

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Producer Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

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ARENA STAGE IN ASSOCIATION WITH
AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PRESENTS
THE ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY'S PRODUCTION OF
TONI STONE
BY LYDIA R. DIAMOND
A FREE LIVE SIMULCAST TO BE PRESENTED AT NATIONALS PARK

*** The special one-day-only event will take place on Sunday, September 26 ***

*** Free tickets are now available ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is proud to partner with Nationals Park to host a free live simulcast of the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of *Toni Stone* on **Sunday, September 26 at 7:30 p.m.** The performance inside the Kreeger Theater will be broadcast to the center field video board at Nationals Park for thousands to experience, making this Arena's largest audience in its history. **Tickets are free and must be reserved. To RSVP, please visit [here](#).**

Prior to the performance, the day will include a ceremonial first pitch on the field. The stadium will open two hours before the performance. A variety of concessions and food will be available for purchase at the ballpark. Hundreds of Toni Stone commemorative bobblehead figures will be raffled off during the event. Arena is thrilled to collaborate with Nationals Park to offer this community outreach and engagement experience.

"What better way to come roaring back in the nation's capital than with a story about perseverance and fighting the odds about Toni Stone, the first woman to play professional baseball with a men's league. There is true beauty and synchronicity in a simultaneous showing of *Toni Stone* from Arena Stage to the Nationals ballfield on the video board," shares Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "Toni Stone's story is hidden history and needs to be told. To be able to tell this story in front of thousands at the ballpark and to celebrate Toni and the Negro League is an honor and a thrill."

"The Nationals are so excited to partner with Arena Stage to help tell the trailblazing story of Toni Stone," states Senior Vice President, Community Engagement for the Washington Nationals **Gregory McCarthy**. "Ever since our organization ceremoniously drafted Mamie Johnson in 2008, we have strived to raise up the legacy of both women in baseball and the Negro Leagues, both of which are incredibly important stories in American history. We hope that the DMV will come out to see the show and we can help inspire the next generation of women in baseball."

"I am excited to share Lydia R. Diamond's play and Toni Stone's story of her time in the Negro Leagues with DC baseball fans — a perfect fit for this SW neighborhood," shares Director **Pam MacKinnon**.

* Media interested in attending should please e-mail press@arenastage.org for further information regarding interviews and photo/video requests. RSVPs are required and must be submitted by September 10. *

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Set in the 1950s, Toni Stone was the first woman to play baseball in the Negro Leagues, also making her the first woman to play in a professional men's league. Against all odds, Stone blazed a path in the male-dominated sports world, shattering expectations and creating her own set of rules. Written by Arena alumna resident playwright **Lydia R. Diamond** (Arena's *Smart People, Stick Fly*), this heroic, true story shines a light on one of history's greatest trailblazers.

Directed by Tony Award winner **Pam MacKinnon**, *Toni Stone* runs **September 3 – October 3, 2021 in the Kreeger Theater**.

The cast features **Gilbert L. Bailey II** (*Spec/Gabby*), **Aldo Billingslea** (*Alberga/Rufus*), **Deimoni Brewington** (*Jimmy/Father O'Keefe*), **JaBen Early** (*King Tut/Supervisor*), **Santoya Fields** (*Toni Stone*), **Kenn E. Head** (*Millie/Willie*), **Rodney Earl Jackson Jr.** (*Elzie*), **Sean-Maurice Lynch** (*Stretch/Syd*) and **Jarrold Mims Smith** (*Woody/Mother*).

In addition to MacKinnon, the creative team includes Choreographer **Camille A. Brown**, Set Designer **Riccardo Hernández**, Costume Designer **Dede Ayite**, Lighting Designer **Allen Lee Hughes**, Sound Design and Original Music by **Broken Chord**, Hair and Wig by **Cookie Jordan**, Associate Choreographer **Jay Staten**, Stage Manager **Elisa Guthertz**, Assistant Stage Manager **Kurt Hall** and Production Assistant **Dayne Sundman**.

For full company biographies, please visit [here](#).

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

**Arena Stage in Association with American Conservatory Theater Presents
The Roundabout Theatre Company's Production of
*Toni Stone***

By Lydia R. Diamond

Directed by Pam MacKinnon

Choreographed by Camille A. Brown

In association with Samantha Barrie

In the Kreeger Theater | September 3 – October 3, 2021

At Nationals Park | Sunday, September 26, 2021

ABOUT: History is filled with trailblazers and Toni Stone was one of them. Considered a pioneer, Toni Stone is the first woman to play baseball in the Negro Leagues, also making her the first woman to play professionally in a men's league in the 1950s. Against all odds, Stone shattered expectations and created her own set of rules in the male-dominated sports world. Based on Martha Ackmann's book *Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone*, award-winning playwright Lydia R. Diamond (Arena's *Smart People, The Bluest Eye*) tells the dynamic story of Stone's journey of perseverance and resilience just to do what she loved the most — play baseball.

SAFETY: In accordance with Mayor Muriel Bowser's guidance, Nationals Park is requiring all guests to wear an approved facial covering at all times when in an indoor area at Nationals Park, regardless of vaccination status, unless they are actively eating or drinking. This rule applies for all indoor areas including but not limited to restaurants, bathrooms, elevators, stairwells, corridors etc. For guests who are not fully vaccinated, facial coverings are required everywhere at Nationals Park and may only be temporarily removed when guests are actively eating or drinking within their seating pods. Children who are age two and older who are unvaccinated must wear a facial covering.

BAG POLICY: Backpacks are prohibited inside Nationals Park, except as provided herein. Purses, drawstring bags and soft-sided coolers that do not exceed 16"x16"x8" are permitted. See the full bag policy by visiting [here](#).

PARKING: Nationals Park is located in Southeast Washington along the Anacostia River bounded by South Capitol Street to the west, N Street to the north, First Street to the east and Potomac Avenue to the south. Parking will be available for purchase at the GEICO Garage and Garage C. Both garages will open 2.5 hours prior to the start of the performance.

METRO: Patrons coming to Nationals Park can take the Green Line to the Navy Yard station or the Orange, Blue or Silver Lines to the Capitol South station. The Navy Yard station is just a block away from Nationals Park, and the Capitol South station is a 15-minute walk to and from Nationals Park.

*Prime Sponsorship for Toni Stone and Arena Stage is generously provided by **Beth Newburger Schwartz**. Supporting Sponsorship for Toni Stone is generously provided by **AT&T, Susan and Steve Bralove, Exelon and***

Sue Henry and Carter Phillips. *The Opening Night Celebration is generously sponsored by **Boston Consulting Group.***

*Generous support for Toni Stone at Nationals Park is provided by the **Annenberg Foundation** and **Sachiko Kuno Foundation.** Supporting Sponsorship is generously provided by **Exelon** and **GEICO.** Contributing Sponsorship is generously provided by **Charles Schwab, Hogan Lovells LLP** and **Strategic Education.***

*Sponsorship for Arena Stage's Season Artwork is generously provided by **David Bruce Smith** and **The Grateful American Foundation.***

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 impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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