

WEDDINGS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Mead Center for American Theater

240-488-4380 | RENTALS@ARENASTAGE.ORG

WHY MEAD CENTER?

Nestled along the waterfront in the historic Southwest neighborhood of Washington, D.C., the Mead Center for American Theater offers a unique blend of breathtaking views, stunning architecture, theatrical history, and world-class hospitality.

A magnificent, custom-designed carpet in hues of red, orange and yellow spans the first floor and Grand Lobby. Perched atop the roof of the Kreeger Theater, the third floor café offers a birds-eye view of the entire Mead Center and features a contemporary rock garden. The center is completed by the open-air Terrace, which offers breathtaking views of the Waterfront and Washington Monument.

For unconventional couples, a Wedding Ceremony or Reception at the Mead Center for American Theater is a theatrical event you'll never forget. The striking, yet intimate, Kogod Cradle is a stunning setting in which to say "I do." Afterwards, the magnificent floor to ceiling windows while dining in the Molly Smith Study or Grand Lobby set a dramatic tone for the most important event of your lives.

ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS REGARDING WEDDINGS AT THE MEAD CENTER?

The Mead Center provides some of the most highly-desirable event space in the Washington, DC Metro area. With beautiful views of the Waterfront and the Washington Monument, stunning architectural elements, custom carpets, and hospitality catered by some of the best companies in the nation's capital, a wedding at the Mead Center is an affair to remember.

While we are a unique, modern and non-traditional venue, the Arena Stage performance calendar imposes limitations on the availability of our reception spaces. Please note that the Grand Lobby and Café are only available when we are performance-free, and that we may have restrictions and limitations on music in the Molly Smith Study and Bank of America Lower Lobby until performances have concluded for the evening. If you are interested in hosting your wedding at the Mead Center, please reach out to our Events and Rentals team to discuss the possibilities and schedule a site visit.

WHAT ARE THE RENTAL FEES? WHAT DOES THE RENTAL FEE COVER?

Please see our Wedding Brochure for rental fee packages. Weddings packages assume a cocktail hour, followed by a seated reception with dinner and dancing. Ceremony space is available for an additional fee. Wedding rentals are booked within a 10:00 AM – 2:00 AM window, and generally assume 1 hour for the ceremony (if applicable), 1 hour for a cocktail hour, and up to 4 hours for dinner and dancing.

The rental fee covers the following: exclusive use of the rooms booked for the duration of your rental period; Mead Center events staff on site for the duration of the rental period; restroom maintenance throughout the event/guest time; room set-up or strike for any Mead Center equipment. The rental fee does NOT cover dining or cocktail tables and chairs, linens, china, etc.; these items are generally rented through your selected caterer.

WHAT TIME CAN MY WEDDING START AND END?

Load-in may not start before 10:00 AM, and all weddings must conclude by midnight; weddings may be extended to 1:00 AM on a case-by-case basis. All caterer or third party breakdown and load-out

must be completed by 2:00 AM. Events requiring load-in before 10:00 AM or extending past 2:00 AM must be approved in advance of the event date, and are subject to additional facility fees.

HOW DO I SECURE A SPACE AND DATE FOR MY WEDDING?

A space may be held for up to two weeks and holds must be requested in writing. To secure a space, we ask that you sign a License Agreement, and provide a deposit of 50% of the rental fee, a security deposit and Certificate of Insurance. The balance of all fees is due two week prior to your wedding date.

CAN I HAVE A DJ, BAND, OR OTHER LIVE MUSIC?

Yes! However, please note that restrictions may apply based the Arena Stage programming occurring on your wedding date. On dates in which the Mead Center is entirely performance free, any type of DJ, band or other live music are permitted provided that that volume level is not excessive. On dates when select theaters host performances, music is permitted with certain restrictions until the performances have concluded (typically around 10:00 PM). Restrictions generally include a cap on the decibel level from 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM and a ban on the use of subwoofers until the conclusion of all Arena Stage performances.

Excessive volume (as determined solely by Mead Center management) is prohibited at all times. Live music is prohibited on the Terrace at all times.

IS PARKING AVAILABLE? ARE YOU CLOSE TO A METRO?

There is limited parking available in both the Mead Center's on-site garage and the two public garages at 1100 and 1101 4th Street, SW. Parking is subject to availability, especially on dates when it is shared with the Mead Center's theater patrons. We are conveniently located just 2 blocks from the Waterfront Metro Station on the Green line. We also encourage clients to use rideshare services such as Lyft or Uber, and we are happy to coordinate valet services for your event.

DO I HAVE TO USE AN APPROVED CATERER?

The Mead Center maintains a list of exclusive caterers, from which you must choose. All food must be provided by one of the following companies:

CORCORAN CATERERS

Leslie Grimes
leslie@corcorancaterers.com
301-588-9200

DESIGN CUISINE

Kent Smith
ksmith@designcuisine.com
703-769-7335

DISTINCT TASTE

Bryan Nails
bnails@distincttaste.net
404-444-4043

RIDGEWELLS CATERING

Katie Gamble Fleury
kfleury@ridgewells.com
301-907-3757

RSVP CATERING

Shauna DiPasquale
sdipasquale@rsvpcatering.com
571-722-1271

Alcoholic beverages must be served by a licensed bartender from an approved caterer or the Mead Center cafe. The Mead Center works with some of the best caterers in the Washington, DC metro area, and we are certain you will be as pleased with their offerings as we are!

CAN I PROVIDE MY OWN ALCOHOL?

Yes! All of our caterers permit client to provide their own beer, wine, and/or liquor; the caterer, however, is required to pour and serve all alcoholic beverages. According to local regulations, all alcohol must be purchased in the District of Columbia.

Red wine is permitted throughout the Mead Center.

CAN I USE MY OWN VENDORS FOR LIGHTING, A/V, DÉCOR, AND OTHER NEEDS?

You are free to choose a vendor of your choice for these services, subject to approval in advance by Mead Center management. We require that third party vendors schedule a site visit at least 2 weeks prior to the wedding date to discuss event policies and procedures with our Events and Rentals team. We also require that all vendors sign a Mead Center Vendor Agreement and supply a Certificate of Insurance. Please see the Wedding Brochure for a list of pre-approved recommended vendors.

ARE THERE ANY VENDOR RESTRICTIONS I SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

Our preferred caterers are well-versed in our facility policies and procedures, and are sensitive to the particularities of our event rental spaces. Please note that for all vendors, load-in and load-out times are limited to the window during which you have rented the space. Do consider this restriction when selecting a third party vendor for A/V, equipment rental, lights or other needs, as the Mead Center can only store items on a case-by-case basis, and storage is subject to a daily fee.

ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON DÉCOR?

The following items are not permitted: fog, dry ice, or bubble machines; helium balloons or any item which may float; the tossing of raw rice, seeds, paper cut-outs, flowers petals, glitter, confetti or any item smaller than 2" in diameter.

Votive and hurricane candles are permissible, provided that flames are completely enclosed. Candles may not be incorporated into floral décor for any reason. Candles are not permitted in our theaters. Any candles placed on the bookshelves in the Study must be battery operated; real flame is not permitted near the books.