For immediate release

COMPLETE CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR “THE SECRET GARDEN”
AT THE AHMANSON THEATRE BEGINNING PERFORMANCES IN FEBRUARY 2023

Helmed by Tony Award winner Warren Carlyle, this new and revisited production will make its debut in Downtown Los Angeles.

Developed for a new generation by the original creators — Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winner Marsha Norman and Grammy Award-winning composer Lucy Simon — “The Secret Garden” cast has now been set. “The Secret Garden” will play at Center Theatre Group / Ahmanson Theatre February 19 through March 26, 2023 and opens February 26, 2023. Joining the previously announced Drama Desk and Drama League nominee Sierra Boggess (“The Little Mermaid,” “The Phantom of the Opera”) playing Lily Craven are actors Emily Jewel Hoder**** (“The Music Man,” “Les Misérables”) as the adventurous 10-year-old lead as Mary Lennox, Derrick Davis (“The Lion King,” “The Phantom of the Opera”) as lord of Misselthwaite Manor Archibald Craven, Aaron Lazar (“The Light in the Piazza,” “Les Misérables”) as the embittered and outspoken Dr. Neville Craven, Julia Lester (“Into the Woods,” Disney+’s “High School Musical: The Musical: The Series”) as the young and spunky housemaid of Misselthwaite Manor Martha and John-Michael Lyles (“A Strange Loop,” “Sweeney Todd”) as Dickon, the imaginative and caring brother of Martha.

This complete cast includes Sierra Boggess (Lily Craven), Terron Brooks (Major Shelley), Mark Capri (Ben Weatherstaff), Peyton Crim (Major Holmes), Derrick Davis (Archibald Craven), Randi De Marco (swing), Susan Denaker (Mrs. Medlock), Kelley Dorney (Mrs. Winthrop/Cholera), Ali Ewoldt (Rose Lennox), William Foon (Colin Craven alternate), Ava Madison Gray (Mary Lennox at certain performances), Emily Jewel Hoder (Mary Lennox), John Krause (Captain Albert Lennox), Aaron Lazar (Dr. Neville Craven), Julia Lester (Martha), Reese Levine (Colin Craven), Sam Linkowski (swing), John-Michael Lyles (Dickon), Yamuna Meleth (Ayah), ***Cassandra Marie Murphy (Alice), Ariel Neydavoud (Lieutenant Shaw), James Olivas (Lieutenant Wright), Sadie Brickman Reynolds (Mary Lennox at certain performances), ***Kyla Jordan Stone (Mrs. Shelley), and Vishal Vaidya (Fakir).

“When the creative team came to us with the opportunity to produce this long-awaited revival, we jumped at the chance,” shared Center Theatre Group Producing Director Douglas C. Baker. “‘The Secret Garden’ is one of those shows that audiences have been
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longing to see again in a new production. With its iconic score by the late great Lucy Simon, and a brilliant, updated book by Marsha Norman, and now with our first-rate cast determined, ‘The Secret Garden’ will bring a whole new generation to the theatre. The Ahmanson has been an important home for incredible musicals, and we are eager for L.A. audiences of all ages to be the first to experience Warren Carlyle’s fresh and authentic take on this beloved musical.”

“All the Secret Garden” follows the young, orphaned Mary Lennox as she’s sent from her home in India to live with her reclusive uncle on his haunted English country estate. Guided by an exceptionally beautiful score, audiences will be swept away with Mary’s unapologetic curiosity as she is joined with the help of unlikely companions transporting her on a thrilling quest to untangle the pieces of her family’s past and – most importantly – discover herself. This revival production based on the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett of the same name will include book and lyrics by Marsha Norman, music by Lucy Simon, and direction and choreography by Tony Award winner Warren Carlyle. The creative team includes Rob Berman (Music Supervision and Additional Arrangements), Danny Troob (Orchestrator), Dan Redfeld (Music Director), Jason Sherwood (Set Designer), Ann Hould-Ward (Costume Designer), Ken Billington (Co-Lighting Designer), Brian Monahan (Co-Lighting Designer), Dan Moses Schreier (Sound Designer), Victoria Tinsman (Wig and Makeup Designer), Michael Donovan, CSA and Richie Ferris, CSA (Casting), as well as David Franklin (Production Stage Manager).

Nominated for seven Tony Awards and winner of Best Book of a Musical as well as two Drama Desk Awards, this enchanting musical is based on Burnett’s turn-of-the-century tale about understanding and compassion. TIME hailed the original production as “elegant, entrancing... The best American musical of the Broadway season,” while USA Today called it “a splendid, intelligent musical.”

