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Kathleen Akerley Joins Avant Bard as Producing Partner as the Company Announces its 2023-2024 Season

Avant Bard Theatre announces its 8th annual Scripts in Play festival and two full productions for the 2023-2024 season. Producing Partners Sara Barker and Alyssa Sanders welcome to the leadership Kathleen Akerley, Artistic Director of Longacre Lea.



Kathleen Akerley

ARLINGTON, VA, Aug. 15, 2023: Avant Bard Theatre is thrilled to announce that Kathleen Akerley has joined Sara Barker and Alyssa Sanders as a third Producing Partner on its shared leadership team. Akerley is the founder and Artistic Director of Longacre Lea, and has collaborated with Avant Bard numerous times as an actor (“Caligula,” “Macbeth,” “Juno and the Paycock,” “Medea,” “Every Young Woman’s Desire,” “Hedda Gabler,” and in “Hapgood,” for which she received a Mary Goldwater Theater Lobby Award) and director (2023’s “Julius Caesar” in addition to “The Tooth of Crime,” “Jumpers” and “Macbett,” which was co-directed with founding company member Christopher Henley).

“Sara and I were over the moon when Kathleen shared interest in leading Avant Bard with us,” stated Producing Partner Alyssa Sanders. “With our history as actors, we were aware of the need to bring a director’s viewpoint to the team and Kathleen’s experience, knowledge of the company, and keen eye will undoubtedly serve Avant Bard well.”

Akerley stated “I’m particularly excited by how the company is situated to engage their community with education outreach.” Since 2019 Akerley has been the Film teacher at Arlington’s HB Woodlawn Secondary Program, “which has increased my awareness of and commitment to creating theatrical experiences that echo and support the content students are mastering in school.”

Founding Artists

TJ Edwards

Brian Hemmingsen

Christopher Henley

Producing Partners

Kathleen Akerley

Sara Barker

Alyssa Sanders

Board of Directors

Edgar Ndjatou, President

Peter Threadgill, Secretary



With the three Producing Partners at the helm, Avant Bard will begin its season with its 8th annual free Scripts in Play staged reading festival, which both develops and showcases new works by playwrights from the DC area and beyond. The festival will be co-hosted by Arlington art galleries again, including Arlington’s Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA). The festival will take place Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons in the latter half of January and early February.

For its first full production of the season, Avant Bard will present a co-production, with Longacre Lea, of Shakespeare’s “Coriolanus,” to be directed by Longacre Lea Managing Director Séamus Miller. “Inspired by video games, virtual reality, and our cultural embrace of ultra-violence, the production will reframe our understanding of the protagonist through a trauma-informed lens,” Miller explains. “The audience will be directly involved and implicated in the conditioning of a man who is bred into, even celebrated for, antisocial brutality—and then punished for his learned inability to ‘play nice’.” Longacre Lea will bring its signature video presence to the co-production. Previews begin Thursday, February 29. Opening/Press Matinee is Sunday, March 3.

The final production of the season is the DC-area premiere of “Homeless Garden,” written by Matt Minnicino and co-developed by Chicago’s Refracted Theatre Company and Director Graham Miller. Minnicino is a playwright known to area audiences for his Helen Hayes nominated adaptation of “The Misanthrope” for Avant Bard in 2019. “Homeless Garden” modernizes and deconstructs Chekhov’s “The Cherry Orchard” with an eye on the interconnection of environmental and class issues. Kathleen Akerley will direct Avant Bard’s production. Previews begin Thursday, May 2. Opening/Press Matinee is Sunday, May 5.

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Located in Arlington, Virginia, Avant Bard produces thought-provoking theatre. Avant Bard dedicates itself to productions of classic works—both time-tested and contemporary—that take provocative, bold approaches in intimate settings. Since 1990, Avant Bard has delivered high-quality, diverse, and accessible arts to the Washington, D.C. region. Avant Bard’s mission includes a commitment to talent development, equity, inclusion, and programmatic excellence.

www.avantbard.org

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