

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Arena StageAnastasia St. Hilaire, asthilaire@arenastage.org**Print Shop PR**Nicole Capatasto, nicole@printshoppr.com**ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR
SUSPENSEFUL NEW SILICON VALLEY THRILLER****DATA**By **MATTHEW LIBBY**Directed by **MARGOT BORDELON**

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announced today the cast and creative team for **Data**, an intriguingly suspenseful new play designed to take audiences behind the locked doors of Silicon Valley. Written by **Matthew Libby** (Northern Stage's *Sisters*) and directed by **Margot Bordelon** (Denver Center's *The Lehman Trilogy*, Arena's *POTUS*), **Data** will premiere **October 31 - December 15, 2024**, in the **Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**. Press Night will be held on **Thursday, November 7 at 8 p.m.** For information and tickets, please visit arenastage.org/data.

Data follows Maneesh, an entry-level programmer at Athena Technologies. Content with working in the low-stress environment of User Experience, Maneesh faces a crisis of conscience when he is transferred to the central Data Analytics team and learns the true nature of Athena's highly controversial and secretive work. Torn between idealism and survival, Maneesh is forced to come to terms with his unique American identity while learning the lengths to which Athena is willing to go to hide its gruesome secrets.

"I am beyond thrilled to be collaborating with this dream team to bring the world premiere of *Data* to Arena Stage," said **Libby**. "This play was born out of my experience coming of age in Silicon Valley, torn between the tech industry's glamour and its power, — a tension that, as the past several decades have proven, creates the world we live in for better or worse."

"Matthew Libby's sharp political thriller brings a fresh take on the role humanity plays within our digital landscape that is prime for this vibrant, diverse political city," said Arena Stage Artistic Director **Hana S. Sharif**. "The first time I read this script, I couldn't put it down, and I cannot wait for DC audiences to be swept up in the tides and tensions of the inexorable expansion of Artificial Intelligence along with us."

“I wanted to take audiences behind the curtain of these mysterious, monolithic companies specifically through the eyes of the young people — the peons, fresh out of college, at the bottom of the food chain,” continued **Libby**. “What does it mean to have a quarter-life crisis within an industry that is itself having a quarter-life crisis? How do you learn the responsibility of an individual within a corrupt system? What do we lose when we reduce people to their data points? I'm so excited to bring these questions to DC audiences alongside such an incredible cast, director, and design team — as well as bring a question that is, of course, equally important: How much live ping pong can one play have?”

Making their Arena Stage debuts with *Data*, the star-studded cast of this fast-paced drama includes **Karan Brar** (Disney's *Jessie*) in his theatrical debut as Maneesh, **Stephen Cefalu, Jr.** (Broadway's *To Kill A Mockingbird*) as Jonah, **Isabel Van Natta** (The Huntington's *John Proctor Is The Villain*) as Riley, and **Rob Yang** (HBO's *Succession*) as Wang Tao (Alex).

Joining **Bordelon**, the creative team for *Data* includes set designer **Marsha Ginsberg** (Shakespeare Theatre Company's *Lehman Trilogy*), costume designer **Beth Goldenberg** (New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Juilliard's *The Mother of Us All*), lighting designer **Amith Chandrashaker** (Broadway's *Prayer for the French Republic*), sound designer **Mikaal Sulaiman** (Broadway's *Fat Ham*), composer **Dan Kluger** (Broadway's *Oklahoma!*), stage manager **Elisa Guthertz** (Berkeley Repertory Theatre's *Mother Road*, Arena's *Sanctuary City*), and assistant stage manager **Lauren Pekel** (Studio Theatre's *Fun Home*). New York casting is by **Taylor Williams Casting**. DC casting is by **Raiyon Hunter**.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

Karan Brar (*Maneesh*) is a first-generation Indian American actor. Karan has starred in major film and television productions such as Disney's hit show *Jessie* and its spinoff *Bunk'd*, Netflix and Adam Sandler's *Hubie Halloween*, Legendary Entertainment/Universal Pictures *Pacific Rim: Uprising*, Twentieth Century Fox's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* franchise, and the Sony/ PlayStation video game *Concord*. Karan has also worked behind the camera as a director. *Data* is Karan's theatrical debut. When he is not acting or directing, Karan serves as an advisory board member to The Cameron Boyce Foundation. He currently resides in New York City and is represented by Paradigm. Instagram: [@karanbrar](https://www.instagram.com/karanbrar)

Stephen Cefalu, Jr. (*Jonah*) is making his Arena Stage debut! Recent Credits: Broadway National Tour of *To Kill A Mockingbird*; *The Cherry Orchard* (Goodman Theatre); World Premiere of *Mary Page Marlowe* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *End Days* (Windy City Playhouse); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Redtwist Theatre, Jeff Nomination: Best Supporting Actor); *The Gradient* (St. Louis Rep, Theatre Circle Nomination: Outstanding Supporting Performer); *PerkUp PerKup* (City Theatre); *Scenes from a Court Life, Assassins* (Yale Rep.); *In A Word, Damsels, Brotherhood* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Slave Play* (Original Cast at Yale Drama). TV/film: *Shameless, Law and Order: SVU, Evil, This Afternoon*. MFA: Yale School of Drama.

