POTUS
or, behind every great dumbass are seven women trying to keep him alive
2023/24 SEASON

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POTUS
OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBBASE ARE SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE

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ARENA STAGE MISSION

Arena Stage is built on the land of the Piscataway people of the Algonquin-speaking tribes, as well as the lands of the Native American people of the greater Anacostia, Potomac, and Tidewater regions.

ARENAC STAGE MISSION

Arena Stage is the voice of American theater resident in our nation's capital. Focused on American artists, our productions are innovative and representative of stories from across the country. We nurture new plays and reimagine classics. We celebrate our democracy and diversity through a multitude of voices in our productions and community engagement programs to inspire people to action. We produce all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, entertaining, deep, and dangerous in the American spirit.

ARTISTICALLY SPEAKING

I am delighted to welcome you to Arena Stage as your new Artistic Director! I am so grateful for the incredibly warm welcome I've received since joining the iconic Arena Stage family. I look forward to getting to know you throughout the season.

While still relatively new to residency in Washington, D.C., I am familiar with our capital city and the myriad ways politics are woven into every aspect of life. Helicopters, motorcades, and government shutdowns have a distinct and specific impact here that are mere reverberations in other parts of the country.

The indomitable spirit of our city is representative of the hope, grit, joy, and dreams that stretch from coast to coast. In taking the mantle of this incredible theatrical institution, I begin with the fundamental question of "Who are we that make up this Capital (two states and a district)?" What stories intrigue, challenge, delight, and inspire us? In programming, how is the work meaningfully reflecting the existential questions of our collective humanity while honoring the specificity and diversity of our lived experiences? How is the work galvanizing and inspiring people to action? Answering the call of these questions is essential to serving our mission and reflecting the full spectrum of the American Spirit.

Molly Smith understood answering the call should also harken joy, hilarity, and unassailable truth. Through the lens of the comedic and the familiar, we are able to most openly face our vulnerabilities and hypocrisies in service of our humanity. Nothing in the theatrical cannon more fully delivers on those points than a good farce. Most people can get behind a farce about the White House, regardless of political persuasion.

In POTUS, we tackle the power dynamic between men and women and the lengths to which we will go to protect the legacy of the leaders we follow. In the dedication of this play, Selina Fillinger frames the journey as a tribute to "Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Hillary Clinton, Shirley Chisholm...and every other woman who's ever found herself the secondary character in a male farce." No men appear onstage, but their presence, proclivities, and perceived power are ever-present.

In this city of infinite possibility, where everything is seemingly negotiable, and every negotiation impacts millions—where and how we draw our moral lines of complicity are food for fodder. Selina's world exemplifies this question as we romp through one extraordinary day in the West Wing, pushing us from the ridiculous to the sublime.

There is a future where the faces of history are not only the men (and one day, women) who were vaulted to the top job but include the vast teams of people that form the network—and safety nets—for leadership to thrive. What a fantastic space to hold this story—Arena's iconic Fichandler Stage. It is a theater founded by a bold visionary woman who understood the power of the theater-in-the-round placing every audience member in the story. We see each other physically while posed questions challenge, delight, and illuminate our world. We become a community for these brief hours and hopefully extend part of that community into the rest of our lives.

What a gift to begin my adventure with you on this wild odyssey into the annals of Selina Fillinger's imagining of our political machine at work.

Thank you all for the warm welcome and joyful support of Arena Stage.

Buckle up, my friends, we are in for quite the ride!

Hana S. Sharif
Artistic Director
We have joined together today for POTUS, following the show's celebrated Broadway run last year. One of the founding principles of the resident theater movement was to have an alternative source of theater to the commercially-focused Broadway. Arena Stage is one of the early founders of the movement in 1950.

This is a quote from an Arena Stage Board of Trustees meeting, March 25, 1976:

“Al Miller reported that Arena Stage will become the first theater company outside New York City to be presented a Tony Award. Zelda Fichandler will accept the award on television (ABC-TV) on April 18, 1976. This Tony is one of several special awards made each year, at the same time that the competitive awards (Best Actor, Best Director, etc.) are made. The award will be presented by Al Pacino, an actor of note who began and still works in the resident theater movement. Arena Stage will certainly call the public's attention to its newest honor, but the Tony will not be overused as a symbol of Arena's accomplishment—it was noted that the Broadway hit-or-miss syndrome was one of the things Zelda wanted to get away from in 1950, when Arena began; it would now be ironic for Arena to enshrine Broadway's emblem.”

