2024/25 SEASON



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DIRECTED BY HANA S. SHARIF

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ARENA STAGE

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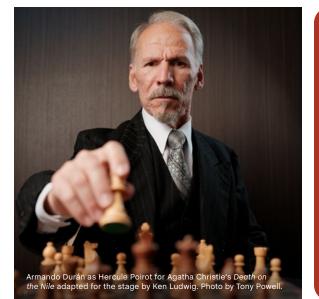
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ARENA STAGE'S MISSION

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.

OUR LAND Acknowledgement

Arena Stage is built on the land of the Nacotchtank and 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.



ARTISTICALLY SPEAKING

"Ah, but life is like that!

It does not permit you to arrange and order it as you will.

It will not permit you to escape emotion, to live by the intellect and by reason! You cannot say, 'I will feel so much and no more.'

Life... whatever else it is, is not reasonable."

-Hercule Poirot

It is a great gift to embark on my directorial debut at Arena Stage with an exhilarating journey into the enigmatic world of *Death on the Nile* and to revel in a world that is both fresh and familiar, iconic and modern, comforting in its ubiquity, and delicious in its complexity. Working with the incomparable Ken Ludwig on this world-premiere adaptation has been both a joy and a privilege. I have long been enchanted by Ken's clever, insightful, comedic theatrical adventures, so it was delightful that he was one of the first artists to welcome me to Washington, DC, last fall.

Indeed, Agatha Christie once said, "I've often noticed that when coincidences start happening, they go on happening in the most extraordinary way." It is a strange and wonderful symmetry to mirror the show that closed out my tenure at The Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Ken Ludwig's adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Agatha Christie's intricately crafted mysteries have a keen ability to pull us out of our day-to-day and unlock a deep sense of wonder. It is a gift to share this story with a playwright whose enthusiasm for digging into the mysteries of our shared humanity matches my own.

In a world rife with uncertainty, I have been returning to a truth that has long provided solace: that storytelling and the fundamental human underpinnings of love and resilience that excellent storytelling reveals are the central backbone of our society. We turn to new plays and world classics to guide our way, trusting that the curiosity and reverence with which we approach these stories can be a comfort and a compass when the path—or the river—ahead feels dark.

Interrogating these mysteries has been the core of Arena Stage's work for nearly 75 years. Our intrepid founder, Zelda Fichandler, once said, "New plays are central to our repertory since they come from the very time of our lives. But the world classics must remain alive in the present for our contribution to be complete. We are as we were and always will be, and deep truths about our misplaced love, our lust, our foolishness, cruelties, hunger for power, and dread of death are embedded in these great works, which turn their faces to us as the world turns."

This production is a unique blend of a new work and a classic tale, a rare treat for theatergoers. Through the lens of Agatha Christie's iconic detective, Hercule Poirot, we embark on a journey across continents and into a complex web of intersecting threads. Passion, hope, lust, betrayal, financial ruin, malfeasance, love, and rage compete for the stage, and Ken Ludwig's indelible pen breathes life, humor, and a fresh perspective into this eclectic band of characters trapped in Anubis's murderous lair, The River Nile.

At the core of this play is Agatha Christie's powerful belief that under the right series of circumstances, ordinary people can be driven to extraordinary acts. In the wake of unspeakable violence, the S. S. Karnak's once-merry band of travelers are left to grapple with the significant cost of emotional recklessness. Christie's inimitable protagonist, Hercule Poirot, cautions his brethren, "Do not open your heart to evil. If you do, evil will make a home within you." As we all move through this holiday season, this play is a powerful reminder that love and tenderness, despite their many guises, are our greatest force for good, and that at the end of the day, the needle of our moral compass points toward each other.

Haha S. Sharif Artistic Director

Arena Stage Washington, DC



Proudly Shaping the Local Landscape

FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Trivia question: How many full-length plays by Ken Ludwig has Arena Stage produced? Four: Shakespeare in Hollywood (2003), Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery (2015), Dear Jack, Dear Louise (2019), and now Agatha Christie's Death on the Nile.

More trivia: Ken also wrote a 10-minute play as part of *Our War* (2014), a compilation of short pieces on the American Civil War. In addition, during the dark early days of the pandemic, he partnered with Arena to mimic the *Dear Jack, Dear Louise* experience with physical letters telling the story of the play mailed to patrons.

And a piece of personal trivia: Back in my commercial producing days, I worked as co-producer with the Nederlander Organization and Ken on the musical *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* with a score by Don Schlitz.

What isn't trivial are the relationships artists build with other artists and organizations. Our community of artists stretches over many miles and years. When I use the word "artist" in this context, it includes the many artisans, craftspeople, administrators, teachers, producers, and of course, you, our audience, that make up our organizations and therefore our communities. We meet these artists at different points in our lives, connecting and disconnecting, and reconnecting again. It is equally important to have long-standing and new voices in our communities. It's always fun when, as with *Death on the Nile*, it's a new piece from a familiar voice.

Ken is not the only returning community member this season. As I'm sure many of you know, Karen Zacarías is another big part of Arena's extended community. Her adaptation of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* comes to the Fichandler in February and March. The trivia buffs out there may be interested to know that Arena has previously produced four of Karen's plays: *Legacy of Light* (2009), *The Book Club Play* (2011), *Destiny of Desire* (2015), and *Native Gardens* (2017). Similar to Ken, she also had a piece in *Our War*, and she greatly contributed to Arena's artistic life during the dark days of the pandemic, through both of Arena's online films: *May 22, 2020* and *The 51st State*.

