

# MEDIA RELEASE

MOLLY SMITH ARTISTIC DIRECTOR EDGAR DOBIE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ZELDA FICHANDLER FOUNDING DIRECTOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2023

CONTACT:

Anastasia St. Hilaire, Arena Stage  
[asthilaire@arenastage.org](mailto:asthilaire@arenastage.org)

Amy Killion, Bucklesweet  
[amy@bucklesweet.com](mailto:amy@bucklesweet.com), 703-559-9714

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM  
FOR ITS TENTH WORLD-PREMIERE POWER PLAY

## *Exclusion*

A New Play by Acclaimed Theater and TV Writer KENNETH LIN  
Directed by TRIP CULLMAN

(Washington D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announced today the cast and creative team for the world premiere of *Exclusion*, a wickedly funny Hollywood-set comedy. Written by acclaimed theater and TV writer **Kenneth Lin** (*Kleptocracy*, *Warrior Class*, Netflix's *House of Cards*) and directed by Drama Desk nominee **Trip Cullman** (*The Rose Tattoo*, *Choir Boy*, *Lobby Hero*), *Exclusion* will run **May 5 – June 25, 2023**, in the **Kreeger Theater**. Press Night will be held on **Thursday, May 18 at 8 p.m.** For information and tickets, please visit [arenastage.org/exclusion](http://arenastage.org/exclusion).

*Exclusion* follows Katie, an award-winning historian, who is thrilled when her best-selling book about the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is optioned for a mini-series by a Hollywood mogul. Her euphoria turns to disillusionment as she finds herself constantly defending its authenticity in the struggle between what's true and what sells.

"*Exclusion* takes off from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, but it's written from a contemporary point of view," says Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "It's a play about who gets to tell the story and what happens when the original storyteller gets shoved to the side. *Exclusion* is a very American story and Ken Lin is a brilliant storyteller."

"Audiences should come to see *Exclusion* because it's funny," says **Lin**. "The great thinker Henri Bergson wrote in his work *Laughter* that we laugh at 'something mechanical encrusted on the living.' In that vein, *Exclusion* is my primal scream as an Asian American deep in Hollywood's trenches, thrown into the mouth of a ventriloquist's dummy. It is also a fulfillment of my duty as an artist to respond to the moment, and in this particular American moment, we really, really need funny."

*Exclusion* is the tenth addition to Arena's Power Play series. Launched in 2016, this is a 10-year initiative commissioning original works on politics and power, reflecting American diversity and challenges through five cycles and voices—presidential, African American, insider, musical theater, and women's voices. Previous Power Plays include Lawrence Wright's *Camp David* (2014); John Strand's *The Originalist* (2015); Jacqueline E. Lawton's *Intelligence* (2017); Bob Banghart, Georgia Stitt, and John Strand's *Snow Child* (2018); Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Sovereignty* (2018); Aaron Posner's *JQA* (2019); Eduardo Machado's *Celia and Fidel* (2021); Craig Lucas' *Change Agent* (2022); and Nathan Alan Davis'

*The High Ground* (2023). The eleventh Power Play, Kia Corthorn's *Tempestuous Elements*, will premiere in February 2024. *Exclusion* is also the recipient of a prestigious Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.

Musing on Bergsöm's juxtaposition of "mechanical on the living," **Lin** continues, "As vital, supple individuals who are in constant danger of calcifying on the lattice of society, we need to be reminding each other to stay 'living.' In other words, we laugh together to signal that we're still game to live together.

"Right now, it feels like we need that in spades. So, I hope that as audiences enter the theater, we can laugh and see each other.

"After all," **Lin** questions, "they say that Hollywood is just Washington for ugly people, right?"

Returning to Arena Stage is **Tony Nam**, who previously appeared in *Akeelah and the Bee* and *Change Agent*, as Malcolm. Making their Arena debuts with *Exclusion* are cast members **Karoline** (Lincoln Center Theater's *The Hard Problem*) as Katie, **Josh Stamberg** (Hulu's *Fleishman Is in Trouble*) as Harry, **Michelle Vergara Moore** (NBC's *La Brea*) as Viola, **Karen Li** (Contemporary American Theater Festival's *Babel*) as the understudy for Katie and Viola, **Jonathan Feuer** (Shakespeare Theatre's *As You Like It*) as the understudy for Harry, and **Ryan Dalusung** (Everyman Theatre's *The Lion in Winter*) as the understudy for Malcolm.

The creative team for *Exclusion* includes Set Designer **Arnulfo Maldonado**, Costume Designer **Sarah Cabbage**, Lighting Designer **Adam Honoré**, Sound Design **Sunny Kil**, Original Music Composer **Hsin-Lei Chen**, Wig Designer **Anne Nesmith**, Fight Director **Sordelet Inc.**, Dramaturg **Jocelyn Clarke**, Dramaturg **Zoë Elizabeth Lillis**, Casting Director **Joseph Pinzon**, New York Casting **Kelly Gillespie, CSA**, Stage Manager **Christi B. Spann**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Emily Ann Mellon**.