Here in 2023, we proudly display that Tony Award in the lobby. Where once the resident (or regional) theater movement may have resisted these connections, there is a fruitful symbiosis both in resident theaters sending shows to New York and shows coming from New York. Ultimately what has been created is a nationwide field of theater makers who adapt between the not-for-profit and for-profit worlds.

As you may know, Arena has participated with the pre-Broadway runs of many shows, most recently Sweat (by Lynn Nottage) and Dear Evan Hansen (music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, and book by Steven Levenson) and an example from farther back, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone (by August Wilson, in 1987). Other examples of Arena producing shows shortly after their successful Broadway runs include Other Desert Cities (by Jon Robin Baitz, in 2013) and Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike (by Christopher Durang, in 2015). These post-Broadway productions were not tours of the Broadway creative teams, but rather newly visioned productions of the show—just like this new in-the-round version of POTUS.

Great stories find their way around the country, and it's heartening to realize that the theater field envisioned by Zelda and her peers thrives by sharing this great theater, from Broadway and to Broadway. As you will see in POTUS, these stories demand to be told and can speak directly to our specific communities in interesting ways.

For me personally, there is another interesting connection. As you may see in my bio, I spent many adventurous years as President of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Theatre Company. So, I will say my experience with shows featuring giant chandeliers above the stage is that they will be great successes!

Edgar Dobie
Executive Producer
President of the Corporation
BETWEEN RUPTURE & RAPTURE
by Otis Ramsey-Zöe, Dramaturg

First of all, comedy does consist in the absence of something which is expected, but it can also consist in the presence of something where nothing is expected. Always, however, the situation must illustrate the absence of what ought to be, if it is to reveal comedy. The unexpected indication of the absence of perfection (the ought) constitutes the comic situation.

— James K. Feibleman, “The Meaning of Comedy”

We live in an age in which we can make the case for politics as a form of theater. We seemingly also live in an age of comedy; or, said another way, comedy as genre, lens, and rhetorical mode functions as a primary means of delivering and processing information. News and analysis travel by memes, apps like TikTok, and programs like The Daily Show and Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. For at least a decade and a half—perhaps the inflection point that added the greatest momentum to this era is Saturday Night Live’s September 2008 introduction of Tina Fey as Alaskan Governor and vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin—comedy has been essential to helping us reconcile and understand our increasingly absurd and often unrecognizable world. Selina Fillinger is both a student and master of perceiving the contemporary moment. Her play POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive skillfully combines political satire, parody-cum-backstage comedy, and farce to produce a scenario so outrageous that it will never happen. Yet, quite commonly, these days something once thought too ridiculous to occur happens. POTUS simultaneously epitomizes the zeitgeist and follows what has been the purpose of comedy dating back to the origins of western drama.

As a backstage comedy, POTUS takes place in a White House that amalgamates prior administrations and emerges from fevered amplification of possible future ones. The figures are nonpartisan composites drawn from both parties. We can recognize the unseen US President in the play; we’ve seen traces of him in various leaders stretching back decades. He is a man who engages in extramarital affairs, excels at bullying, exhibits poor leadership, wields a hot temper, and appears woefully ill-equipped for the job he holds. We have seen women in most, but not all, of the Executive Branch positions featured in the play, and this straightforward observation perhaps portends one of Fillinger’s peremptory proffer.

Brace yourselves. POTUS begins in medias res, or without preamble, and at a rupture. In farce, the past is prologue. Circumstances fueling calamities and chaos that will unfold all stem from preceding events. Since the initiating problem has already occurred, characters find themselves in a game of catch-up as conditions spiral, new complications enter, and urgency ever increases. The play’s hapless head of state sets off concurrent crises, which the seven women closest to him must resolve. The women labor on behalf of the titular dumbass and endeavor to keep up appearances, which dramatizes the impulse to conserve the status quo. Early and often in POTUS, there is a sense that things aren’t working and something must change. But, how? Or, what? Or, who? While comedy sometimes provide escape from society’s problems, POTUS bids viewers to lean into our political dysfunction to contemplate pressing questions about our democracy and responsibilities as citizens.

