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MEDIA RELEASE

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CARRIE FISHER STARS IN *WISHFUL DRINKING* AT ARENA STAGE AT THE LINCOLN THEATRE

***** Best-selling author and Hollywood star brings her hilarious solo show to Washington, D.C. *****

Arena Stage welcomes best-selling author and Hollywood personality **Carrie Fisher** to the Lincoln Theatre for her one-woman show, *Wishful Drinking*, staged by renowned director **Tony Taccone**. During its extended run in California, *Wishful Drinking* received critical acclaim, set box office records and delighted audiences in sold-out houses night after night. Arena Stage presents *Wishful Drinking*, a Jonathan Reinis Production in association with Berkeley Repertory Theatre. The show only runs three weeks from September 5 to September 28, so purchase tickets today.

Wishful Drinking kicks off Arena's collaboration with the historic Lincoln Theatre in Northwest, D.C. for the two-year festival, *ARENA RESTAGED*. Arena's theater campus at Sixth and Maine Avenue, S.W. is under construction to build the \$125 million Mead Center for American Theater, set to open in 2010. During the construction, Arena will continue to perform at Arena Stage in Crystal City, in addition to the Lincoln.

"I was essentially raised in my mother's nightclub act, so it's very natural for me to do what most people find unnatural—get on stage and tell stories," **Fisher remarks**. "I always say, 'If my life weren't funny, it would just be true—and that's unacceptable.' So please come to see my show, otherwise I'll end up talking about myself alone in the dark. Again!"

"Next to politics, Hollywood royalty is Washington's other obsession," says **Arena's Artistic Director Molly Smith**. "I grew up watching Carrie Fisher in *Star Wars* and was moved by her film *Postcards from the Edge*. She's a powerful writer and performer with a wicked sense of humor!"

"Carrie is an incisive writer," **Taccone comments**, "and she has a razor sharp wit. Having lived in the public eye for so long—and having survived so many unusual experiences—she's developed a unique capacity to make sense out of life's challenges through storytelling. With this show, she combines these talents with an ability to be completely authentic and truthful onstage."

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Carrie Fisher is the life of the party in this uproarious and sobering look at her Hollywood hangover. The daughter of Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, Carrie Fisher became a cultural icon when she starred as Princess Leia in the first Star Wars trilogy at 19 years old. Forever changed, Carrie's life did not stay picture perfect. A demanding career and single motherhood followed, as well as her struggle with addiction. It's an incredible tale filled with self-deprecating humor about Elizabeth Taylor as a stepmother, marrying (and divorcing) Paul Simon, and losing her daughter's father to another man. Fisher tells a true and intoxicating story with the strong, wry wit that she poured into bestsellers like *Postcards from the Edge*. Get "Carried" away with this hilarious insider's look at life in Hollywood.

Entertainment Weekly declares the show "drolly hysterical," and the *Los Angeles Times* dubs it a "Beverly Hills yard sale of juicy anecdotes." The *San Francisco Chronicle* asserts, "Fisher knows how to write wickedly comic material and, better still, how to deliver it." And the *Wall Street Journal* raves: "Addiction, mental illness, movie-star parents, bad marriages, really bad hair... Carrie Fisher, right? You got it: Princess Leia has recycled her nightmarish life yet again, this time putting it onstage in the form of an exceedingly clever one-woman show called *Wishful Drinking*. [She's] drop-dead funny about a string of personal crises so horrific that the only alternative to laughing at them is slashing your wrists in sympathy."

"Hurry to the box office as fast as you can and get your tickets to Carrie Fisher in *Wishful Drinking*," **ABC Radio** proclaims. "You'll double over laughing at the skeletons in Carrie's closet." And **CBS Radio** says it's "a fabulous, funny, wild ride through showbiz with a remarkable woman! I love this show and so will you!"

Taccone continues, "Carrie offers us a chance to peek behind the mask of character, the mythos of Hollywood, and the artifice of celebrity to witness a person who recognizes the absurdity and insanity of everything around her and who brazenly chooses to laugh it off. Given the options, she will tell you, it's her only viable choice."