I've cited these two playwrights because they are in our current season, but by no means are they the only returning friends in our artistic community. Among the casts and design teams this season are many deep relationships. It makes me proud to know that Arena has played a role in creating a broad artistic community, including welcoming audiences like you—whether for the first time or the 75th.

Warmly,

Edgar Dobie Executive Producer President of the Corporation

HEAD AND HEART: Mystery and felicity

by otis ramsey-zöe, dramaturg



Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," published in April 1841, is considered the first detective story. Poe is said to have drawn inspiration from the 1828 memoir by François-Eugène Vidocq, a Frenchman and founder of the world's first detective bureau in Paris. While Poe received credit for founding the detective mystery genre, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of the Sherlock Holmes series) and Dame Agatha Christie (best known for works featuring fictional detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple) are recognized masters of the genre. Why should a genre created nearly 200 years ago endure with such immense popularity today? We live in such uncertain times. Perhaps we turn to detective tales for the certainty they provide.

Detective stories are popular perhaps because they offer reassurance. Cases

at the heart of the stories often concern murder, and unwaveringly these tales suggest a world in which someone cares about what happened to victims and where someone will pursue justice on behalf of the deceased, injured, or aggrieved. Crime represents a breach not just against its victims but against society at-large. For the maintenance of social understandings that enable us to continue living in relationship to one another, and especially amongst strangers, we must trust that the restoration of order will be a value practiced by those in power.

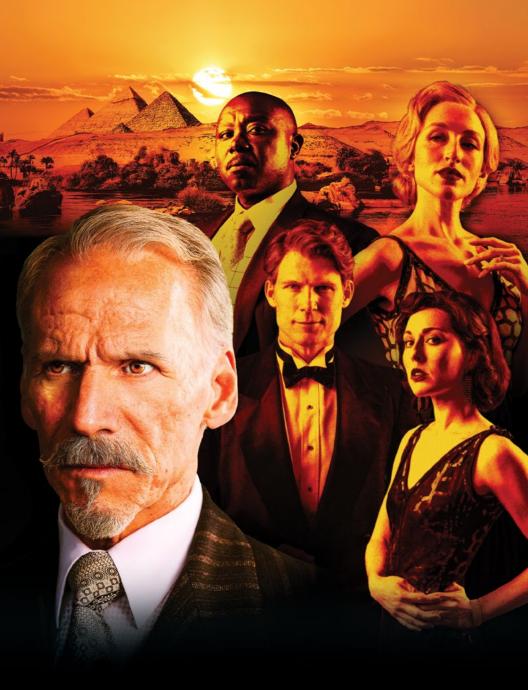
A tenet of mysteries is that everyone introduced in the narrative is a suspect. In the foreword to her Hercule Poirot mystery novel *Cards on the Table*, Christie asserts that, "any one of them, *given the right circumstances*, might have committed the crime." There



is always a logical solution to the problem. Detective mysteries express the triumph of the logical mind and posits that any allegedly unsolvable or perfect crime can be resolved through successful thinking. To unravel the mystery, both detective and audience must pay attention to details and context, as a perpetrator will always attempt to disguise what they have done. Where do the pieces not make sense? What doesn't fit the puzzle? As the tale unfolds, pieces that don't fit, or that seem insignificant, accumulate. Attention to deliberate misfits is key to breaking the code.

However, Ken Ludwig's adaptation of Death on the Nile is not interested in adhering exclusively to principles of mystery. Ludwig harvests Christie's novel for its astute investigator, rich characters with plenty of motive, and the essential plot, and then he adds comedy to the mix. Classically, comedy tends to focus on relationships, often explicitly romantic pairings, and end in some form of union. Whereas the traditional mystery centers on the head, the comedy revolves around the heart. The stress and heaviness of death is counterbalanced by the levity and delight of potential love. Passion in Ludwig's work is often madcap, tender, and surprising. According to Ludwig, "I decided that the best way to write a mystery for the stage was to make the piece as relentlessly entertaining as I possibly could - another way of saying that the forward propulsion of the piece should never flag." This fusion produces an adaptation that crackles with the best of Christie and Ludwig and invites audiences into a world where quests for justice and love are weighed equally.

Image of François-Eugène Vidocq, Edgar Allen Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Agatha Christie from Wikimedia Commons.



ARENA STAGE HANA S. SHARIF, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | EDGAR DOBIE, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



SET DESIGNER ALEXANDER DODGE COSTUME DESIGNER KAREN PERRY

ORIGINAL MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN CHARLES COES AND NATHAN A. ROBERTS

HAIR AND WIG DESIGNER

FIGHT DIRECTOR SORDELET INC. – RICK SORDELET

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CREATIVE ASSOCIATE ASHLEY D. POLASEK STAGE MANAGER CHRISTI B. SPANN^{*} ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER DAYNE SUNDMAN*

Support for Death on the Nile is provided by David and Patricia Fisher, Daniel Korengold, Martha Dippell, and OURISMAN, Michele and Allan Berman, and Catherine and Chris Guttman-McCabe.

LIGHTING DESIGNER KENNETH POSNER

PROJECTION DESIGNER BRITTANY BLAND

DIALECT AND VOCAL COACH LISA NATHANS

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Summer 1937.