The entanglement of politics and comedy trace back to the earliest forms of comedy for which we have historical records. The oldest form of stage comedy in western dramatic tradition are what’s known as Old Comedy, which date to fifth century BC. All the works that shape our understanding of this initial phase in ancient Greek comedy come from a sole playwright, Aristophanes, whose dramatic output patently addressed political themes pertinent to Athenian institutions and democracy. In ancient Greece, theater performances took place during city festivals that were so important that attendance or participation was essential for standing as a good citizen. Broadly, ancient Greek tragedies centered on figures from traditional myths as a means of exploring an individual’s responsibility to self, family, and city-state. As tragedies routinely ended in unfavorable outcomes, lessons on how citizens ought to behave were often communicated by examples of how persons ought not behave; arugably, POTUS utilizes the same approach. In contrast, Old Comedy concerned familiar and present political conditions, and public figures, officials, and prominent citizens were blatantly criticized and had their policies derided. Aristophanes acted as a conscience of the people and did not shy away from exposing corruption and political mismanagement and ridiculing the offenders. POTUS synthesizes tragedies’ interrogation of individual responsibility and representations of less than model behavior and Old Comedy’s analysis of current political zeitgeist.

Both comedy and politics are concerned with possibility. Aristotle once asserted that “politics is the art of the possible.” For Aristotle, possible refers to what is pragmatic. Yet, possible is capacious enough to hold anything that is conceivable, that which ought to be even if it hasn’t come to pass. Comedy shows us the folly in what is in order to arouse what could be, should be, and urgently must be. Breaches in comedy provide ways of testing out different perspectives, alternative social formations, verboten romantic and sexual pairing, fantastic solutions to common problems, and the subversive and transformative nature of language. As experimental worldmaking, comedy journeys us from rupture to rupture. Like the preamble to the US Constitution, POTUS’s project might be to encourage us to consider what is needed from each of us to move the nation in the direction of becoming “a more perfect union.” Or, perhaps, that’s too great a burden for a play, and its greatest ask is that we simply buckle up, lean in, and enjoy the ride; after all, this is a comedy.
POTUS
OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE
BY SELINA FILLINGER
DIRECTED BY MARGOT BORDELON

SET DESIGNER
REID THOMPSON

COSTUME DESIGNER
IVANIA STACK

LIGHTING DESIGNER
MARIKA KENT

ORIGINAL MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN
SINAN REFIK ZAFAR

WIG AND HAIR DESIGNER
TOMMY KURZMAN

DIALECT AND VOCAL COACH
LISA NATHANS

DRAMATURG
OTIS RAMSEY-ZÖE

CASTING DIRECTOR
JOSEPH PINZON

NEW YORK CASTING
KELLY GILLESPIE, CSA

STAGE MANAGER
CHRISTI B. SPANN

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
DAYNE SUNDMAN

POTUS is made possible by a generous gift from Beth Newburger Schwartz, made in honor and welcome of Hana S. Sharif as Arena Stage’s new Artistic Director. Additional support is provided by Sheila Stampfli. Arena Stage offers this production in memory of generous patron and longtime volunteer, Naomi Horowitz.

POTUS is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

SETTING
The White House.
Perhaps not the current administration, exactly—but broad strokes of past presidents, combined with stress dreams of future ones.
And, if we're being honest, an amalgamation of them all...

CAST (in order of appearance)
Harriet (His chief of staff.) ................................................................. NAOMI JACOBSON
Jean (His press secretary.) .............................................................. NATALYA LYNETTE RATHNAM
Stephanie (His secretary.) .............................................................. MEGAN HILL
Margaret (His wife. The First Lady.) .............................................. FELICIA CURRY
Chris (A journalist.) ................................................................. YESENIA IGLESIAS
Dusty (His dalliance.) ................................................................. SARAH-ANNE MARTINEZ
Bernadette (His sister.) / Fight Captain ........................................... KELLY MCANDREW
u/s Harriet / Bernadette .............................................................. JANET GREER
u/s Jean / Stephanie ....................................................................... PEREGRINE TENG HEARD
u/s Margaret / Chris / Dusty ........................................................... JASMINE JOY

FOR THIS PRODUCTION
Assistant Director ................................................................. KAYLA A. WARREN
Fight and Intimacy Consultant ................................................... SIERRA YOUNG
Singing Coach ................................................................. TRACY OLIVERA
Production Assistant .............................................................. TIFANY KO
Stage Carpenters ........................................................................ HANNAH MARTIN, SIMON SINNREICH
Props .......................................................................................... ERICA FEIDELSEIT, ABBY FRY
Light Board Operator .............................................................. SCOTT FOLSOM
Lighting Assistant ................................................................. INDIGO GARCIA
Audio Engineer ........................................................................ DREW MOBERLEY
Wardrobe Supervisor .............................................................. ALICE HAWFIELD
Wardrobe .................................................................................. ADELLE GRESOCK
Wigs, Hair, and Makeup Supervisor ........................................... JAIME BAGLEY
Crew Swing ............................................................................... TREvor COMEAU

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Try one of our Arena-themed cocktails or family-friendly drinks.