Wishful Drinking Creative Team

Carrie Fisher has been a compelling force in the film industry since her feature film debut opposite Warren Beatty in the 1975 hit *Shampoo*. She became a cultural icon when she played Princess Leia in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Her star-studded career includes roles in countless films such as *The Blues Brothers*, *The Burbs*, *Garbo Talks*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, *The Man with One Red Shoe*, *This is My Life*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Austin Powers*, *Scream 3*, *Charlie's Angels* and *Wonderland*. Her next films—*White Lightnin'*, *Fanboys* and the remake of *The Women*—will be released this year. In 1987, Fisher's book, *Postcards from the Edge*, leapt onto *The New York Times*' bestseller list and netted her the Los Angeles Pen Award for Best First Novel. Three more bestsellers followed: *Delusions of Grandma*, *Surrender the Pink* and *The Best Awful*. Fisher turned *Postcards* into a screenplay for the hit film starring Shirley MacLaine and Meryl Streep, and is currently adapting *The Best Awful* for HBO with producers Bruce Cohen and Dan Jinks. Her writing has also appeared in *Details*, *Harper's Bazaar*, the *New York Times*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Vogue* and many other major publications. Fisher's television credits range all the way from *Laverne and Shirley* to *Sex in the City*, with recent appearances on popular programs such as *30 Rock* and *Weeds*. Her experiences with addiction and bipolar disorder—and her willingness to speak honestly about them—have made her a sought after speaker and respected advocate for these communities.

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Director Tony Taccone is artistic director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where he has staged more than 35 shows, including the world premieres of *The Convict's Return*, *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, *The First 100 Years*, *Geni(us)*, *Ravenshead*, *Taking Over*, *Virgin Molly* and *Zorro in Hell*. He commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America*, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum and has collaborated with Kushner on six projects. Their latest piece, *Brundibar*, featured designs by beloved children's author Maurice Sendak. It debuted at Berkeley Rep and then traveled to Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven and the New Victory Theatre in New York City, where it sold out its run and was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards. Taccone recently made his Broadway debut with *Bridge & Tunnel*, which was universally lauded by the critics and won a Tony Award for its star, Sarah Jones. He also staged the show's record-breaking off-Broadway run, workshopped it for Broadway at Berkeley Rep and directed Jones' previous hit, *Surface Transit*. In 2004, his production of David Edgar's *Continental Divide* transferred to the Barbican in London after playing the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse and England's Birmingham Rep. His other regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arizona Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre and San Francisco's Eureka Theatre, where he served six years as artistic director before working at Berkeley Rep.

Tony Award-winning **Producer Jonathan Reinis'** Broadway productions include Harvey Keitel in *Jerry Springer: The Opera* at Carnegie Hall (2008), *How The Grinch Stole Christmas: The Musical* (2006-7), *Kiki and Herb: Alive On Broadway* (Tony Nomination 2006), *Dame Edna* (Tony Award, 2000), Russell Simmons's *Def Poetry Jam* (Tony Award, 2003), *Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home* (Tony Nomination, 2003) and *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* (Tony Nomination, 1999). His Off-Broadway work includes *Room Service*, *Marga Gomez's Los Big Names*, Josh Kornbluth's *Love & Taxes* and *Shay Duffin as Brendan Behan*. San Francisco/Bay Area and touring productions include Carrie Fisher at Berkeley Rep (2008), Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*; Josh Kornbluth's *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*; Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss* (with Sean Penn, Woody Harrelson, Nick Nolte and Cheech Marin); *Dame Edna, Ennio, His Way*; *Sandra Bernhard*; Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (national tour); John Leguizamo's premiere of *Freaky*; *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*; and *Forever Tango* (national tour). Mr. Reinis built and operated Theatre on the Square in downtown San Francisco for more than 20 years (1981-2002). The theatre opened with the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play *Talley's Folly*. Other San Francisco productions include *Jeffrey*, *Irving Berlin in Revue*, *Bubbe Meises*, *The Piano Lesson* (national tour), *The Kathy and Mo Show*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Love Letters*, *Mass Appeal* and *Phantom of the Opera* by Ken Hill. He also presented Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project in Northern California, the premier production of Smuin Ballets/SF *Dances with Songs*, the Kirov Ballet's original *Nutcracker*, *Ballet Folklorico de Mexico de Amalia Hernandez*, *Stomp*, *Riverdance—The Show*, *Guys and Dolls* (national tour), *Fame: The Musical* and *Dirty Blonde* (national tour). Mr. Reinis is a member of the Broadway League and ATPAM.

The Tony Award-winning **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**, associate producer: Born in a storefront, Berkeley Rep has moved to the forefront of American theatre. Founded in 1968 by Michael Leibert, the Theatre quickly earned respect for presenting the finest plays with top-flight actors. In 1980, with the support of the local community, Berkeley Rep built the 400-seat Thrust Stage where its reputation steadily grew over the next two decades. It gained renown for an adventurous combination of work, presenting important new dramatic voices alongside refreshing adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored

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with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. The company celebrated by unveiling a new 600-seat proscenium stage in 2001, the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. It also opened the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the permanent home for its tradition of outreach and education programs. The addition of these two buildings transformed a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex, the linchpin of a bustling Downtown Arts District which has helped revitalize Berkeley. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 50 world premieres. The Theatre now welcomes an annual audience of 180,000, serves 20,000 students and hosts dozens of community groups, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 400 artists, artisans and administrators. In the last two years, four shows seen at Berkeley Rep have gone on to New York: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice* and *Passing Strange*. Now America gets a taste of Berkeley with *Wishful Drinking*.

