

# 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 ANNOUNCES THE VIRTUAL AUDITION INTENSIVE

**\*\*\* The pre-professional program for ages 16-22 provides audition training  
for students and young artists \*\*\***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces its newly created virtual audition intensive. Developed and led by Arena Stage's Community Engagement department, the online intensive prepares students and artists ages 16-22 for careers in theater with group and private coaching sessions in audition techniques. This two-week program taught by accomplished theater professionals is geared towards those interested in studying theater in college or those just beginning their careers. This virtual format allows students in the Washington metropolitan D.C. area and around the country to join this brand-new program. **The Virtual Audition Intensive will run August 3 – 14, Monday through Friday.**

"The Virtual Audition Intensive gives young artists the opportunity to work with gifted theater professionals from all over the nation to learn the art and business of the audition process," states Director of Community Engagement and Senior Artistic Advisor **Anita Maynard-Losh**. "Students have group sessions to learn a variety of techniques, and private coaching sessions to work specifically on their own audition pieces. With the program being virtual, students can come from all over the country to work with our consummate faculty of talented professionals."

Students will receive first-hand knowledge and best practice techniques on how to choose appropriate materials for and to navigate an audition. Students will receive group training in musical theater, dance, singing and acting, coupled with sessions on how to prepare their headshots and resumes. Private audition coaching will focus on preparing contemporary and Shakespeare monologues and two contrasting songs. By the end of the two-week program, students will have a repertoire of audition materials along with recorded tracks of their selected songs for rehearsing and future auditions.

The Virtual Audition Intensive features an award-winning faculty of actors, dancers, musicians, composers and audition experts who have worked all over the country including Arena Stage. Faculty include **Brad Gardner, Amy Lizardo, Kristyn Pope, David Rowen, Teresa Sapien** and **Erin Weaver**. Special guest artists Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith** and choreographer **Parker Esse** (Broadway Dance Center, *Newsies*, *Anything Goes*) will teach sessions on taking direction during an audition and how to navigate a dance audition.

To register and for more information on the Virtual Audition Intensive:  
<https://www.arenastage.org/auditionintensive/>

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### The Virtual Audition Intensive

August 3 – 14, 2020

12 – 5:30 p.m.

Classes are via Zoom.

Registration for Virtual Audition Intensive is now open.

Register here: [arenastage.org/auditionintensive](https://arenastage.org/auditionintensive)

### FACULTY

**Brad Gardner** is a Los Angeles-based music director and conductor, who began his professional career with the first year of the Arena Stage Academy back in 2009! Most recently, Brad was the associate music director of the first national tour of Disney's *Aladdin*, and the music director of the Japanese company of *An American In Paris* in Tokyo. Broadway/Off-Broadway/National Tour credits include *Mean Girls*, *The Addams Family*, *Aladdin*, *An American In Paris*, *Something Rotten!*, *Jasper In Deadland*, and *Silence! The Musical*. D.C. credits include: *My Fair Lady*, *Oliver*, *Fiddler On The Roof* (Arena Stage); *Little Shop Of Horrors* (Kennedy Center - starring Megan Hilty and Josh Radnor). Other career highlights include the world premiere of Marvin Hamlisch's *The Nutty Professor*, directed by Jerry Lewis; conductor for Elaine Paige at *Gypsy of the Year*; *The Nutcracker* with San Francisco Ballet. Over the past decade, Brad has been on the music staff of several other arts education programs, including the Jimmy Awards, YoungArts, and The Performing Arts Project. Brad is an avid traveler and adventurer who maintains a private online studio from wherever he is, offering piano lessons, vocal coaching, and conducting coaching.

**Amy Lizardo** was formerly a Bay Area-based actor, appearing in new works, Shakespeare and musicals around the greater Bay Area. Recently she became an Acting Company member with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where she had previously been a teaching artist. Most recently Amy was seen in the world premiere of Octavio Solis' *Mother Road* at both The Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage. While at The Oregon Shakespeare Festival she also appeared in the world premiere of *La Comedia of Errors*, a bilingual adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. Regional theater credits include: *Men On Boats*, *The Unfortunates* and *A Christmas Carol* (American Conservatory Theater), *Quixote Nuevo* and *The Tempest* (California Shakespeare Theatre), *Party People* and *Moby Dick* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), *Dogfight* (San Francisco Playhouse), *Taming of the Shrew* (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival). Amy has been a resident artist with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival for the last 10 years and provides individual coaching in Shakespeare, new works and musical theater.