PRE-ORDER REFRESHMENTS
Avoid the intermission concessions line and order your drinks before the performance. Your order will be waiting for you in the lobby at intermission.

WHO’S WHO

CAST

NAOMI JACOBSON
(Harriet)’s Arena Stage performances include Mary Todd Lincoln in Tazewell Thompson’s Mary T. & Lizzy K. (premiere), A View From the Bridge, The Misanthrope, and The Women, among others. An Affiliated Artist at Shakespeare Theatre, and a company member at Woolly Mammoth, her DC credits include The Kennedy Center, Ford’s Theatre, Studio, Signature, Folger, Round House, Olney, Theater J, and Wolf Trap Opera. She’s traveled to the Guthrie Theater, Goodman Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Rep, Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Indiana Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, and Berkshire Theatre Festival. Voice-over work includes documentaries for NPR, PBS, Discovery Channel, and the Smithsonian. She’s received three Helen Hayes Awards, numerous nominations, the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship, the Anderson-Hopkins Award, and a DC Commission Individual Artist Grant. Visit www.naomijacobson.com for complete resume.

MEGAN HILL
(Stephanie) is a Brooklyn-based actor and writer. Her play The Last Class: A Jazzercise Play has enjoyed runs in New York, DC, and Seattle. As an actor, she’s originated roles in the world premieres of Ramiz Monsef's The Ants; Leah Nanako Winkler’s The Brightest Thing in the World and Kentucky; Crystal Skillman's Open and Cut; Amy Staats’ Eddie and Dave; Mara Nelson Greenberg's Do You Feel Angry?; Rob Askins’ Hand to God; and Joshua Conkel and Matt Marks’ The House of Von Macramé. Megan was nominated for a Drama Desk Award and was named one of the Best Comedic Performances of the Year by The New York Times for her portrayal of David Lee Roth in Eddie and Dave. BFA Acting/Original Works: Cornish College of the Arts. MFA: ART/MXAT IATT at Harvard. www.meganhill.net Instagram: @meganhillwhat

NATALYA LYNETTE RATHNAM
(Jean) last appeared at Arena Stage in Our War. Regional credits include The Last Match, The Phlebotomist (1st Stage); A Nice Indian Boy (Olney Theatre Center); Bars and Measures, Shame 2.0, When January Feels Like Summer (Mosaic Theater Company); It’s Christmas, Carol (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Memoirs of a Forgotten Man (Washington Stage Guild); A Wind in the Door, Kid Prince and Pablo, Mockingbird, The Wings of Ikarus Jackson (Kennedy Center); 4,380 Nights (Signature Theatre); Death of A Salesman (Ford’s Theatre); The Trojan Women (Taffety Punk); The Fire and The Rain (Constellation Theatre Company); The Fantasticks (Rep Stage); Glassheart (Rorschach); Illyria, Julius Caesar (Virginia Shakespeare Festival); A

FELICIA CURRY
(Margaret) last appeared at Arena Stage in the Cabaret Nights series. She was last seen on DC stages in Our Town at Shakespeare Theatre Company and My Lord, What a Night at Ford’s Theatre. Curry received a Helen Hayes Award for Lela & Co. at Factory 449 where she is a company member. She is also a Resident Company Member at Everyman Theatre and an Artistic Associate at Ford’s Theatre. Felicia recently made her Broadway debut in the Tony-nominated revival of Into the Woods, and then toured with the show around the country, including The Kennedy Center. She has a Berkshire Theatre Critics Award, an RTCC Award, an Anderson Hopkins Award, and is an AUDELCO nominee for Queens Girl in the World at Abingdon Theatre off-Broadway. Felicia has been named one of “12 DC Stage Dynamos” by The Washington Post.
and one of “DC’s Biggest Theater Stars” by Washingtonian magazine. She is on the WAPANA Board of Directors and the Emmy-nominated host of WETA Arts on PBS. Instagram: @thefeliciacurry