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Annabelle Pennington	FELICIA CURRY*
Linnet Ridgeway	OLIVIA CYGAN*
Hercule Poirot	ARMANDO DURÁN*
Septimus Troy	ERIC HISSOM*
Jacqueline de Bellefort	KATIE KLEIGER*
Colonel Race	JAMIL A.C. MANGAN*
Ramses Praed	RYAN MICHAEL NEELY*
Salomé Otterbourne	NANCY ROBINETTE*
Atticus Praed	ROBERT STANTON*
Simon Doyle	TRAVIS VAN WINKLE*
Rosalie Otterbourne	SUMIÉ YOTSUKURA*

UNDERSTUDIES

For Ramses Praed, Simon Doyle – BRANDON HAAGENSON* For Linnet Ridgeway, Jacqueline de Bellefort, Rosalie Otterbourne – LILLI HOKAMA* For Hercule Poirot, Septimus Troy, Colonel Race, Atticus Praed – KEITH RICHARDS* For Salomé Otterbourne, Annabelle Pennington – ERIKA ROSE*

EXTRAS

SAM FROMKIN, KIRA GANDOLFO, DANIEL MASEDA

*Members of Actors' Equity Association



FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Associate Projection Designer	ZAVIER TAYLOR
Assistant Director	JAIDA GILLESPIE
Assistant Set Designer	
Projections Programmers	
	JERRAN KOWALSKI
Intimacy Consultant	
Intimacy consultant	VICTORIA VOURKOUTIOTIS
Mayon and Canaultant	
Movement Consultant	
Magic Consultant	RYAN PHILLIPS
Production Assistant	KYLA S. MERMEJO-VARGA
Stage Supervisor	HANNAH MARTIN
Deck Carpenter	
Props Technicians	LUÍS RAMON CÓRDOVEZ.
	ERICA FEIDELSEIT
Light Board Operator	
Lighting Assistant	
Audio Engineer	LIV FABLEY
Second Audio	
Wardrobe Supervisor	
Wardrobe	
	CAITLIN O'BRIEN
Wigs, Hair and Makeup Supervisor	JAIME BAGLEY
Crew Swings	TREVOR COMEAU,
Ŭ	MADALYN OLIVER

SPECIAL THANKS

Arena Stage would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their support of this production: Great Lakes Scenic Studios and Tom Carroll Scenery

Denny Blackwell

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Image of Hugh Bonneville for Uncle Vanya courtesy of the artist, artwork by Berkeley Rep.

CAST



FELICIA CURRY (Annabelle

Pennington) last appeared at Arena Stage in POTUS. Most recently, she was in the onewoman thriller, Sandra, at TheaterWorks Hartford, and performed her solo cabaret at

Everyman Theatre. Felicia 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 made her Broadway debut in the Tony-nominated revival of Into the Woods. and then toured with the show around the country, including at The Kennedy Center. She has a Berkshire Theatre Critics Award, a RTCC Award, an Anderson-Hopkins Award, and is a two-time AUDELCO nominee for Queens Girl in the World at Abingdon Theatre and Fabulation at The Billie Holiday Theatre, both 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 WAPAVA Board of Directors and the Emmy-nominated host of WETA Arts on PBS. Instagram: @thefeliciacurry



OLIVIA CYGAN (Linnet Ridgeway) is thrilled to be making her Arena Stage debut! Olivia is a New York-based actor and recent graduate of the Yale School of Drama. This spring, she understudied *Doubt* on

Broadway (Roundabout), directed by Scott Ellis. A native of Chicago, Olivia has originated roles in world premieres at Steppenwolf and Goodman. She's developed new work at theaters across the country, most recently with New York Stage and Film and Playwrights Realm in NYC. Television: Gotham. BS: Northwestern University. Carol Finch Dye Award, Yale School of Drama.



ARMANDO DURÁN (Hercule

Poirot) was a member of the repertory acting company at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for over twenty years, where his roles included Antony in Antony and Cleopatra,

Julius Caesar in Julius Caesar, Don Quixote in

Don Quixote, García Lorca in Lorca in a Green Dress, and Eddie Carbone in A View from the Bridge. He has originated characters in over a dozen world premieres including new works by Pulitzer Prize winners Nilo Cruz, Robert Schenkkan, and Frank Galati. He has appeared in productions at the Folger Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Yale Repertory, Seattle Repertory, the Clarence Brown Theatre, The Old Globe, and South Coast Repertory. His numerous audiobook titles include Avenue of Mysteries by John Irving and Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Marquez.



ERIC HISSOM (Septimus Troy) has appeared at Arena Stage in Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike and JQA. DC credits include Our Town and Comedy of Errors at Shakespeare Theatre; Twelve Angry Men and

Born Yesterday at Ford's; Cyrano and Arcadia (Helen Hayes Award) at the Folger; Body of an American and Life Sucks at Theater J; The Tempest and Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo at Round House; The Effect at Studio; The Vibrator Play at Woolly Mammoth; and others. National Tour: The 39 Steps. He has worked at many regional theaters, including Seattle Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Rep, Asolo Rep, Arden Theatre, Orlando Shakespeare Theater, The Cape Playhouse, and others. Eric has an MFA from the FSU/Asolo Conservatory.



