



Avant Bard Theatre – Performances  
Gunston Arts Center – Theatre Two  
2700 S Lang St.  
Arlington, VA 22206

Avant Bard Theatre - Office  
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August 27, 2024

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Avant Bard Launches Season 35 – Back to the Bard: Reimagined and Relevant

**Arlington, VA** – Avant Bard Theatre proudly announces the start of its 35th season, beginning in October 2024, with a rich and distinctive lineup that exemplifies our mission to interrogate the classics and classical themes and showcase innovative voices.

The season kicks off with the **October 2024 9th annual Scripts in Play festival** presented in Arlington art galleries, featuring three bold and thought-provoking new scripts:

***Killing Mockingbirds*** by Bridget Grace Sheaff

**Oct. 4, 7:30 & Oct. 6, 2:00, Mason Exhibitions, 3601 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA**

In *Killing Mockingbirds*, Frances is finally making a comeback to directing for the stage with a production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. However, James, the artistic director of the community theatre in Annapolis, MD receives a cease and desist from the Broadway production while Frances is moving into dress rehearsals. Frances rallies the cast to create a devised work around the themes of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and, in the meantime, has to wrestle with her father's failing health. She eventually crosses too many lines in the rehearsal room and James shuts down her production. Frances is left with the real question: Who are the mockingbirds in this story? The play asks who owns stories, how the ghost of the play enters a room when working on a classic, and the harm that we do to each other unintentionally.

***Radio Free America*** by Allyson Currin

**Oct. 11, 7:30 & Oct. 13, 2:00, Mason Exhibitions, 3601 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA**

Set in a dystopian future, *Radio Free America* imagines a United States under invasion, seen through the eyes of a small group of DC artists who operate a radio station to lift the spirits of their besieged city. As the conflict intensifies, they struggle to preserve their culture's art amidst the chaos of war. The play raises profound questions about the role of art in times of crisis and the value of creativity when basic survival is at stake. The play asks how we might need to challenge the definition of art in a rapidly changing world.

***Rude Mechanics*** by Eric Hissom

**Oct. 18, 7:30 & Oct. 20, 2:00, MoCA Arlington, 3550 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA**

*Rude Mechanics* is a fast-paced, gender-fluid period comedy that resonates with contemporary themes, set in London in 1612 during a time of plague and political unrest. When an understudy is thrust into a leading role in Shakespeare's troupe on the eve of a performance for King James, the night becomes rife with political and romantic intrigue. Featuring Shakespeare himself and touching on many of his enduring themes, this play is a lively exploration of love, art, and survival in tumultuous times.

**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  
Nia Hill, Treasurer

**March 2025 Production: *The Margriad* (or, The Tragedy of Queen Margaret)  
Gunston Arts Center, Theatre Two, 2700 S Lang St, Arlington, VA**

Avant Bard Theatre proudly presents *The Margriad*, a compelling adaptation that brings to life one of Shakespeare's most formidable characters, Queen Margaret of Anjou. Conceived by Séamus Miller, this production weaves together four of Shakespeare's history plays—*Henry VI Part 1*, *Part 2*, *Part 3*, and *Richard III*—to tell the complete, epic story of Margaret's rise and fall. With six actors taking on all the roles, and three different actors embodying Margaret at various stages of her life, *The Margriad* offers a powerful and streamlined exploration of ambition, power, and tragedy. This production invites audiences to experience Shakespeare's history plays as a cohesive narrative, centered around the indomitable spirit of Queen Margaret. Previews begin Thursday, March 6.

**Press/opening matinee is Sunday, March 9.** *The Margriad* runs through Saturday, March 29. Performances take place at Gunston Arts Center, Theatre Two, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington, VA 22206. For press inquiries, interviews, or additional information, please contact Sara Barker at [sara@avantbard.org](mailto:sara@avantbard.org) or at 202-553-2770.

**May 2025 Production: *Hamlet***

**Gunston Arts Center, Theatre Two, 2700 S Lang St, Arlington, VA**

Avant Bard Theatre is thrilled to close its 35th season with a bold new interpretation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, directed by the visionary Kathleen Akerley, an Avant Bard artistic associate. Known for her cerebral and innovative approach to classical texts, Akerley reimagines the iconic tragedy by delving deep into Hamlet's grief-fueled disorientation, and examines every character not in the context of how they fail the titular hero but are failed by him. "People tell you not to make any major decisions within a year of significant loss," Akerley observes. "So much of *Hamlet* stands as cautionary proof of that point. When my mother died, I thought the globe was literally spinning wrong: how could I be trusted to measure reality or take the temperature of the world and people around me – many of whom were also flailing in grief?" This *Hamlet* will drive to its awful conclusion with few stops for air. Previews begin Thursday, May 1. **Press/opening matinee is Sunday, May 4.** *The Margriad* runs through Saturday, May 24. Performances take place at Gunston Arts Center, Theatre Two, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington, VA 22206. For press inquiries, interviews, or additional information, please contact Sara Barker at [sara@avantbard.org](mailto:sara@avantbard.org) or at 202-553-2770.

**Note:** As part of a commitment to making theatre open to all, Avant Bard offers pay-what-you-can tickets for all previews as well as Saturday matinees, complementary tickets to all Arlington middle and high school students and half-price tickets for their parents/guardians, and, for *The Margriad* and *Hamlet*, offers two "Mask Required" performances: Saturday, March 22, 2pm for *The Margriad*, and Saturday, May 17, 2pm for *Hamlet*.

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*Avant Bard on the web and social media:*

<https://avantbard.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AvantBardTheatre>

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<https://instagram.com/avantbardtheatre>

*Avant Bard produces thought-provoking theatre. We are dedicated to interrogating the classics and classical themes via innovative, bold approaches in intimate settings. Gratefully in its 35<sup>th</sup> season, Avant Bard has delivered high-quality, diverse, and accessible arts to the Washington, D.C. region since 1990.*