YESENIA IGLESIAS  
(Chris) is thrilled to be making her Arena Stage debut with this incredible team. A selection of her DC regional credits includes Dance Nation (Olney Theatre Center); Daphne’s Dive, Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (Signature Theatre); A Christmas Carol (Ford’s Theatre); Kid Prince and Pablo (Kennedy Center); Love’s Labor’s Lost (Folger Theatre); The Legend of Georgia McBride (Round House Theatre); Hamlet, and King Charles III (Shakespeare Theatre Company). Elsewhere in the DMV includes The Caucasian Chalk Circle and The Arabian Nights (Constellation Theatre Company), and The Smartest Girl in the World (Imagination Stage). Other notable credits include Passing Strange (ACT – Seattle), Mwindo (Seattle Children’s Theatre), and Water by the Spoonful (Theatre 22). Yezenia is from Bayamón, Puerto Rico, and holds an MFA from the University of Washington. Instagram: @ye_iglesias

SARAH-ANNE MARTINEZ  
(Drusilla) is making her debut at Arena Stage! New York credits include Leaving Eden (NYMF, Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role Award). Regional credits include Peter and the Starcatcher, The Addams Family, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Festival 56); and Hello, Dolly! (Tulane Summer Lyric). You can see her on television as Teen Marjorie in Pretty Little Liars: Original Sin. Other TV credits include The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Blue Bloods, and Evil. Proud Ball State University alum and member of Actors’ Equity and SAG-AFTRA. Thank you to the creative team of POTUS and to her agents at Stewart Talent. Much love to Brent! Instagram: @sarahmartinezz

KELLY McANDREW  
(Bernadette/Fight Captain) is thrilled to return to Arena Stage, where in 2000 she played both Annie Sullivan in The Miracle Worker as well as Eleanor Bachman in the revival of The Great White Hope. Off-Broadway credits include roles at Playwrights Horizons, Atlantic Theater Company, MCC, Signature Theatre, Railtraxt, Transport Group, and Primary Stages. Regional theaters include Humana Festival (‘17, ‘18, and ‘19), Westport Country Playhouse, Yale Rep, ART, Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe, and Olney Theatre (for which she received a Helen Hayes nomination for Best Actress in Holiday in 2001). TV: New Amsterdam, The Sinner, The Good Fight, Daredevil (recurring), Orange Is the New Black (recurring), House of Cards, Elementary, Law & Order: SVU, Smash, Law & Order, and Gossip Girl. Film: Peas and Carrots (upcoming), A Kid Like Jake (Sundance 2018), Appropriate Behavior (Sundance 2014), In the Family (Spirit nomination), and Everybody’s Fine (with Robert DeNiro). Training: UMKC. kellymcandrew.com

PEREGRINE TENG HEARD  
(u/s Jean/Stephanie)’s New York credits include the world premiere of Chuck Mee’s soot and spit (The New Ohio), Call Out Culture: or, the unbearable whiteness of being (Ars Nova ANT Fest), Ski End (Pleholo), and Sehnsucht (JACK). Peregrine is the artistic director of The Associates Theater Ensemble, with whom she has devised and performed The Cousinhood (The Center at West Park), Sheila (A.R.T./New York Theatres), Black Protagonist (124 Bank Street Theater), and Fressome (The Brick). Regional credits include Tom Jones and Remix 38 at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Voice-over work includes ads for Cadillac, Sonos, and Roomba. Peregrine’s play Redemption Story is a 2023 O’Neill National Playwrights Conference Semifinalist.

