

Avant Bard Theatre Press Release

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AVANT BARD THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEW FIVE-PARTNER ARTISTIC STRUCTURE

ARLINGTON, VA, February 17 — Arlington's [Avant Bard Theatre](#) announced today that the company is moving ahead into 2021 under a new model of artistic partnership. After the double blow of the pandemic and the unexpected death last November of Artistic Director Tom Prewitt, the Avant Bard board expected that the company would have to shut its doors. However, a group of artists associated with the company came together after Mr. Prewitt's memorial service in December to brainstorm ways to save the company. The result is a new artistic management structure of five "producing partners" - **DeMone Seraphin**, director of Avant Bard's recent Helen Hayes award-winning production of *Topdog/Underdog* and lead actor in Avant Bard's *Gospel at Colonus*; **Megan Behm**, director of recent Avant Bard productions, Helen Hayes award-nominated *A Misanthrope* and the prematurely closed (due to the pandemic) *Ada and the Engine*; **Dina Soltan**, DC-based actor who played Ada in *Ada and the Engine*; **Alyssa Sanders**, DC-based actor involved in numerous Avant Bard productions; and **Sara Barker**, DC-based actor and long-time Avant Bard company member.



From left: Sara Barker, Megan Behm, DeMone Seraphin, Alyssa Sanders, and Dina Soltan

Upon hearing the Avant Board board's agreement to move forward under this new model, Mr. Seraphin stated that, "It is such a great joy to announce that AVANT BARD IS HERE TO STAY! As we honor our late leader, Tom Prewitt, we are MOVING FORWARD with a renewed vigor and commitment to bringing exciting, challenging, progressive, and entertaining programming to Arlington and throughout the DMV area. Follow us on social media, join us in the virtual space, and, when the time is right...meet us in the theatre!" Ms. Barker, added, "It's thrilling to be a part of this strong, thoughtful group of artistic creators coming together to propel Avant Bard Theatre and Tom's vision forward."

The news comes on the heels of the recent announcement from the family of Tom Prewitt and Arlington's [Embracing Arlington Arts](#) non-profit of the launch of the [Tom Prewitt Fund for Theatre Arts](#), managed through the [Arlington Community Foundation](#). The fund "will foster Tom's lifelong passion for mentoring aspiring young theatre artists and nurturing theatre/community partnership."

First up for Avant Bard Theatre? On Friday, February 26th at 7 p.m., Avant Bard will host a virtual panel discussion on putting words to action in light of the reawakened call for equity, diversity, and inclusion. The discussion will not only center on EDI issues in the theatre but will also challenge participants to detail actionable steps that will foster a more equitable and inclusive theatre in Arlington, the DC-area, and around the country. Panelists include: Helen Hayes Award winning Artistic Director of Arena Stage **Molly Smith**; Artistic Director of Adventure Theatre MTC and former Co-Artistic Director of the Lodestone Theatre Ensemble **Chil Kong**; Tony Award-winning composer/performer (*Passing Strange*, *The Total Bent*) and educator **Stew Stewart**; Award-winning director/choreographer and performer (upcoming Broadway revivals of *1776* and *Violet*; choreographer for Beyoncé) and Philadelphia Theatre Company resident artist **Jeffrey L. Page**; and DC-based performer/educator and activist **Jjana Valentiner**. Avant Bard Theatre Producing Partner **DeMone Seraphin** will monitor the panel. The event is free but requires registration. [Send an email to info@avantbard.org](#) to register.

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Avant Bard Theatre is an Arlington-based performing arts organization dedicated primarily to producing classic works--both time-tested and contemporary classics; emphasizing a provocative, bold approach in an intimate setting; and training and showcasing the best emerging talent in the region, mentored by seasoned, professional theatre artists. Avant Bard's mission is expressed through its commitment to artistic excellence, collaboration, developing talent, and promoting educational and social outreach. Learn more here: www.wscavantbard.org.

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