#### **CAST BIOGRAPHIES (in order of appearance)**

**Karoline** (*Katie*) is an actor, writer, and filmmaker. They are best known for Tom Stoppard's *The Hard Problem* (Lincoln Center Theater) and the world premiere of *[Veil Widow Conspiracy]*, for which *The New York Times* singled them out as "terrific." They will next be seen as Eleanor Chun in the new Hulu show *Death and Other Details*. [onlykaroline.com](https://onlykaroline.com) IG: @onlykaroline

**Josh Stamberg** (*Harry*) As a Washington, D.C. native, Josh is proud to be working at Arena Stage, where he first fell in love with theater. This marks his second collaborations with both Trip Cullman (*A Steady Rain* by Keith Huff at New York Stage and Film) and Kenneth Lin (*Intelligence-Slave* at L.A. Theatre Works). Most recently, he played Arthur Miller in the world premiere of *Fall* by Bernard Weinraub at the Huntington Theatre in Boston. Other theater credits include the world premiere of *Meteor Shower* by Steve Martin at The Old Globe and Long Wharf Theatre; the title role in *The Power of Duff* by longtime collaborator (and fellow D.C. native) Stephen Belber at the Geffen; developing and starring in the world premiere of *Tape* by Belber in NY, LA, and London's West End; the U.S. premiere of *The Female of the Species* by Joanna Murray-Smith opposite Annette Bening; and *Distracted* by Lisa Loomer at Roundabout Theatre opposite Cynthia Nixon. His extensive screen work includes *Fleishman Is in Trouble* opposite Claire Danes, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, *WandaVision*, *The Loudest Voice* opposite Russell Crowe, *The Affair*, *Nashville*, *Parenthood*, and *Drop Dead Diva*, among many others. He works frequently with Ojai Playwrights Conference and L.A. Theatre Works, and has recorded numerous titles in the *James Bond: 007* radio series for the BBC. Josh lives in Los Angeles with his daughters Vivian and Lena.

**Tony Nam** (*Malcolm*) is pleased to be returning to Arena Stage after previously appearing in *Akeelah and the Bee* and *Change Agent* (u/s Jack/Cord). He is a member of the Resident Acting Company at

Everyman Theatre in Baltimore where he has appeared in *Jump, Baskerville, Sense and Sensibility, The Skin of Our Teeth, Cry It Out, Murder on the Orient Express, Everything is Wonderful, and Aubergine*. He has appeared in numerous productions with other D.C. area theaters including The Kennedy Center, Ford's Theatre, Folger Theatre, Mosaic Theater Company, Olney Theatre Center, Round House Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Tony holds a BA from St. Mary's College of MD and MFA from the University of Washington.

**Michelle Vergara Moore** (*Viola*) is beyond chuffed to be making her Arena Stage debut with *Exclusion*. Originally from Melbourne, Michelle completed her training at Australia's premiere theater school, the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), Sydney. Now calling NYC home, Michelle workshopped plays there with Atlantic Theater Company and New Dramatists. Australian stage credits include Veronica in *The Motherf\*\*\*er with the Hat* and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*. She made her U.S. feature film debut in *Side Effects*, directed by Steven Soderbergh, and was a series regular on *La Brea* (NBC), *The Unusual Suspects* (Hulu), and *The Time of Our Lives* (ABC Australia). Other TV credits include co-starring opposite Bob Balaban on *Condor* (MGM+) and guest starring in *High Maintenance* (HBO).  
[www.linktr.ee/michellevergaramoore](http://www.linktr.ee/michellevergaramoore) IG: @michellevergaramoore

**Karen Li** (*u/s Katie / Viola*) is a Baltimore-based actor with a Theatre and Dance double degree from UC San Diego. She most recently appeared onstage in the DMV area in *Babel* (Contemporary American Theater Festival) and *Black Super Hero Magic Mama* (Strand Theater). Other favorite theater credits include *The Great Leap* (Perseverance Theatre), *Sunset Park* (Theaterlab), *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots* (La Jolla Playhouse), and *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* (Chinese Pirate Productions for San Diego Comic-Con). Karen's TV credits include *Dancing with the Stars* (Season 10).

**Jonathan Feuer** (*u/s Harry*) is making his Arena Stage debut! Local credits include *Richard III* and *As You Like It* (Shakespeare Theatre Company), *John* (Signature Theatre), *Charm* (Mosaic Theater Company), *Antigone Project* (Rep Stage), *The Call* (Theater J), *Maz & Bricks* (Solas Nua), Kennedy Center TYA, Imagination Stage, Spooky Action Theater, Prologue Theatre, The Hub Theatre, Annapolis Shakespeare Company, Forum Theatre, The Keegan Theatre, Adventure Theatre MTC, Quotidian Theatre Company, and Studio 2ndStage. Jonathan is a graduate of The Academy for Classical Acting at GW. Upcoming: *Monumental Travesties* (Mosaic Theater Company).