JASMINE JOY  
(u/s Margaret/Chris/Dusty) is so excited to join Arena Stage for this hilarious, elegant production! Local credits include Shear Madness (The Kennedy Center); The Hula-Hoopin’ Queen, Corduroy, The Snow Queen (Imagination Stage); Dance Nation (Olney Theatre Center); The Mamalouges (1st Stage); A Chorus Within Her (Theater Alliance); Moon Man Walk (Constellation Theatre), A Wind in the Door (The Kennedy Center TYA); Womxn on Fire Festival (Keegan Theatre); The Powers That Be, #solostories (Venues Theatre); and The Gulf (Peter’s Alley). You can see Jasmine next in Is God Is at Constellation Theatre! Jasmine would love to thank her daughter, Calypso, for being her inspiration, her partner Matt, and her mom. You can visit Jasmine’s website at www.jasminejoybrooks.com.
SELINA FILLINGER (Playwright) is an LA-based writer and performer. Her plays include The Collapse, Something Clean, Faceless, and The Armor Plays: Cinched/Strapped. In 2022, POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive debuted on Broadway, earning three Tony Award nominations. Her plays have been developed at Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, McCarter Theatre Center, Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Old Globe, Alley Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, and Northlight Theatre. She's currently commissioned at South Coast Repertory and Roundabout. She was a Hawthornden Fellow and a resident of McCarter’s Sallie B. Goodman Artists’ Retreat. Something Clean is the recipient of the 2019 Laurents/Hatcher Award and Cinched/Strapped received the 2019 Williamstown Theatre Festival’s L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award. Selina wrote for the third season of Apple TV+’s The Morning Show; she’s developing a feature with Chernin Entertainment/Netflix and a pilot with Selina. She’s currently commissioned at South Coast Repertory. She received the 2019 Williamstown Theatre Company, Olney, Signature, Ford’s, Folger, Guthrie (Minneapolis), 5th Avenue (Seattle), and Theatricum Botanicum (LA). Lisa received her MFA from Central School of Speech and Drama and BFA from Boston University. She’s designated a Linklater Voice teacher and a certified Gianni Speech practitioner.

OTIS RAMSEY-ZÖÉ (Dramaturg) is a care worker, dramaturg, director, theater arts educator, Literary Manager at Arena Stage, and Lecturer in Dramaturgy at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. He has developed new works at such institutions as Sundance Institute, Kennedy Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Center, and New National Play. He has been an actor in theatre at Northwestern University, University of California, Irvine, Performing Arts at American University, and Theatre Arts at Howard University. He was Associate Artistic Director at banished productions, Future Classics Program Coordinator at The Classical Theatre of Harlem, Literary Manager at Center Stage, and an Allen Lee Hughes Senior Fellow at Arena Stage.

JOSEPH PINZON (Casting Director) is the founder and creative producer of the contemporary circus company Short Round Productions and its award-winning show Filament. With over 25 years of performing experience, he has worked internationally with renowned companies such as Cirque Eloize, Compagnia Finzi Pasca, Cirque du Soleil, and The 7 Fingers. He holds an MS in Arts Leadership from USC, a BA in Psychology from UCLA, and graduated from the National Circus School in Montreal with a specialization in circus arts. He was the casting and resident director for Chamäleon Productions (Berlin) and Constellation Immersive (CAA’s experiential affiliate). He is also a member of the Creative &
Independent Producer Alliance and a founding board member of the American Circus Alliance. You can see him causing chaos on season 6 of Nailed It on Netflix, where (spoiler alert) he is a part of the series’ first three-way tie.

**KELLY GILLESPIE, CSA** (New York Casting) is the Casting Director at Manhattan Theatre Club, where she has been on staff for the past fifteen years. Favorite recent MTC projects include Prayer for the French Republic, The Best We Could, Skeleton Crew, Ink, Choir Boy, and The Explorers Club. She has also cast plays for the WP Theater, The Old Globe, Two River Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, McCarter Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Marin Theatre Company, Miami New Drama, City Theatre, Merrimack Rep, The Foundry Theatre, EST, I3P, T.A.C.T., and Keen Company, as well as a few radio projects for WNFC. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan.

**CHRISTI B. SPANN** (Stage Manager) has been working as a stage manager in DC since 2011. Recent Arena Stage productions include Holiday, The High Ground, and Exclusion. She previously spent 12 seasons on the stage management staff at the Denver Center Theatre Company and has also worked with The Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, MN and Virginia Repertory Theatre in Richmond, VA.

**DAYNE SUNDMAN** (Assistant Stage Manager) is happy to be back at Arena Stage. Some favorite past shows at Arena include Angels in America: Part One, Millennium Approaches; American Prophets: Frederick Douglass in His Own Words; Catch Me If You Can; Mother Road; Newies; Junk; The Heiress; and Anything Goes. Select other credits include Jane Anger, The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci (STC); Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812, Sense and Sensibility (Idaho Shakespeare Festival); Baldwin Wallace University 2015.