“The Secret Garden” had its world premiere in 1989 as a Virginia Stage Company production at the Wells Theatre in Norfolk, Virginia. It then premiered on Broadway in 1991, earning three Tony Awards including a win for Daisy Eagan, who is the youngest female recipient of a Tony Award to date for Best Featured Actress in a Musical. “The Secret Garden” went on to be produced all over the world, including Australia and in the U.K. by The Royal Shakespeare Company, breaking box office records before a West End run. The production is a favorite among many local and regional theatres.

Tickets for “The Secret Garden” are on sale now and start at $40. They will be available through CenterTheatreGroup.org, Audience Services at (213) 972-4400 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Offices (at the Ahmanson Theatre) at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012. Performances run Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Managing
Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, and in collaboration with the four Associate Artistic Directors, Lindsay Allbaugh, Tyrone Davis, Neel Keller and Kelley Kirkpatrick, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1,600 to 2,100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions, and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics, and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

**Bank of America** is Center Theatre Group's 2022-2023 Season Sponsor. Bank of America believes in the power of the arts to help economies thrive, to educate and enrich societies, and to create greater cultural understanding. For more than 20 years, the company has supported Center Theatre Group’s innovative Education and Community Partnerships programs as well as world-class productions. Bank of America is also an instrumental supporter in accelerating Center Theatre Group's commitment to becoming an anti-racist, equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization.

**American Express** is the official credit card for Center Theatre Group and the presenting sponsor of the Digital Stage.

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January 10, 2023

Revised February 3, 2023**** // January 27, 2023*** // 1pm, January 10, 2023 ** // 10:45am, January 10, 2023

**Our original release misspelled Ava’s last name. It has now been corrected to Ava Madison Gray, who is playing the Mary Lennox alternate.**

*** Our original release listed Cassandra Marie Murphy as Mrs. Shelley and Kyla Jordan Stone as Alice. It has now been corrected to Cassandra Marie Murphy as Alice and Kyla Jordan Stone as Mrs. Shelley.

**** Our original release listed Sadie Brickman Reynolds as Mary Lennox. Reynolds, alongside Gray, will play Mary at certain performances. Emily Jewel Hoder will now perform as Mary Lennox.

**BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order):**

**Sierra Boggess** (*Lily Craven*) has been seen on Broadway in the Tony nominated musical “School of Rock,” “It Shoulda Been You” directed by David Hyde Pierce, two separate engagements of the Broadway production of “The Phantom of the Opera” (the first for the show’s 25th Anniversary and the second opposite Norm Lewis), the revival
of “Master Class” (opposite Tyne Daly) and “The Little Mermaid” (Drama Desk and Drama League nominations, Broadway.com Audience Choice Award). London theatre credits include “Les Misérables,” the 25th-anniversary concerts of “The Phantom of the Opera” at Royal Albert Hall and “Love Never Dies” (Olivier Award nomination). Other New York theatre credits include the recent Off-Broadway production of Barry Manilow’s “Harmony,” Manhattan Concert Productions’ “The Secret Garden” at Lincoln Center; the one-night-only concert of “Guys and Dolls” at Carnegie Hall opposite Nathan Lane, Patrick Wilson and Megan Mullally; the final Off-Broadway cast of “Love, Loss, and What I Wore;” and “Music in the Air” for City Center’s Encores! series. She also starred as Christine Daaé in the Las Vegas production of “The Phantom of the Opera.” Regionally, she has been seen in “A Little Night Music” (Barrington Stage), “Into the Woods” (Hollywood Bowl), “Ever After” (Alliance Theatre), “Age of Innocence” (world premiere, Hartford Stage and McCarter Theatre), “Princesses” (world premiere, Goodspeed Opera House and Seattle’s 5th Avenue Theatre), and the national tour of “Les Misérables.” Film and television credits include “Vulture Club” with Susan Sarandon and the web series “What’s Your Emergency,” directed by Michael Urie. Her recordings include “School of Rock, It Shoulda Been You,” the 25th-anniversary concert of “The Phantom of the Opera” (also on DVD), the symphonic recording of “Love Never Dies,” “The Little Mermaid,” and Andrew Lippa’s “A Little Princess.” Concert appearances include the BBC Proms at Royal Albert Hall, Lincoln Center’s American Songbook series “The Lyrics of David Zippel,” The New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, and Broadway by the Year at Town Hall. Sierra has toured all over the world across Australia, Japan, Paris, and London with her concert show, which has been preserved live and released on CD, “Awakening: Live at 54 Below.” She recently released an album of duets with Julian Ovenden made during the pandemic entitled “Together At A Distance.” sierraboggess.com


Peyton Crim (Major Holmes) was recently seen in Knot Free’s L.A. production of “A Little Night Music” (Frederick). His other credits include the first U.S. national tour of “The Play That Goes Wrong” (Robert) and Off-Broadway productions of “On A Clear Day” and “Finian’s Rainbow,” “Brigadoon” (City Center Encores!). Other selected regional credits include: “Beauty and The Beast” (Beast), “Sweeney Todd,” “Sunset Blvd.,” “The Music Man,” “Mary Poppins,” “Peter Pan.”