KATIE KLEIGER (Jacqueline de Bellefort) is excited to make her Arena Stage debut. Other DC credits include White Noise, The Wolves, The Effect (Studio Theatre); Unseen (Mosaic Theater); Book of Will, and Miss

Bennet (Round House Theatre). Katie is also a company member at Everyman Theatre in Baltimore, where she most recently appeared as Dusty in POTUS. Her Off-Broadway credits include Sleep No More (McKittrick Hotel), Ring Twice for Miranda (New York City Center), and The Fall (SoHo Playhouse). Select regional credits include Everything is Wonderful (Philadelphia Theatre Company), Pride and Prejudice (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), and Juno and the Paycock (Guthrie Theater). Katie is also a singer-songwriter; you can find her music on all streaming platforms. Training: Guthrie BFA Acting Program. Instagram: @katiekleiger

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JAMIL A.C. MANGAN (Colonel

Race) has graced stages from Everyman Theatre in Baltimore where he portrayed Harmond Wilkes in Radio Golf, to Repertory Theatre of St. Louis as Monsieur Bouc in Murder on the Orient

Express, and the Contemporary American Theater Festival as Bear in North of the Boulevard. In NYC, he played Sergeant in Mother Courage at Classic Stage Company alongside Tony Award winner Kecia Lewis. Regionally, Jamil earned the Connecticut Critics Circle Award for Best Actor as Troy Maxson in Fences at Playhouse on Park. Jamil also played Othello at Perseverance Theatre and MLK Jr. in The Mountaintop at TheaterWorks Hartford. His TV work includes FBI (CBS), Blue Bloods (CBS), Manifest (NBC), and Gotham (FOX). Instagram: @jamilacts



RYAN MICHAEL NEELY (Ramses Praed) is thrilled to be making his Arena Stage debut. DC credits include King Lear with Patrick Page, Much Ado About Nothing (dir. Simon Godwin), Our Town, and The Merchant of Venice

(Shakespeare Theatre Company). Other regional credits include the title role in Hamlet (StoryTellers Theater), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival), Pride and Prejudice (Classic Theatre of Maryland), East of Heart Mountain (dir. Giovanna Sardelli), House for Sale (dir. Daniel Fish), and Twelfth Night (Shakespeare's Globe, UK). New York credits include Hamlet (L+F), Romeo and Juliet (Secret Theatre), and The Book of Z... (Manhattan Rep). TV credits include One Life to Live, Monumental Mysteries, and A Day Late and Ten Pounds Overweight (Winner: Top Indie Film Awards). BFA: Rutgers, Mason Gross. MFA: GW/STC Academy.



NANCY ROBINETTE (Salomé

Otterbourne) was most recently seen at Arena in The Heiress, Well, and Ah, Wilderness!. Other recent roles in DC include Nan in Jennifer Who Is Leaving (Round House), Carrie in The Trip to

Bountiful (Ford's), Bubbe in The Chameleon (Theater J), and Aunt Barb in Problems Between Sisters (Studio). She was recently on Broadway in Prayer for the French Republic (Manhattan Theatre Club), and earlier in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. For Prayer, she received an Outer Critics Circle nomination; for her 40-plus years in DC theater, she received a Helen Hayes Tribute.



ROBERT STANTON (Atticus Praed) has appeared at Shakespeare Theatre Company as Mr. Puff in The Critic & Moon in The Real Inspector Hound, winning an Emery Battis Award; and as Charles Marsden in Strange

Interlude. He recently performed Uncle Vanya at Lincoln Center, having also appeared on. Broadway in Ink, Saint Joan, A Free Man of Color, Mary Stuart, and The Coast of Utopia. Two dozen Off-Broadway credits include an Obie Award for All in the Timing, and Love Child, written and performed with Daniel Jenkins; Off-Off-Broadway credits include The Gold Room. Films include Confessions of a Shopaholic, Find Me Guilty, Next Stop Wonderland, Washington Square, Dennis the Menace, Bob Roberts, and A League of Their Own. Recent television includes Blue Bloods, Pretty Little Liars: Original Sin, and Mr. Mercedes.



TRAVIS VAN WINKLE (Simon Doyle) was most recently seen in an adaptation of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof as Brick at the Stella Adler Theatre. Presently he can be seen in the Netflix/Skydance action comedy Fubar. Other television

series regular roles include You, The Last Ship, and Instinct. Past recurring roles include Made for Love, Hart of Dixie, and Happy Endings. His film credits include Road House, Friday the 13th, Meet the Spartans, Transformers, and Accepted. Travis is a proud mentor in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program of Los Angeles and serves as a member on their Junior Board. He is also a Global Ambassador for the nonprofit BuildOn, building schools in Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Senegal. Instagram: @travisvanwinkle



SUMIÉ YOTSUKURA (Rosalie

Otterbourne) is delighted to return to Arena Stage after appearing this past spring in the ensemble of Unknown Soldier. She has also appeared as Gussie in Merrily We Roll Along (Keegan Theatre), Hodel

in Fiddler on the Roof (Olney Theatre Center), and was most recently seen in the ensembles of Signature Theatre's Soft Power and Creative Cauldron's Sondheim Tribute Revue. Other favorite DC credits include King of the Yees (Signature Theatre) and The Mortification of Fovea Munson (Kennedy Center TYA). Her regional credits include The Full Monty (Transcendence Theatre Company). She received her BA in Theatre and Asian & Pacific Islander American Studies from William & Mary. Instagram: @sumie.yotsukura



