



WORLD-PREMIERE POWER PLAY

# CHANGE AGENT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY CRAIG LUCAS

## 2021/22 SEASON

**arena**  
**stage**  
the mead center  
for american theater



# ARTISTICALLY SPEAKING

Washington, D.C., is a city that loves to talk politics, from its first waking moments to when our heads hit the pillow. When I arrived as artistic director in 1998, I began searching fiercely for D.C.'s voice in theater. Believe it or not, it took some time for me to fully realize that our unique voice is political. One has to look past the monuments and preservation of history to what people here talk about. Politics is Washington and Washington is politics — our main course meal, our blood lines. Politics is current, fleshy, provocative and now.

The play you are with us to witness, *Change Agent* by Craig Lucas, is a commissioned play in Arena's Power Play initiative, investigating our blood lines and finding truth in our shared experience. Craig is one of America's strongest playwrights and it's a pleasure to produce his work. Wonderful also to have him direct this terrific company of actors and designers.

The Power Plays initiative highlights American stories of politics and power, exploring the people, events and ideas that have helped shape our country's narrative and identity. It features works by well-established writers as well as those who are in the earlier stages of their careers in theater, embracing the diversity of our country to understand who we are as Americans. We are building a canon with one story per decade, beginning with 1776 through the current decade.

*Change Agent* is a work of fiction based on historical events through the imagination of the writer. The historical plays within Power Plays aim to show America at its best and worst through historical characters and stories, but not necessarily as direct recreations of actual events. Theater illuminates the past, validates the present and leads us screaming into the future. The arts have always been on the front line of the fight against fear. I'm so glad we're all together in producing this provocative type of theater.

*Change Agent* is the eighth Power Play produced and one of the 19 commissioned.

Previous Power Plays you may remember include Lawrence Wright's *Camp David* (2014), which explored the pivotal 1978 Camp David Accords between President Jimmy Carter, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat; John Strand's *The Originalist* (2015), which offered a rare portrayal of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia; Jacqueline E. Lawton's *Intelligence* (2017), which fictionalized the true events of a covert operative who protects the United States' national security post-9/11; Bob Banghart, Georgia Stitt and John Strand's *Snow Child* (2018), which followed a couple's voyage to rebuild themselves in the Alaskan wilderness; Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Sovereignty* (2018), which drew past and present parallels between sovereign nations and the U.S. government; and Aaron Posner's *JQA* (2019), which presented a unique look into the childhood, adulthood and late life of John Quincy Adams. Eduardo Machado's *Celia and Fidel*, the dynamic story of radical change in Cuba featuring the country's most notorious political figure and Cuba's most influential female revolutionary, just closed in November 2021.

There is much more to come. Commissioned playwrights include Nathan Alan Davis, Kenneth Lin, Caleen Sinnette Jennings, Karen Zacarias, Zack Zadek and Emily Feldman, Vera Starbard, Kia Corthron, Lauren Yee, Octavio Solis and Idris Goodwin. Spoiler alert: you will see some of this work next season.

What better place to take on this juicy initiative than in our nation's capital at Arena Stage where we focus on American plays, American artists and American ideas? Thank you for joining us today and on this fascinating journey through American history, ideas — and humanity.

**Molly Smith**  
Artistic Director



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

A fascinating part of hearing a story set in the past is rediscovering truths that illuminate our current condition.

Reflecting on *Change Agent*, but also harkening back to *Celia and Fidel*, we have notable historical figures in imagined circumstances. Our country is in a similar state of turmoil as it was in the early 1960s. There is civil unrest and an intense social justice movement (in the U.S. and Cuba). Political rivals spar constantly. Today, we have debate over the COVID-19 vaccine, and in the early 1960s, the polio vaccine was being introduced. It is an interesting juxtaposition that Arena just recently produced a play imagining the mind of Fidel Castro, and now offers a play with American political figures whose decisions had a huge impact on Cuban-American relations in the 1960s — and in the same theater space, the intimate Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle.

In April 1961, the month when the failed counter-revolutionary invasion at the Bay of Pigs occurred, Arena Stage produced a series of three one-act plays: *Krapp's Last Tape* by Samuel Beckett, *The End of The Beginning* by Sean O'Casey and *In the Zone* by Eugene O'Neill. Three Irish stories, two tragic and one comic. Reviewers favored the Beckett piece.

In October 1962, during the American naval blockade of Cuba (the Cuban Missile Crisis), Arena Stage produced *Once in a Lifetime* by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, a comedy of misadventures of theater and film artists as they stumble through a move to Hollywood and making of a film. That is a little less scary than nuclear war.

In late November 1963, Arena's American premiere production of *The Devils* by John Whiting closed on November 24, two days after a notorious date when we remember where we were. *The Devils* is an adaptation of Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudon*, a story of demonic possession. Arena's next production was also a new

play, *Battle Dream* by Herbert Boland. This era of Arena Stage was buoyed in large part by a transformational grant from the Ford Foundation, and Herbert Boland, a WWII veteran and actor and director, was given a playwright residency at the time to develop this work. Interestingly, *Change Agent* is part of Arena's Power Plays commissioning program for new work (Boland went on to be a staff announcer at WNYC public radio in New York).