**Ryan Dalusung** (*u/s Malcolm*) is delighted to be making their Arena Stage debut. Most recently, Ryan appeared in Baltimore as a part of Everyman Theatre's production of *The Lion in Winter*, playing King Philip of France. Other regional and D.C. theater credits include *Dot* (Everyman Theatre), *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*, *Jumanji*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Adventure Theatre), *Collaborators* (Spooky Action Theater), and *Murder in the Cathedral* (Compass Rose Theater). Ryan also performs as a voice artist and audiobook narrator, including regularly narrating books with the Library of Congress to record unabridged books for the blind. [www.RyanDalusung.com](http://www.RyanDalusung.com) IG: @dalusungtheactor

## **PRODUCTION INFORMATION**

### **EXCLUSION**

**By Kenneth Lin**

**Directed by Trip Cullman**

**In the Kreeger Theater | May 5 – June 25, 2023**

**ABOUT:** In *Exclusion*, an award-winning historian is thrilled when her best-selling book about the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1883 is optioned for a mini-series by a Hollywood mogul. Her euphoria turns to disillusionment as she finds herself constantly defending its authenticity in the struggle between what's true and what sells.

**CAST:**

Katie: Karoline\*  
Harry: Josh Stamberg\*  
Malcolm: Tony Nam\*  
Viola: Michelle Vergara Moore\*  
u/s Katie/Viola: Karen Li  
u/s Harry: Jonathan Feuer\*  
u/s Malcolm: Ryan Dalusung\*

**CREATIVE TEAM:**

Playwright: Kenneth Lin  
Director: Trip Cullman  
Set Designer: Arnulfo Maldonado  
Costume Designer: Sarah Cubbage  
Lighting Designer: Adam Honoré  
Sound Design: Sunny Kil  
Original Music: Hsin-Lei Chen  
Wig Designer: Anne Nesmith  
Fight Director: Sordelet Inc.  
Dramaturg: Jocelyn Clarke  
Dramaturg: Zoë Elizabeth Lillis  
Casting Director: Joseph Pinzon  
New York Casting: Kelly Gillespie, CSA  
Stage Manager: Christi B. Spann\*  
Assistant Stage Manager: Emily Ann Mellon\*

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association

*Exclusion* is sponsored by **AARP** and **Beth Newburger Schwartz** with additional support provided by **Linda A. Baumann, Jeffrey M. Busch, The Drs. Elliot and Lily Gardner Feldman Endowment for New Plays at Arena Stage,** and **David Bruce Smith and the Grateful American Foundation.**

*Exclusion* is the recipient of an **Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.**

**PLAN YOUR VISIT**

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *Exclusion* are \$56-95 plus applicable fees. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change. Arena Stage's many savings programs include "pay your age" tickets for those aged 30 and under, student discounts, and "Southwest Nights" for those living and working in the District's Southwest neighborhood. To learn more, visit [arenastage.org/savings-programs](http://arenastage.org/savings-programs).

Tickets are available at [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org). Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300, or in person at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, D.C., Tuesday-Sunday, 12-8 p.m.

Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300  
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380

**PERFORMANCE DATES:**

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday at 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.  
Weekday matinees at 12 p.m. on May 24, June 1 and 14  
No performance on June 17

**Early Curtains:** Sunday, June 4 at 6 p.m.

**Southwest Nights:** Saturday, May 13 at 8 p.m. and Thursday, May 25 at 8 p.m.

**Audio-Described Performance:** Saturday, May 27 at 2 p.m.

**ASL-Interpreted Performance:** Friday, June 16 at 8 p.m.

**Closed Captioning:** GalaPro begins Friday, May 19

### **Post-Show Conversations**

Connect with the show beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with staff and artists on May 30 following the 7:30 p.m. performance; on June 8 following the 8 p.m. performance; and on May 24, June 1, and June 14 following the 12 p.m. matinees.

**Full Calendar:** [arenastage.org/tickets/calendar](https://arenastage.org/tickets/calendar)

**SAFETY:** Arena Stage requires that patrons, staff, and volunteers wear facial masks while in our theaters, regardless of vaccination status. We recommend, but do not require, that patrons wear facial masks in our public, non-theater spaces, such as the Lower Lobby and Grand Lobby. These conditions are subject to change, and Arena continues to consult with medical professionals, monitor government best practice recommendations, and engage in industry trainings to ensure the health and safety of our patrons, artists, and staff. For up-to-date information, visit [arenastage.org/safety](https://arenastage.org/safety).

**TRAVEL:** Limited parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage for \$18 to \$30, including drive-up valet parking for \$30. Call 202-488-3300 to purchase in advance. For more information on transportation and other parking options around the Mead Center, visit [arenastage.org/transportation](https://arenastage.org/transportation).

**For complete 2022/23 Season details, visit [arenastage.org/season](https://arenastage.org/season).**

*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](https://arenastage.org)*

###

### **Connect with us:**

[facebook.com/arenastage](https://facebook.com/arenastage)

[twitter.com/arenastage](https://twitter.com/arenastage)

[instagram.com/arenastage](https://instagram.com/arenastage)

[youtube.com/user/arenastage1](https://youtube.com/user/arenastage1)

[arenastage.org](https://arenastage.org)