BRANDON HAAGENSON (u/s Ramses Praed, Simon Doyle) is thrilled to return to Arena Stage after last year's Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches. His other DC credits include The Play That Goes Wrong at The Kennedy

Center, and Our Town and The Merchant of Venice at Shakespeare Theatre Company. He has performed Off-Broadway in The Play That Goes Wrong (New World Stages) and Afterglow (original cast). National Tours include Beauty and the Beast (Lumière) and A Christmas Carol. His favorite regional credits include Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Florida Repertory, Stages St. Louis, Riverside Theatre, North Carolina Theatre, and North Shore Music Theatre, Television appearances include The Other Two (HBO Max) and The Food That Built America (History Channel). He also tours the world with the musical trio, the MidAtlantic Men. He holds an MFA in Classical Acting from STC's Academy at The George Washington University, and he has a BFA in Musical Theater from Millikin University. Love to his family and friends for their unending support. www.brandonhaagenson.com

Instagram: @brandonhaagenson



LILLI HOKAMA (u/s Linnet Ridgeway, Jacqueline de Bellefort, Rosalie Otterbourne) is grateful to be debuting at Arena with this charming ensemble. DC credits include A Midsummer Night's Dream and Amadeus at Folger Theatre.

Most recently, Lilli worked with the Fine Arts Center in CO for Water by the Spoonful, where she also did Elf The Musical and Guadalupe in the Guest Room. Past acting highlights include The Wolves (Lincoln Center Theater): Little Women (Dallas Theater Center/The Old Globe); Now Circa Then, I and You (Chester Theatre); Matt and Ben (Kitchen Theatre Company); and Antigone (Baltimore Center Stage). She also presented an original story for We Hear You—A Climate Archive, presented at The Kennedy Center and Dramaten, the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. TV credits include Prodigal Son and several short films including Jellybones and Chip!. She has done voice acting and motion capture for Khan Tran in the new Telltale game, The Expanse. Directing credits include Night of the Living Dead at Rorschach Theatre, Red, Henry Makes a Bible at Ensemble Studio Theatre, and the world premiere of AJ Clauss' Rat Jaw at their co-owned theater company, Stomping Ground Theatre, which focuses on bringing high fidelity art to rural America. It is an honor and privilege for Lilli to be here, eternal gratitude to her partner, family, and friends.



KEITH RICHARDS (u/s Hercule Poirot, Septimus Troy, Colonel Race, Atticus Praed) is thrilled to be making his Arena Stage debut. DC credits include Peter and the Starcatcher (Helen Hayes Award) at Constellation

Theatre; Disney's Beauty and the Beast at Imagination Stage; Oliver! and James and the Giant Peach (Helen Hayes Award) at Adventure Theatre. National Tours include Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! with The Kennedy Center, J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan with 360 Entertainment, and A Christmas Carol with Nebraska Theatre Caravan. Other regional credits include Shakespeare in Love at Virginia Rep; 9 to 5, A Tale of Two Cities at Barter Theatre; The Odd Couple at Mill Mountain Theatre; Hello, Dolly! and Pirates of Penzance at Music Theatre Works of Chicago. TV credits include American Titans, Deadly Demands on Discovery, and Sultan and the Saint on PBS, www.keitharichards.com Instagram: @keithrichardsactor



ERIKA ROSE (u/s Annabelle

Pennington, Salomé Otterbourne) has performed Off-Broadway in Here There Are Blueberries (New York Theatre Workshop). Regional: Here There Are Blueberries (STC); Tiny Beautiful Things (Baltimore

Center Stage); Confederates, The Cymbeline Project (OSF); An Octoroon, Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); Crying on Television, Queens Girl in Africa (Everyman Theatre); Queens Girl in Africa (Mosaic Theater Company, Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actress); In Darfur (Theater J, Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actress); Fences (Ford's Theatre); The Father (Studio Theatre); Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus! The Musical!, Knuffle Bunny, The Brand New Kid, OLIVERrio, Barrio Grrrl! (The Kennedy Center); Clybourne Park (Pioneer Theatre Company); Cinderella, Looking for Roberto Clemente, Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters (Imagination Stage); Book Club Play, Pippin (Round House Theatre). Film: The Cymbeline Project with Scarlett Kim; Anesthesia; Black Sorority Project: The Exodus. Company Member: Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Instagram: @erikarose.art