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### ARENA STAGE LEADERSHIP

#### HANA S. SHARIF (Artistic Director)

Artistic Director) has enjoyed a multi-faceted theater career, including roles as an artistic leader, director, playwright, and producer with a specialty in strategic and cross-functional leadership. Hana began her professional career as an undergraduate student at Spelman College. From 1997 to 2003, Hana served as the co-founder and Artistic Director of Nasir Productions, a theater dedicated to underrepresented voices challenging traditional structure. Hana joined the Tony Award-winning regional theatre, Hartford Stage, in 2003. During her decade-long tenure at Hartford Stage, Hana served as the Associate Artistic Director, Director of New Play Development, and Artistic Producer. Hana launched the new play development program, expanded the community engagement and civic discourse initiatives, and developed and produced Tony, Grammy, Pulitzer, and Obie Award-winning shows. Starting in 2012, she served as Program Manager at ArtsEmerson, a leading world theater company based at Boston’s Emerson College. During her tenure at ArtsEmerson, Hana launched an Artists in Residency program, led a research program assessing barriers to inclusion across the region, and leveraged her regional theater experience to freelance produce for smaller theater companies looking to expand and restructure their administrative teams. Hana was Baltimore Center Stage’s Associate Artistic Director from 2014 to 2019 and was the architect of the innovative CS Digital program: a platform that pushes the boundaries of traditional theater and looks at the nexus point between art and technology. Her other achievements at Baltimore Center Stage included prototyping the Mobile Unit focused on historically underserved audiences, strengthening community engagement, producing multiple world and regional premiers, and helping to guide the theater through a multi-million dollar renovation and rebranding effort. Hana became the first Black woman to lead a major regional theater in 2018 when she was named the Augustin Family Artistic Director of The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. During her tenure at The Rep, Hana guided the organization through a strategic alignment, revolutionized the New Works program, expanding access to underserved communities, and centering equity and anti-racism as the organization’s foundational values. Hana holds a BA from Spelman College and an MFA from the University of Houston. Hana is the recipient of USITT’s 2023 Distinguished Achievement Award, Spelman’s 2022 National Community Service Award, the 2009-10 Aetna New Voices Fellowship, EMC Arts Working Open Fellowship, and Theatre Communications Group (TCG) New Generations Fellowship. Hana is a founding member of The Black Theatre Commons (BTC). She serves on the board of directors for the TCG, BTC, and the Sprott Family Foundation.

#### EDGAR DOBIE (Executive Producer)

Born in Vernon, British Columbia, a village next to the Rocky Mountains (three years after Arena had its first performance in 1950), I am one of five brothers raised by my Dad Edgar, a mechanic and small businessman, and Mom Connie, a telephone operator and union organizer. I am the only Dobie to make a career in the theater. Luckily for me, drama was an arts elective I was offered at the tender age of 12 so I hung up my hockey skates and joined the drama class, led by teacher Paddy Malcolm and her fledgling Powerhouse Community Theater after school. By the time I graduated from high school, we volunteers had built ourselves a 200-seat, fully equipped theater on its own piece of land in the center of town and found a sold-out audience for the full season of plays we had on offer. That experience taught me so many lessons about the power of theater to foster collaboration and share meaningful stories, as well as the public values that attach themselves to building a safe place where everyone is welcome. All those lessons served me well as a managing leader and producer both sides of the border and both sides of the commercial and non-profit theater divide. Arriving here in Southwest with my good wife Tracy and our daughter Greta Lee in 2009 makes me feel like I am well-equipped to do a good job for you all. I am honored to have been recognized for my service to, and leadership of, the Washington, D.C.- area theater community as a recipient of Theatre Washington’s inaugural Victor Shargai Leadership Award in 2022.

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Arena Stage gratefully acknowledges the many individuals and families who support the theater’s work by contributing to the Annual Fund. These gifts make it possible for the theater to continue presenting high-quality productions and innovative education programs that strengthen the community in which we live.

For more information on the benefits of becoming an Annual Fund contributor, please call the Development Department at 202-600-4177.

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For more information, contact Maya Well, CAP®, Arena’s Gift Planning Specialist at 202-600-4158 or mwell@arenastage.org

The cast of The Pajama Game. Photo by Margot Schulman.
We wish her well in her retirement!

of artists, theater professionals, students, and community members. Her work has impacted thousands upon thousands in Croatia and in six cities in India; and supported staff, fellows, and artists throughout Arena. Her work has impacted thousands upon thousands on all our stages; co-founded the beloved Camp Arena Engagement and senior artistic advisor, Anita

During her tenure as director of Community Career at Arena Stage.