Randi De Marco (Swing) is ecstatic to make her Center Theatre Group debut. Theatre credits include Ayah in “The Secret Garden” (3-D Theatricals) and “Evita in Concert” (Ensemble), Martha in “Spring Awakening.” Voiceover: Twist Queen in “LOL Surprise! Winter Fashion Show” streaming on Netflix.


Ali Ewoldt (Rose) has appeared as Christine Daaé in “The Phantom of the Opera” on Broadway, Cosette in “Les Misérables” (Broadway, National Tour), in “The King and I” (Lincoln Center, Lyric Opera of Chicago), and as Luisa in “The Fantasticks” (Off-Broadway). Regionally, she has played Amalia in “She Loves Me” (Signature Theatre), Yook Mei in “Gold Mountain” (Utah Shakespeare Festival), Philia in “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” (The Muny), Fan/Mrs. Bonds in “A Christmas Carol” (McCarter Theatre), Martha Jefferson in “1776” (The Muny) and Sarah Brown in “Guys and Dolls” (Sacramento Music Circus). Ali’s concert/symphony work includes: Feinstein’s/54 Below, Alice Tully Hall, The Town Hall, Canyon Ranch, NY Pops at Carnegie Hall, American Pops Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Kaohsiung Symphony and The Boston Pops. Her TV/Film credits include “The Michael J. Fox Show,” “Yield,” and the short
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films “Mia” and “The Cactus.” Ali has a BA in psychology from Yale University and is a proud Filipina American. @aliewoldt

**William Foon** (*Colin alternate*) is thrilled to debut at the Ahmanson. He loves singing, dancing, and acting and has performed since age six with the Peter Pan Foundation, SFCMT, Berkeley Playhouse Conservatory, The Ballet School for Performing Arts, Joy in Motion, Performing Academy and ACT Young Conservatory. Recent memorable roles include Tiny Tim in Center Rep’s “A Christmas Carol,” Kurt in PPF’s “The Sound of Music” and the Broadway Dreams NYC showcase. @william.foon

**Ava Madison Gray** (*Mary Lennox at certain performances*) is thrilled to be making her debut with CTG at the Ahmanson Theatre. Ava is 12 and has been performing in musical theatre and live venues since age five. Ava is a voiceover artist, most recognizable as JJ, Bella, and the iconic logo of “CoComelon.” Her voice is also featured in “CoComelon Live: JJ’s Journey” world tour, the “CoComelon Play with JJ” Nintendo Switch game, and as JJ on Cameo Kids. Ava is a National Anthem singer for Los Angeles Angels baseball team and a member of Voices of Hope Children’s Choir (feat. “America’s Got Talent”). @avamadisongray

**Emily Jewel Hoder** (*Mary Lennox*) is so excited to be at the Ahmanson Theatre in “The Secret Garden.” She is coming straight from Broadway’s “The Music Man” as Amaryllis and Super Swing (OBC). National Tour: “Les Misérables” (Young Cosette) Regional: “Annie” (Molly), “The Jungle Book” (Mogwli). Voiceover: “Schmigadoon!” Apple TV+, Panda Corner learning app. @emilyjewel7