CREATIVE

AGATHA CHRISTIE (Author) is known throughout the world as the Queen of Crime. Her books have sold over a billion copies in English with another billion in foreign languages. She is the most widely published author of all time and, in many languages, outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare. She is the author of 66 crime novels, 150 short stories, over 25 plays, and six novels written under the name Mary Westmacott. Her work includes Murder on the Orient Express, Death on the Nile, and the genre-defining And Then There Were None. Agatha Christie's first novel, The Mysterious Affair at Styles, was written towards the end of the First World War, in which she served in the VAD. In it she created Hercule Poirot, the little Belgian detective who was destined to become the most popular detective in crime fiction since Sherlock Holmes. It was published by Bodley Head in 1920. In 1926, after averaging a book a year, Agatha Christie wrote her first masterpiece. The Murder of Roger Ackroyd was the first of her books to be published by Collins and marked the beginning of an author-publisher relationship that lasted for 50 years and well over 70 books. Ackroyd was also the first of Agatha Christie's books to be dramatized-under the title Alibi-and to have a successful run in London's West End. By 1930, Agatha had introduced a new character to act as detective. When she created Miss Marple, Agatha did not expect her to become Poirot's rival, but with The Murder at the Vicarage, Miss Marple's first full-length outing, it appeared she had produced another popular and enduring character. The Mousetrap, her most successful play of all, opened in 1952 and is the longestrunning play in history. Agatha Christie was made a dame in 1971. She died in 1976. Agatha Christie Limited (ACL) has been managing the literary and media rights to Agatha Christie's works around the world since 1955, working with the best talents in film, television, publishing, stage, and on digital platforms to ensure that Christie's work continues to reach new audiences in innovative ways and to the highest standard. The company is managed by Christie's great-grandson James Prichard, Visit www.agathachristie.com for more information. KEN LUDWIG (Playwright) is the most performed playwright of his generation. He has had six productions on Broadway and eight in London's West End, and his 34 plays and musicals are staged around the world and throughout the United States every night of the year. They have been produced in over 20 languages in more than 30 countries, and many have become standards of the American repertoire. His first play, Lend Me a Tenor, won two Tony Awards and was called "one of the classic comedies of the 20th century" by The Washington Post. Crazy For You was on Broadway for five years, on the West End for three, and won the Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Musical. It has been revived in London twice. His play Murder on the Orient Express is currently on a yearlong tour of the United Kingdom and Ireland. In addition, he has won the Edwin Forrest Award for contributions to the American theater, two Laurence Olivier Awards, two Helen Hayes Awards, the Charles MacArthur Award, and the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of the Year. He also won the Samuel French Award as Playwright of the Year, and he was nominated for an Emmy Award for writing the Kennedy Center Honors. He has had three previous world premieres at Arena Stage, Shakespeare in Hollywood, Baskerville, and Dear Jack, Dear Louise. Other plays include Moon Over Buffalo, Leading Ladies, Sherwood, Twentieth Century, A Fox on the Fairway, A Comedy of Tenors, and The Game's Afoot. His plays have starred, among others, Alec Baldwin, Carol Burnett, Tony Shalhoub, Joan Collins, Lynn Redgrave, and Kristen Bell. His book How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare, published by Penguin Random House, won the Falstaff Award for Best Shakespeare Book of the Year, and has just been released in a new, expanded edition. His essays on theater are published in the Yale Review, and he gives the Annual Ken Ludwig Playwriting Scholarship at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. His first opera, Tenor Overboard, opened at the Glimmerglass Festival in 2022. His most recent world premieres were Lend Me A Soprano and Moriarty, and his newest plays and musicals include Pride and Prejudice Part 2: Napoleon at Pemberlev. Beginner's Luck, and Easter Parade. His latest play, Lady Molly of Scotland Yard, will premiere this season at the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Florida, and Dear Jack, Dear Louise will open in January in New York City at 59E59. For more information, visit www.kenludwig.com.



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Cut Here

HANA S. SHARIF (Director) has directed acclaimed productions of Murder on the Orient Express (7 STLCC nominations), A Christmas Carol (4 STLCC nominations, STL A-List Award), Pride and Prejudice (5 STLCC nominations). Porgy and Bess, The Who & The What (3 SFBA Critic Circle nominations), Fun Home, Sense and Sensibility, The Christians, Les Liaisons Danaereuses, Pride and Preiudice (DCArts: Best Director/Best New Play), The Whipping Man, Gem of the Ocean (six CCC nominations), Gee's Bend (CCC Award Best Ensemble, two nominations), Next Stop Africa, Cassie, The Drum, IFdentity, Pretty Fire, Patient 463, I, Marcus Garvev, Quicksand, Hospice, and The Blacker The Berry. Her plays include All the Women I Used to Be, The Rise and Fall of Day, and The Sprott Cycle Trilogy (1880, 1964, 2010).

ALEXANDER DODGE (Set Designer)'s Arena Stage credits include Catch Me If You Can. Noises Off, and On the Jump. Broadway: I Need That, Anastasia (Outer Critics nomination), A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics nominations). Present Laughter (Tony nomination), Old Acquaintance, Butley, Hedda Gabler. Off-Broadway: Russian Troll Farm, Harry Clarke, Whisper House, The Understudy, Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme (Lucille Lortel Award). London West End: Harry Clarke, All New People. Other: Disney's Hunchback of Notre Dame at La Jolla and Paper Mill Playhouses, Japan, Germany, and Austria. DC: Shakespeare Theatre, Folger. Opera: Samson et Dalila at Metropolitan Opera, The Thirteenth Child at Santa Fe, Ghosts of Versailles at LA Opera, Il trittico at Deutsche Oper Berlin. Training: MFA Yale. Instagram: @alexanderdodgedesign

KAREN PERRY (Costume Designer)'s previous Arena Stage credits include A Time to Kill and Resurrection. She has designed costumes for Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill (Syracuse Stage), Destiny of Desire (Old Globe), Clyde's (Berkley Rep/Huntington Theatre, Norton Award for Best Costume Design), Wine in the Wilderness (Two River Theater), A Raisin in the Sun (NYSF Public Theatre), Personality: The Lloyd Price Musical (People's Light), and Lackawanna Blues (Broadway & Mark Taper Forum). Karen has designed nine of the 10 August Wilson Century Cycle plays (she has yet to design Fences). Upcoming: The new adaptation of Karen Zacarías' Destiny of Desire: A Telenovela

Musical, directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson, due soon on Broadway." Television credits include *The Gregory Hines Show, Saturday Night Live*, and *The Brother from Another Planet*. She has received a Norton Award, Lucille Lortel Award, LA Ovation Awards, a CDG Award, an Ace Award, and a Hewitt Award; is an Emmy and AUDELCO Award nominee; and is a nine-time NBTF Award recipient and Lifetime Achievement honoree.