Please join us in celebrating

Please join us in celebrating Anita Maynard-Losh’s 20-year career at Arena Stage.

However, if your name is not listed, please contact the Development Department at 202-600-4177. We are also grateful to the thousands of other contributors to Arena Stage.

Please join us in celebrating Anita Maynard-Losh’s 20-year career at Arena Stage.

During her tenure as director of Community Engagement and senior artistic advisor, Anita directed, associate directed, and dialect coached on all our stages; co-founded the beloved Camp Arena Stage; wrote and directed plays with grieving youth; devised plays in Croatia and in six cities in India; and supported staff, fellows, and artists throughout Arena. Her work has impacted thousands upon thousands of artists, theater professionals, students, and community members.

We wish her well in her retirement!

Thank you, Anita, for so many seasons of love!
We Share Your Dream for the Future

Powering our communities is just the beginning. At Exelon, we consider it our responsibility to improve the quality of life for people in the communities where we live, work and serve. Participation in good corporate citizenship is an integral part of our culture, and we inspire our employees to help everyone succeed.
THEATER STAFF

Artistic Director .............................................Hana S. Sharif
Executive Producer .....................................Edgar Dobie
Founding Director ............................................Zelda Fichandler (1924–2016)
Founding Executive Director .........................Thomas C. Fichandler (1915–1997)
Artistic Director Emeritus ................................Molly Smith

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT
Associate Artistic Director ..........................Teresa Sapien
Literary Manager ....................................Otis C. Ramsey-Zöe
Artistic Associate, Casting ..........................Joseph Pinzon
Artistic Development Coordinator ..................Melissa Singson
Dramaturg .............................................Jocelyn Clarke
Artistic Development Fellow ........................Vanessa Dalpia*
Current Commissioned Writers ..........The Bengsons, Lee Cataluna, Kira Corthron, Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi, Emily Feldman, Idris Goodwin, David Henry Huang, Caleen Sinnette Jennings, Deepak Kumar, Octavio Solis, Vera Starbard, Cheryl West, Lauren Yee, Karen Zacarias, Zack Zadek

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Interim Co-Director of Community Engagement/ Director of Education ..................Ashley Forman
Interim Co-Director of Community Engagement/ School Programs Manager ..............Rebecca Campana
Community Programs Manager ..................Mauricio Pita
Training Programs Manager .........................Zoë Hall
Community Engagement Programming Coordinator ...............Kayla A. Warren
School Programs Fellow .........................Jazmyn Ja’Net Roberson*

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Membership Assistant ..............................Osco Len
Development Fellow ..................................Mina Sollars*

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General and Production Management Coordinator ............Jenna Murphy
General and Company Management Fellow .............Alexandra Lopez*

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System Administrator .................................Brian Oh
Business Intelligence and Tessa Lead (consultancy) .................Sabrina Clark
IS Help Desk Fellow .........................................................................Eddie Wieland

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Aaron Hutchens, Meg Karch
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PRODUCTION
Director of Production .........................Robert Hand
Production Manager .........................Trevor A. Riley
Assistant Production Manager ..................Rachel Crawford

STAGE MANAGEMENT
Resident Production Manager ..................Christi B. Spann

SCENIC
Technical Director .................................Chris Stoutjesdyk
Associate Technical Director ..................Clare Cawley
Scene Shop Supervisor ......................Travis Smith
Charge Scenic Artist .........................Liz Llagon

PROPERTIES
Properties Director .........................Jennifer Sheetz
Associate Properties Director ..................Jonathan Borgia
Head Props Artisan .........................Niel DuVal
Props Artisan ...............................Kyle Handziak
Props Assistants .......................Erica Feidelseit, Alex Shines

LIGHTS
Lighting Supervisor .........................Paul Villalovoz
Assistant Lighting Supervisor ..................Olliv Rudd
Electricians .........................Scott Folsom, Kelsey Swanson
Lighting Fellow .........................Indigo Garcia*

SOUND
Sound and Video Supervisor ..................Brian Burchett
Master Sound and Video Technician ..................Timothy M. Thompson
Sound Technicians .........................Lex Allenbaugh,
Alex Cloud, Drew Merbler

COSTUMES
Costume Director .................................Joseph P. Salasovich
Associate Costume Director ..................Cierra Coan
Drapers .................................Erika Krause, Carol Ramsdell
First Hands .................................Michele Macadaeg,
Elizabeth "Liz" Spilbury
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