Alexander V. Nichols (scenic design/lighting design/projections) has created scenery, costumes, lights and projections for dance and theatre companies across America, including 16 shows at Berkeley Rep. His credits also include American Conservatory Theater, the Alley Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theater, Arena Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Boston Ballet, California Shakespeare Theater, the Hartford Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Huntington Theatre Company, the Kronos Quartet, the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, the National Theater of Taiwan, ODC/SF, OSF, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, Pennsylvania Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and San Francisco Ballet.

This production of *Wishful Drinking* is sponsored by Donald and Nancy de Laski.

Arena Stage's 2008/09 season is sponsored by The Family of H. Max and Josephine F. Ammerman, Andrew R. Ammerman, and Hubert (Hank) and Charlotte Schlosberg.

Special Events, Ticket Information and Performance Calendar

The Salon – Monday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m.

In the spirit of artistic and literary salons of the past, The Salon features artistic leaders from Arena Stage in a series of lively, in-depth conversations with the playwrights, actors, directors, designers, dramaturgs and audiences which make Arena Stage so unique. The Salon is free to Arena Stage subscribers and donors (\$75+), and only \$3 for the general public. Reservations must be made through the Arena Stage Sales Office at (202) 488-3300.

Southwest Night – Friday, September 12 at 7 p.m.

An invitation is extended to our Southwest D.C. neighbors to buy \$20 tickets, plus applicable fees, for one designated Friday evening performance of each production. Proof of Southwest D.C. residency or employment for each audience member of each party must be presented at the time of purchase. Tickets are limited to four per person and are based on availability. To purchase tickets, call (202) 488-3300 or stop by the Arena Stage Sales Office.

Out at Arena – Wednesday, October 1, 2008 at 7:30p.m.

For gay and lesbian audiences on selected Wednesday evenings, a post-show discussion with cast members and a reception following the performance is offered. Reception is FREE for subscribers of the Out at Arena series.

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TICKETS: Tickets for *Wishful Drinking* range from \$55-74, with discounts available for students and groups. A limited number of \$10 tickets for patrons 30 and under go on sale beginning on Monday for the following week of performances (Tuesday through Sunday) until all available \$10 tickets sell out. Patrons may purchase \$10 tickets by phone, online or in person. (All patrons must be 30 or younger.) Patrons will be required to present valid ID for age verification. HOTTIX, a limited number of half-price, day-of-performance tickets, are available from 90-30 minutes before curtain prior to every performance for all patrons. **Tickets are available for purchase online at www.arenastage.org and through Arena's Sales Office.**

Sales Office/Subscriptions	(202) 488-3300
Group Sales Hotline	(202) 488-4380
TTY for deaf patrons	(202) 484-0247
Info for patrons with disabilities	(202) 488-3300

Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday 9/10 at 12:00 p.m.
Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays at 8:00 p.m.
Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. (excluding 9/13)
Sunday 9/7 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sunday 9/14 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Sunday 9/28 at 7:30 p.m.

Sign-interpreted performance: Sunday, 9/11 at 7:30 p.m.
Post-show discussion: after 9/10 at 12:00 p.m., 9/23 at 7:30 p.m. and 9/25 at 8:00 p.m. shows
Southwest night: 9/12 at 8:00 p.m.
Salon: 9/15 at 7:00 p.m. (No show tonight)
Open captioned performance: 9/17 at 7:30 p.m.
Out at Arena post-show discussion (for GLBT patrons): 9/17 at 7:30 p.m.
Audio described performances: 9/24 at 7:30 p.m. and 9/27 at 2:00 p.m.

ABOUT ARENA RESTAGED

With construction well underway on the 47-year-old Southwest, D.C. theater campus, Arena Stage has launched ***ARENA RESTAGED***, a massive, two-year festival celebrating the rich mosaic of our nation's voices. ***ARENA RESTAGED*** will lay the foundation for a new home for theater artists and audiences and will take place throughout the time it takes to finish the expansion of the new theater complex, **Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater**. At the Center, the two existing performance spaces—the Fichandler Stage and the Kreeger Theater—will be fully renovated and a new, 200-seat space dedicated to premiering American theater, The Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle, will be added. Arena Stage at the Mead Center is scheduled to open for the 2010/2011 season.

To allow for a timely and cost-effective renovation, Arena currently operates out of **Arena Stage in Crystal City** (1800 South Bell St., Arlington, VA) and at the historic **Lincoln Theatre** (1215 U Street, NW, Washington, D.C.). As information changes and/or becomes available throughout the transition, Arena plans to keep its website at **www.arenastage.org** as up to date as possible with Frequently Asked Questions, directions and other relevant information. Information on Arena Stage's 2008/09 season is also available online.

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