**Kristyn Pope** is excited for the opportunity to connect and teach virtually! She has performed in Arena Stage's productions of *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Oklahoma!* (Re-boot) and *Anything Goes*. Her NYC performing credits include: *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* (Rockette/Swing), Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, and the *Thoroughly Modern Millie Reunion Concert*, as well as the City Center Encores! productions of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Lady Be Good*, and *The New Yorkers*. Kristyn has also served as associate or assistant choreographer and/or Dance Captain at regional theatres across the country for such choreographers as Kelli Barclay, Jessica Hartman, Richard Stafford and Randy Skinner. Kristyn has recently taught virtual classes for Motivated Movers NYC, Stage Door School of Dance at Home, Chambers Performing Arts, Get in Shape Grrl Broadway, Academy of Dance and Walnut Street Theatre Education.

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In person in NYC, Kristyn has taught special group classes at Broadway Dance Center, led classes/mock auditions for the Rockette Experience, and has taught classes for The Growing Studio, Broadway Theatre Connection and Motivated Movers NYC. She has also served as an adjudicator and/or taught Master Classes for organizations across the country, including Dance Masters, Encore Dance Competition, the Victoria Theatre Association, The Des Moines Performing Arts Center, the Hippodrome Foundation, Playhouse Square, Oklahoma City University, Point Park University, Indiana University, the Lied Center and Nebraska High School Theatre Awards. Kristyn holds a BA in psychology from Northwestern University. "...We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen." -Paulo Coelho. Ps100.

**Teresa Sapien** joined Arena Stage's artistic staff in 2019, after seven seasons at La Jolla Playhouse, most recently as Associate Producer. At the Playhouse, she helped guide over fifty productions on the mainstage and out in the San Diego community, including new plays by Martyna Majok, Will Power and Hansol Jung. She was the curator and producer of the 2019 Without Walls Festival of site based and immersive theater which hosted over twenty international and American companies. As the co-producer of the annual DNA New Work Series, she supported the development of over thirty-eight new plays and musicals. In addition to producing, she was the Playhouse's Local Casting Director for numerous plays and musicals, including the world premieres of *Wild Goose Dreams*, *Junk* and *Come From Away*. She is a reader for The Playwrights Realm, Playwrights' Center Minneapolis, Native Voices at the Autry and a proud contributor to the Kilroys' List. Sapien is a graduate of the University of Evansville's Theatre Department.

**David Rowen** is a Helen Hayes Award-nominated actor and musician based in New York City. Originally hailing from Northern Virginia, he earned a Bachelor of Music at James Madison University. He has performed at many theaters, including Signature Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Studio Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, Adventure Theatre MTC, and Toby's Dinner Theatre. He appeared Off-Broadway in *Bob Marley's Three Little Birds* and was in the world premiere production of Barry Levinson and Sheryl Crow's musical, *Diner*, helmed by Tony Award winner, Kathleen Marshall. David produces a YouTube channel, davidrowen/creative, which features his arrangements and covers of pop and Broadway songs in music video form. His work has been praised by Playbill, Broadway.com, BroadwayWorld and award-winning composer, Stephen Schwartz. David is a classically trained singer and pianist and a self-taught guitarist. He regularly freelances as a music director, arranger, accompanist, music producer, and video director/editor. His a cappella arrangements have been featured on the Best of College A Cappella and Voices Only compilation albums. David performs worldwide with the USO Show Troupe, and he sings in the a cappella trio, Iris, who won Varsity Vocals' 2018 International Championship of A Cappella at Carnegie Hall. David has also been a soloist for the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and Firelands Symphony Orchestra.

**Erin Weaver** is five-time Helen Hayes Award-winning actress as well as having two additional Helen Hayes Awards for Best Ensemble (*Sense and Sensibility* at the Folger Theater) and Best Musical Adaption (*The Gift of Nothing* commissioned by the Kennedy Center- award shared with Patrick McDonnell, Aaron Posner and Andy Mitton). She is currently a Helen Hayes Award nominee for the role of Katherine in Arena Stage's production of *Newsies*. Erin also won a Helen Hayes Award for Kattrin in *Mother Courage and Her Children* directed by Molly Smith, starring Kathleen Turner at Arena Stage. Locally, she has also performed at Signature, The Folger, Round House, Theater J, Imagination Stage, and Adventure Theatre.