**Aaron Lazar** (*Dr. Neville Craven*) has starred in 11 Broadway productions. He debuted in “The Phantom of the Opera;” originated roles in the world premieres of “A Tale of Two Cities,” “Impressionism” and “The Last Ship;” starred in the revivals of “A Little Night Music” and “Les Misérables” (Drama Desk Award nomination); and romanced audiences in “The Light in the Piazza” at Lincoln Center and “Live from Lincoln Center” on PBS. He last played the Ahmanson as Larry Murphy in the first national tour of the Tony Award-winning smash “Dear Evan Hansen.” On film and television, Aaron can currently be seen in The Daniel’s critically acclaimed film “Everything, Everywhere All At Once” and season five of “Yellowstone.” He has worked with legendary directors Clint Eastwood (“J.Edgar”), Martin Scorsese (“The Wolf of Wall Street”), Shawn Levy (“This is Where I Leave You”), Mary Harron (“The Notorious Bettie Page”) and The Russo Brothers (“Avengers: Infinity War,” “Avengers: Endgame”). And on television Aaron was recently one of the stars of “Filthy Rich” on FOX. Arcs on: “Quantico,” “The Strain,” “Girl Meets World,” and “The
Onion News Network.” As a singer Aaron has been a guest artist with some of the world’s top symphonies, including The New York Philharmonic, The New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, The National Symphony Orchestra at The Kennedy Center, The Boston Pops, The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra at Masada, The English National Opera Orchestra and the Hollywood Bowl orchestra. His acclaimed solo concert from “Broadway to Hollywood” has played cabaret clubs and PACs around the U.S. As a producer, Mr. Lazar created the album “Broadway Lullabies,” a collection of Broadway’s greatest hits reimagined as lullabies for families during COVID-19, streaming everywhere. He is currently developing a limited series with Nicholas Pileggi (“Goodfellas,” “Casino”) and Tom Fontana (“Oz,” “Monsieur Spade”) based on the book “City For Sale: Ed Koch and the Betrayal of New York.” BA – Duke University. MFA – CCM. Aaron is an honorary board member of the Tennessee Arts Academy serving arts teachers K-12. aaronlazar.com @aaronscottlazar


Yamuna Meleth (Ayah) received her master’s in vocal performance from the University of Northern Colorado. She was most recently seen in “Maya” and Off-Broadway in “The
Cassandra Marie Murphy (Alice). International Tour: “Miss Saigon” (Macau, China). Resident Artist at A Noise Within. Select Regional: Mary Zimmerman’s “Metamorphoses,” “Bridges of Madison County,” “Evita,” “Man of La Mancha,” “Les Misérables,” “Hunchback of Notre Dame,” Shakespeare’s “Henry V,” “Frozen: Live at the Hyperion.” Soundtracks: Steven Spielberg’s “Ready Player One” (Alan Silvestri), Disney’s “Mickey and the Magical Map.” IG: @cassandramariemurphy

Ariel Neydavoud (Ensemble) was recently in “The Visitor” at The Public Theater and sang on the original cast album. Prior to that he starred as The Caliph in “Kismet” under the direction of Emmy Award winner Lonny Price. Other selected credits: Prospect Theatre Company, NYMF, Two River Theatre, Perelman PAC, Marriott Theatre, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, ACT of CT, Reprise! 2.0, Tuacahn Center for the Arts, Musical Theatre West, 3-D Theatricals. Instagram/TikTok: @arielneydavoud

James Olivas (Lieutenant Wright) is honored to make his Ahmanson debut with this wonderful cast and team. Recent credits include Richard Bailey in “Kinky Boots” at the Hollywood Bowl, Dwayne in the NYC Workshop of “Betty Boop!,” and Joe Hardy in Musical Theatre West’s “Damn Yankees.” Film/TV credits include Ryan Murphy’s “American Horror Stories,” Kristen Bell’s “Encore!” and “The Brink Of.” IG: @jamesdolivas

Sadie Brickman Reynolds (Mary Lennox at certain performances) is a joyous 11-year-old and an old soul at heart. A Los Angeles native, she is a sixth grader at a performing arts middle school. She also attends the Conservatory of Fine Arts through LAUSD's gifted and talented program. Local theatre performances include “Annie” and “Aladdin.” Sadie enjoys voiceovers and dubbing; recent roles include Tess the Crane in “Thomas the Train” and Dalimi in “Doremi Dalimi.” In her free time, Sadie enjoys singing, dancing, playing with her seven-year-old beatboxing brother Hudson, cuddling with her two cats July and August, and creating Toca videos on her YouTube channel (TocaSadie). She loves to write and is drafting her own sequel to “Wicked” (her goal is to work with Idina Menzel). She hails from a family of performing artists and wishes to thank her mom and dad for their love, support, and guidance. sadiereynolds.com

Kyla Jordan Stone (Mrs. Shelley) is ecstatic to be making her CTG debut in the theatre she saw her first show at the age of five. You may have seen her on tour as the first Black Anya in “Anastasia,” or at The Muny as Elle Woods in “Legally Blonde.” Other credits include: Johanna (“Sweeney Todd”), Judy Bernly (“9 to 5”), and the Leading Player (“Pippin”). BFA Theatre Performance, Chapman University. IG: @kylastone

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Stage), “Music Man” (Olney Theatre), “Frog and Toad” (Adventure Theatre - Helen Hayes nomination). IG: @vishgram