Isabel Van Natta (*Riley*) is thrilled to be making her Arena Stage debut. She is an actor of Cuban descent and calls Miami home. She has a BFA in Acting from Boston University. Credits: *John Proctor Is The Villain* (The Huntington), *Laure* (workshopped at NYTW and The Tank), *RX Machina* (Boston Playwrights' Theatre), *Medusa Reclaimed* (Central Square Theatre), and *The Nether* (Area Stage Company). Awards:

Elliot Award Nominee for Best Featured Actor in a Play and Winner for Best Production and Best Ensemble for *John Proctor Is The Villain*. Isabel is an advocate for mental health. She sends a special thanks to Dad, Mom, Sofia, Leandro, Mya, and her managers Dave Brenner and Sarah Haber at Creative Talent Company. Instagram: [@isabelvannatta](#) Website: www.isabelvannatta.com

Rob Yang (*Wang Tao (Alex)*) most recently wrapped production for Nick Rowland's upcoming feature film *She Rides Shotgun* in which he stars alongside Taron Egerton. Recent credits include *American Rust* for Prime Video, starring opposite Jeff Daniels, *Rabbit Hole* for Paramount+, opposite Kiefer Sutherland, and Searchlight's feature *The Menu*, opposite Anya Taylor-Joy, Ralph Fiennes and Nicholas Hoult, reuniting him with the *Succession* team of director Mark Mylod and producer Adam McKay. Other credits include the nine-time Emmy Award-winning series *Succession* as the role of Lawrence Yee for HBO, and numerous other hit shows including *Living With Yourself* for Netflix, *The Resident* for FOX, and *The Americans* for FX. On stage, Rob most recently starred in *Catch as Catch Can* at Playwrights Horizons.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

DATA

By Matthew Libby

Directed by Margot Bordelon

By Special Arrangement with Jeffrey Richards and M/B/P productions

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle | October 31 – December 15, 2024

ABOUT: *Data* is Matthew Libby's intriguingly suspenseful and relevant new play that takes you behind the locked doors of Silicon Valley. Its protagonist is Maneesh, a brilliant entry-level programmer at Athena Technologies, a data-mining firm. Content to work in the low-stress environment of User Experience, Maneesh has a crisis of conscience when he is offered a transfer to the more-central Data Analytics team, and learns the true nature of Athena's highly controversial and secretive work. Torn between idealism and survival, Maneesh is forced to come to terms with his unique American identity, all while learning the extent to which Athena is willing to go to hide its secrets.

Cast:

Maneesh: Karan Brar*

Jonah: Stephen Cefalu, Jr.*

Riley/As Cast: Isabel Van Natta*

Wang Tao (Alex)/As Cast: Rob Yang*

Creative:

Playwright: Matthew Libby

Director: Margot Bordelon

Set Designer: Marsha Ginsberg

Costume Designer: Beth Goldenberg

Lighting Designer: Amith Chandrashaker

Sound Designer: Mikael Sulaiman

Composer: Dan Kluger

New York Casting: Taylor Williams Casting

DC Casting: Raiyon Hunter
Stage Manager: Elisa Guthertz*
Assistant Stage Manager: Lauren Pikel*

*Members of Actors' Equity Association

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Ticket prices start at \$59 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 35 and under; military, first responder, and educator discounts; student discounts; and "Southwest Nights" for those living and working in the District's Southwest neighborhood. To learn more, visit arenastage.org/savingsprograms.

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

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 are at 12 p.m. on November 26, November 27, and December 11

Early Curtain: Sunday, November 24 at 6 p.m.

Southwest Nights: Friday, November 1 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, November 10 at 2 p.m.

Audio-Described Performance: Saturday, November 30 at 2 p.m.

ASL-Interpreted Performance: Saturday, December 14 at 8 p.m.

Mask-Required Performances: Saturday, November 16 at 2 p.m. and Sunday, December 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Closed Captioning: GalaPro begins Friday, November 8

Industry Night: Sunday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Pride Night: Wednesday, November 6 at 7:30 p.m.

HBCU/Divine Nine Night: Thursday, November 14 at 8 p.m.

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with the show beyond the performance at a post-show conversation on November 14 following the 8 p.m. performance, December 3 following the 7:30 p.m. performance, and November 21, November 27, and December 11 following the 12 p.m. matinee performances.

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.

SAFETY: Arena Stage recommends but does not require that patrons wear facial masks in our theater except in our occasional mask-required performance. 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.

For complete 2024/25 Season details, visit arenastage.org/season.

The first racially integrated theater in our nation's capital and a pioneer of the regional theater movement, Arena Stage was founded on August 16, 1950, in Washington, D.C., by Zelda Fichandler, Tom Fichandler, and Edward Mangum. Today—nearly 75 years later—Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. We produce plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep, and dangerous in the American spirit, and present diverse and groundbreaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Consistently contributing to the American theatrical lexicon by commissioning and developing new plays, Arena Stage impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement and serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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