KENNETH POSNER (Lighting Designer) is happy to return to the Arena Stage having last designed the 1996 production of Tom Stoppard's Arcadia. He designs extensively on and Off-Broadway, for resident theaters and touring productions throughout the United States as well as internationally. Selected Broadway and West End credits include Doubt, Beetlejuice, Mr. Saturday Night, Pretty Woman, Mean Girls, War Paint, Disgraced, On Your Feet!, If/Then, Kinky Boots, Pippin, Cinderella, Hairspray, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Legally Blonde, Lend Me a Tenor, Catch Me If You Can, The Coast Of Utopia-Shipwreck, Other Desert Cities, The Merchant of Venice, The Little Foxes, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Finding Neverland, and Wicked. He is a graduate of SUNY at Purchase and is the recipient of the Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, Joseph Jefferson, Henry Hewes, and Obie Awards.

CHARLES COES (Original Music and Sound Design) is happy to be back at Arena where he designed Jitney. His work has been seen at Ford's with Parade and at STC with Servant of Two Masters, NY highlights include Comedia of Errors with the Public's Mobile Unit. Beautiful Lady at La MaMa, Sing Street at NYTW, Letters of Suresh at Second Stage, and Golden Shield at MTC. Recent regional work includes Song of Rome at Spoleto, The Pianist at George Street, and Lehman Trilogy at The Huntington and St. Louis Rep. He's toured the world with the Homer's Coat production of An Iliad, and been an associate on many Broadway shows including Girl from the North Country, To Kill a Mockingbird, Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike, and Peter and the Starcatcher.

NATHAN A. ROBERTS (Original Music and Sound Design) is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, instrument-maker, and sound designer who specializes in creating original music and soundscapes for plays, often live onstage. He is thrilled to be making his Arena Stage debut! DC Theater: The Widow Lincoln, Our Town (Ford's Theatre): The Servant of Two Masters (Shakespeare Theatre). Off-Broadway: Golden Shield (Manhattan Theatre Club); Letters of Suresh (Second Stage); Crane Story, Dramatis Personae (The Playwrights Realm). Regional: The Way the Mountain Moved, Sense and Sensibility (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Miss You Like Hell, Fun Home, The Christians, Les Liaisons Dangereuses (Baltimore Center Stage); Animal Farm (Milwaukee Rep): Sense and Sensibility (Dallas Theater Center/Guthrie Theater): Tokvo Fish Storv (The Old Globe). Education: MFA, Yale School of Drama. Faculty: Senior Lecturer in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies. Yale University.

BRITTANY BLAND she/her/they (Projection Designer) is a passionate storyteller dedicated to fostering empathy through her work as a projection designer for the stage. She has an extensive portfolio that includes designs for theater, dance, immersive media, and opera. Her notable recent credits include *Cats: The Jellice Ball, Becoming a Man* at A.R.T., *Westerly Breath* at the Met Museum, *Amani* at Rattlestick Theater, *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Public Theater, and *Goddess* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Brittany holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama and is a proud recipient of theater artists.

LASHAWN MELTON (Hair and Wig Designer) is a native Washingtonian hair and wig designer. Arena Stage credits include The Other Americans (Hair Design), Tempestuous Elements (Wig Design), Disgraced (Hair Design), Smart People (Assistant Wig Design), Nina Simone: Four Women (Assistant Wig Design), Pajama Game (Assistant Wig Design), and Snow Child (Hair and Makeup Design). Regional wig design credits include The Winter's Tale (Folger Shakespeare Theatre); Raisin in the Sun, Emma the Musical, The Play That Goes Wrong (Utah Shakespeare Festival); On Your Feet! (GALA Theatre): The Sensational Sea Minkettes, Describe the Night, Fairview, Botticelli in the Fire (Woolly Mammoth Theatre); The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963 (The Kennedy Center); Comedy of Tenors (Olney Theatre); and School Girls (Round House Theatre). TV/Film hairstylist credits include Lioness, White House Plumbers, Rustin, and Fellow Travelers. Education: BA in Art, University of the District of Columbia.

SORDELET INC. – RICK SORDELET (Fight Director and Intimacy Consultant), along with Christian and Collin Kelly-Sordelet created Sordelet Inc., a Native-owned action movement company with 35+ years' experience. Sordelet Inc. has over 80 Broadway productions to their credit, including The Lion King, Beauty and the Beast and, in 2025, Stranger Things: The First Shadow, also Peter Pan and Tina National Tours currently running, plus 53 first-class productions worldwide, as well as numerous films, operas, live events, and loads of television productions. They teach at William Esper Studio, HB Studio, CUNY Harlem. Montclair State, and 22 years at Yale School of Drama. Rick is a board member for Red Bull Theater. They also run Sordelet Ink. with author David Blixt, an e-publishing company for the emerging writer. To learn visit www.sordeletinc.com more. and www.sordeletink.com. Instagram: @sordeletinc

