. In addition to reflecting Sueko's vision to use Zoom as her soundstage, the film's unique form shows off the virtual multimedia designs of Jared Mezzocchi and enjoys a sound design with original music by Andre Pluess. Casting director Teresa Sapien's ensemble—Shaun Baker, Jacqueline Correa, Angel Desai, Justin Emeka, Brian Lee Huynh, Alyssa Keegan, Thomas Keegan, Brian Letscher, and Ramón De Ocampo—brings to full life the hard and heartfelt war words of the film's compelling characters.

To attend the virtual premiere of *VETERANS DAY 2020*, please register [here](#). The film will remain available to the public to stream for free for 26 weeks.

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 groundbreaking 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

The Atlantic Council promotes constructive leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the Atlantic Community's central role in meeting global challenges. The Council provides an essential forum for navigating the dramatic economic and political changes defining the twenty-first century by informing and galvanizing its uniquely influential network of global leaders. The Atlantic Council—through the papers it publishes, the ideas it generates, the future leaders it develops, and the communities it builds—shapes policy choices and strategies to create a more free, secure, and prosperous world. atlanticcouncil.org

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