Interesting, perhaps you say, but of what relevance? It's a snapshot of time, a curiosity to think about whether one of the audience members of *Once in a Lifetime* went specifically to appreciate a light-hearted evening, away from the looming threat of nuclear war. Was the person sitting in the audience of *The Devils* on that fateful evening aware of the impact of the President's visit to Texas? It is especially interesting to note that Arena Stage was premiering new work then and now.

We are all a sum of many parts — each of us, as well as the icons portrayed in *Change Agent*. It's so important to rediscover lost connections. I hope you enjoy the show.

P.S. For anyone reading this note who may have seen the previous productions mentioned, it would be interesting to hear from you. Feel free to email [leadershipoffice@arenastage.org](mailto:leadershipoffice@arenastage.org) if you have a story or thought to share.

**Edgar Dobie**  
Executive Producer  
President of the Corporation

Arena Stage  
Molly Smith, Artistic Director | Edgar Dobie, Executive Producer

PRESENTS

# CHANGE AGENT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**CRAIG LUCAS**

SET DESIGNER  
**WILSON CHIN**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**ALEJO VIETTI**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**CHA SEE**

ORIGINAL MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN  
**BROKEN CHORD**

PROJECTION DESIGNER  
**CAITE HEVNER**

WIG DESIGNER  
**CHARLES G. LAPOINTE**

FIGHT AND INTIMACY CONSULTANT  
**JENNY MALE**

DIALECT AND VOCAL COACH  
**LISA NATHANS**

DRAMATURG  
**JOCELYN CLARKE**

DRAMATURG  
**OTIS RAMSEY-ZÖE**

CASTING  
**JZ CASTING/GEOFF JOSSELSO, C.S.A.**  
AND **KATJA ZAROLINSKI, C.S.A.**

STAGE MANAGER  
**RACHAEL DANIELLE ALBERT**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
**LEIGH ROBINETTE**

Prime Sponsorship for *Change Agent* is generously provided by  
**Decker Anstrom and Sherry Hiemstra.**

*Change Agent* is the recipient of an **Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.**

Prime Sponsorship for Arena Stage's Season Artwork is generously provided by  
**David Bruce Smith and The Grateful American Foundation.**



**AT&T** is proud to support Arena Stage to help keep artists,  
administrators and audiences safe and healthy.

Originally commissioned by Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.)  
as part of the Arena Stage's Insider Voices Power Play Cycle.  
Molly Smith, Artistic Director and Edgar Dobie, Executive Producer



# SETTING

1936 to 1965, America. And the afterlife.

## CAST

*In order of appearance*

Mary/As Cast.....	ANDREA ABELLO
Jack/As Cast.....	LUIS VEGA
Cicely/As Cast.....	REGAN LINTON
Cord/As Cast.....	JEFFREY OMURA
Jackie/As Cast.....	KATHRYN TKEL
Mary/Cicely/Jackie Understudy.....	RENEA S. BROWN
Jack/Cord Understudy.....	TONY NAM

The actors and stage managers are members of Actors' Equity Association,  
the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Associate Director/Movement Consultant.....	ANGELISA E. GILLYARD
Associate Scenic Designer.....	RIW RAKKULCHON
Associate Lighting Designers.....	REZA BEHJAT, VENUS GULBRANSON
Associate Wig Designer.....	FREDERICK C. WAGGONER
Projection Design Assistant.....	ZAVIER TAYLOR
Dialect and Vocal Assistant.....	JEN RABBITT RING
Production Assistant.....	STEPHEN BUBNIAK
COVID-19 Compliance Officer.....	REBECCA TALISMAN
Stage Carpenter.....	JESS RICH
Props.....	REGINA VITALE
Light Board Operator.....	SCOTT FOLSOM
Audio Engineer.....	DREW MOBERLEY
Automation Programmer.....	HANNAH MARTIN
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	ALINA GERALL
Wardrobe.....	CARISSA GILSON
Hair and Make-Up Supervisor.....	JAIME BAGLEY

The video and/or audio recording of this performance  
by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

Please turn off all electronic devices before the performance,  
unless using specifically for GalaPro closed captioning service.

Eating and drinking are not permitted inside the theater.

**Masks must be worn at all times during the performance.**

All patrons who visit the Mead Center for American Theater and/or  
attend performances must be fully vaccinated by the date of their visit.



Arena Stage is built on the land of the Piscataway people  
of the Algonquin-speaking tribes, as well as the lands of the  
Native American people of the greater Anacostia, Potomac  
and Tidewater regions.

For additional information, including  
cast and creative bios, scan the QR code or visit:  
**ARENASTAGE.ORG/CHANGE-AGENT-PROGRAM**



Patrons can access Arena's guest Wi-Fi by  
selecting the wireless network **ArenaGuest** and  
using the password **arenaguest**.

Supporting Sponsorship for Arena Stage's program is generously provided  
by a lifelong Washingtonian in honor of **Anne Paine West**, Arena Stage's  
longtime Director of Board and Donor Relations who retired in 2020.

This theater operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association.



The actors and stage  
managers are members  
of Actors' Equity  
Association, the Union  
of Professional Actors  
and Stage Managers in  
the United States.



The scenic, costume,  
lighting and sound  
designers in  
LORT theaters are  
represented by United  
Scenic Artists, Local  
USA-829 of the IATSE.



The Director and  
Choreographer are  
members of the **STAGE  
DIRECTORS AND  
CHOREOGRAPHERS  
SOCIETY**, a national  
theatrical labor union.

Arena Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theater.