LISA NATHANS (Dialect and Vocal Coach) is thrilled to be coaching again for Arena Stage with this fabulous team after previously coaching The Other Americans, Data, POTUS, Holiday, Catch Me If You Can, Disney's Newsies, Anything Goes, and others. Other DC credits include various productions with The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences. Shakespeare Theatre Company, Olney Theatre Center, Signature Theatre, Theater Alliance, Keegan Theatre, and MetroStage. Regional credits include Guthrie Theater, 5th Avenue Theatre, and Theatricum Botanicum. TV credits include National Geographic. Teaching (USA and UK): University of Maryland: TDPS (Associate Professor, Voice, Speech, and Acting); CalArts; Stella Adler Academy; RADA; Royal Welsh; Royal Central; University of Washington (PATP MFA); and University of Minnesota (Guthrie BFA). Training: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama: MFA (Voice Studies); Boston University: BFA (Acting); Linklater Voice Designation; and Colaianni Speech Practitioner. Break legs all!

OTIS RAMSEY-ZÖE (*Dramaturg*) is a care worker, dramaturg, director, theater arts educator, and Literary Manager at Arena Stage. He has developed new works at such institutions as Sundance Institute, Kennedy Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Center, and National New Play Network. He has held posts in Dramaturgy at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale and Carnegie Mellon University, Theatre at Northeastern University, Women's Studies and Honors Humanities at the University of Maryland, 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.

CAPARELLIOTIS CASTING (New York Casting) Select Broadway/Off-Broadway: Mary Jane; Prayer for the French Republic; Jaja's African Hair Braiding; 2:22 A Ghost Story; Grey House; Summer, 1976; The Comeuppance; Ohio State Murders; Cost of Living; Macbeth; The Minutes; Skeleton Crew; Ink; Letters From Max; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?; The Waverly Gallery; Boys in the Band. Select theaters: Signature NYC, Atlantic, Ars Nova, The Old Globe, CTG. TV/Film: New Amsterdam (NBC, series casting), The Boys in the Band (Netflix, original casting).

RAIYON HUNTER (DC Casting) is a casting director, producer, and arts administrator from New Orleans, Louisiana. She currently works as the Casting Director/Line Producer of Arena Stage. Previously, she worked as the Casting Director of Children's Theatre Company and the Spelman Leadership Fellow at the Alliance Theatre (Atlanta, GA) where she has contributed to a multitude of shows in varying capacities ranging from Casting Associate to Director on productions such as Do You Love the Dark?. Darlin' Corv. Bina's Six Apples, Good Bad People, Confederates, and more. Additionally, she has been in residency at Oregon Shakespeare Festival under Nataki Garrett and The Repertory Theater of St. Louis under Hana S. Sharif.

ASHLEY D. POLASEK she/her (Creative Associate) is the Executive Director of The Ken Ludwig Company. Credits include Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express at Chichester Festival Theatre and UK National Tour: Crazv For You at Chichester Festival Theatre and West End; and the world premieres of Tenor Overboard at Glimmerglass Festival (Script Associate). Ken Ludwig's Lend Me A Soprano at Alley Theatre (Creative Associate). Ken Ludwig's Moriarty at Cleveland Play House (Creative Associate), and Ken Ludwig's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard (Creative Associate). She holds a doctorate in Adaptation Studies. lecturing on her specialism, Sherlock Holmes adaptations, across the US, UK, Continental Europe, and Asia, and serving as a technical advisor for film and television, most recently on *Enola Holmes* (Legendary Pictures) and *Let's Go Luna!* (PBS Kids). She is the author of several books and dozens of chapters and academic journal articles on adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, editor-inchief of the interdisciplinary journal *The Conan Doyle Review*, and a member of the Baker Street Irregulars.

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, Exclusion, POTUS,* and *Tempestuous Elements*. 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 always glad to be back at Arena Stage. Past favorite shows at Arena include Unknown Soldier; POTUS; Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches; American Prophet: Frederick Douglass in His Own Words; Catch Me If You Can: Newsies: The Heiress: and Anything Goes. Other credits include Murder on the Orient Express (Great Lakes Theater); Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812, Sense and Sensibility (Idaho Shakespeare Festival): Jane Anger. The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci (STC); The Great Society, Born Yesterday, and The Little Foxes (Asolo Repertory Theatre). Allen Lee Hughes Fellow. Baldwin Wallace University 2015.

ARENA STAGE Leadership

HANA S. SHARIF (*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 theater, Hartford Stage, in 2003. During her decadelong 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 premieres, and helping to guide the theater through a multi-million dollar building 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 antiracism 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 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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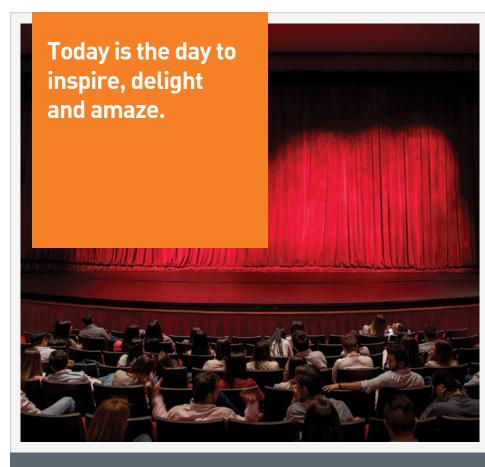
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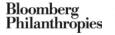
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