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She played Young Cossette/Young Eponine in the first National Tour of *Les Miserables* and has performed at regional theaters across the country. She has created and taught in education programs for theaters including Arena Stage, Two River, 1812 Productions, and People's Light & Theatre. Erin has a BFA from the University of the Arts and she completed the NYU Steinhardt School *Drama in Education* (England) and *Community-Engaged Theatre* (Ireland) summer abroad programs. She lives locally with her husband, director and playwright Aaron Posner, and her fabulous eight-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Maisie.

### **GUEST ARTISTS**

**Molly Smith** has served as Artistic Director since 1998. Her more than 30 directing credits at Arena Stage include large-scale musicals like *Anything Goes*, *Carousel*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oklahoma!*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man*, *Cabaret*, *South Pacific*; new plays like *Sovereignty*, *The Originalist*, *Camp David*, *Legacy of Light*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, *How I Learned to Drive*; and classics like *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Great White Hope*, and *All My Sons*. Her directorial work has also been seen Off-Broadway at 59E59 in New York, Portland Center Stage, Canada's Shaw Festival, The Court Theatre, The Old Globe, Asolo Repertory, Berkeley Repertory, Trinity Repertory, Toronto's Tarragon Theatre, Montreal's Centaur Theatre and Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska, which she founded and ran from 1979 – 1998. Molly has been a leader in new play development for over 40 years. She is a great believer in first, second and third productions of new work and has championed projects including *Dear Evan Hansen*; *Next to Normal*; *Passion Play*, a cycle; and *How I Learned to Drive*. She led the re-invention of Arena Stage, focusing on the architecture and creation of the Mead Center for American Theater and positioning Arena Stage as a national center for American artists through its artistic programming. During her time with the company, Arena Stage has workshopped more than 100 productions, produced 39 world premieres, staged numerous second and third productions and been an important part of nurturing nine projects that went on to have a life on Broadway. In 2014, Molly made her Broadway debut directing *The Velocity of Autumn*, following its critically acclaimed run at Arena Stage. She has been awarded honorary doctorates from American University and Towson University.

**Choreographer Parker Esse** is an eight-time Helen Hayes Best Choreography nominee and recipient for Arena Stage's *Oklahoma!*, *The Pajama Game* and *Anything Goes*. Director/choreographer credits include: *Crazy for You* and *West Side Story* (Finger Lakes Music Theatre Festival). Choreographer credits include: *A Bed and a Chair: A New York Love Affair* (Encores!); *Carousel*, *Oliver!*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *The Music Man* and *The Light in the Piazza* (Arena Stage); *Rags*, *A Wonderful Life*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Most Happy Fella* and *Carousel* (Goodspeed); *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Ogunquit Playhouse); *West Side Story* (Signature Theatre); *Bells are Ringing* and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Berkshire Theatre Group); and *Me and My Girl*, *Sweet Charity* and *Guys and Dolls* (Canada's Shaw Festival). This past season: *La Traviata* (The Kennedy Center WNO), pre-Broadway Jukebox *Hero* featuring Foreigner's Greatest Hits (Ed Mirvish Toronto) and *Lyrics & Lyricists Celebrates Oklahoma! at 75* (92nd St. Y). Associate choreographer credits include Broadway's *Finian's Rainbow* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, and featured performer in *Fosse*.

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*Arena Stage's community engagement efforts are generously sponsored by The Estate of Ms. Toni A. Ritzenberg; Denie and Frank Weil; AT&T; the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; Joanne Barker; the deLaski Family Foundation; Exelon Corporation; the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Hattie M. Strong Foundation; Robert and Natalie Mandel Family Foundation; Floyd E. Davis Family Foundation; Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc.; Alice Shaver Foundation; Theatre Forward; Collins Aerospace; England Family Foundation; Friends of Southwest D.C.; GEICO; JBG Smith; Wayne and Susan Jonas; Wells Fargo & Company; Foley & Lardner LLP; Weissberg Foundation; Jean Schiro- Zavela and Vance Zavela; Actors' Equity Foundation; and Youth Activities Task Force (YATF) of the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, Inc.*

**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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