

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Director Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

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Contact: Greta Hays/Lauren Alexander
press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4056

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ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR D.C. PREMIERE OF
LISA LOOMER'S ROE, DIRECTED BY BILL RAUCH
JANUARY 12-FEBRUARY 19, 2017

*** New drama focuses on two women at the heart of Roe v. Wade and comes to Arena Stage following acclaimed world premiere at Oregon Shakespeare Festival ***

(Washington, D.C.) Following an acclaimed run at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, **Lisa Loomer's world-premiere drama Roe** makes its D.C. debut at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater. Directed by **Bill Rauch**, the drama focuses on the two women at the heart of the landmark Roe v. Wade case—plaintiff Norma McCorvey and her attorney Sarah Weddington—and documents their shockingly divergent journeys following the case, that would come to mirror the polarization in American culture. *Roe* is a co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Berkeley Repertory Theatre and **runs January 12-February 19, 2017 in the Kreeger Theater**.

“One of the most divisive subjects of our lifetime, Lisa Loomer has written a moving and intelligent play about the debate around legalized abortion,” shares Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. “This story is particularly relevant now, in light of the election results, and I’m proud to have Arena part of this dialogue. Whether it’s a woman’s right to choose or the belief of one’s religious affiliation, we are better when we listen to both sides of a story. Lisa has done that with *Roe*, a true testament to how theater can lead us to real dialogue.”

Reprising their roles from the recent Oregon run are **Sara Bruner** as Norma McCorvey, the wild-tempered bartender who became “Roe” after seeking to end an unwanted pregnancy, and **Sarah Jane Agnew** as Sarah Weddington, who argued the case before the U.S. Supreme Court at 26 years old. Also reprising their roles from Oregon Shakespeare Festival are **Zoe Bishop** as Emily, **Catherine Castellanos** as Connie Gonzalez, **Gina Daniels** as Aileen, **Richard Elmore** as Justice Blackmun, **Susan Lynskey** as Linda Coffee and **Amy Newman** as Ronda. Joining the company for the D.C. run are **Jim Abele** as Flip Benham, **Kenya Alexander** as Roxanne, **Mark Bedard** as Henry McClusky/Robert Flowers and **Pamela Dunlap** as Mary/Molly.

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“This play premiered last April and ran through November at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, from the conventions through the increasingly contentious campaign,” says **Loomer**. “I have never had so many letters from audience members, many of whom went back two, three, four times. Why? People were grateful for a true dialogue on this subject, grateful, even, to hear ‘the other side’—and I heard this from people on both ‘sides.’ And now...the world has changed. The comedy will play differently, as will the tragedy. I am daunted by the urgency, and by the possibility of theater taking a human look at *Roe v. Wade*, in our nation’s capital at this incredible moment in time.”

For its Oregon run, *Roe* was hailed by *Ashland Daily Tidings* as “a challenging, passionate piece of theater... with great comedic moments and many opportunities for profound revelation...it will leave you with much to think about, discuss and consider, regardless of your established opinion on the subject.”

“*Roe* is my fourth project with playwright Lisa Loomer and my third project at Arena Stage,” adds **Rauch**. “Throughout her body of work, Lisa has a vivid sense of daring theatricality even as she tackles hot-button social issues. Our audiences in Oregon throughout the play’s seven-month run were wildly entertained and deeply moved by the dueling stories of Sarah Weddington and Norma McCorvey. I directed my first regional theater production at Arena Stage 23 years ago, and Molly Smith has been a friend and an inspiration to me throughout my career. It is vitally important and meaningful for me to return to Arena under Molly’s leadership, and with this urgent story at this momentous time in our country’s history.”

Lisa Loomer (*Playwright*)’s plays include *Living Out*; *The Waiting Room*; *Distracted*; *Homefree*; *Café Vida*; *Expecting Isabel*; *Two Things You Don’t Talk About at Dinner*; *Birds*; *Bocón!*; *Maria! Maria Maria Maria*; and *Broken Hearts*. Her work has been produced at Roundabout, Vineyard Theatre, Second Stage, INTAR, The Public, Mark Taper Forum, Arena Stage, South Coast Repertory, Kennedy Center, Seattle Repertory, Denver Center, La Jolla, Trinity Repertory, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Missouri Repertory and Cornerstone Theater Company and in Mexico, Israel, Egypt and Germany. Screenwriting credits include *Girl*, *Interrupted* and comedies, dramas and pilots for HBO, CBS, FOX and Showtime. Lisa received the American Theatre Critics Award (twice), Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award, Lurie Foundation Award, Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, Jane Chambers Playwriting Award (twice), Imagen Award, Ovation Award and Susan Smith Blackburn Prize.

Bill Rauch (*Director*) returns to Arena Stage after directing *Equivocation* and *A Community Carol*. He directed the Tony Award-winning *All the Way* on Broadway and the world premiere of *The Clean House* at Yale Repertory, where he is an associate artist, and its Off-Broadway premiere (Lincoln Center). Other world premieres include *Fingersmith*, *The Great Society*, *Equivocation* and *By the Waters of Babylon* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Living Out* and *For Here or to Go?* (Mark Taper Forum); and *My Wandering Boy* and *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* (South Coast Repertory). He became the OSF’s artistic director in 2007, having been co-founder and artistic director of Cornerstone Theater (1986-2006). Honors include the Helen Hayes, TCG’s Visionary Leadership, Fichandler, L.A. Weekly and Garland Awards; Margo Jones Medal; and Emmy and Ovation Award nominations.

Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)

Jim Abele (*Flip Benham*) makes his Arena Stage debut. New York credits include *Hedda Gabler* (Broadway) and *View of the Dome*, *Edith Stein*, *The Country Girl* and *Angel City* (Off-Broadway). Regional credits include *Opus* and *The Pleasure of His Company* (Old Globe); *The Three Musketeers* (Seattle Repertory); *State of the Union* (Ford’s Theatre); *The Hairy Ape* (Berkeley Repertory); *The Misanthrope* (McCarter Theatre); *The Tempest* (Milwaukee Repertory); *Arcadia* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); *The Normal Heart* (Pittsburgh Public Theater); and *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park). TV/film credits include guest and recurring roles on *Code Black*, *Major Crimes*, *Transparent*, *NCIS*, *Pretty Little Liars*, *Mad Men*, *Dexter*, *The Middle*, *Cold Case*, *Big Love*, *West Wing*, *24*, *NYPD Blue* and *Six Feet Under*, among others.

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Sarah Jane Agnew (*Sarah Weddington*) makes her Arena Stage debut. Regional credits include *Richard II* and *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Hamlet* (New Victory Theater); *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *The Servant of Two Masters* (Yale Repertory); Sarah Ruhl's *Three Sisters* and *Behind The Eye* (Cincinnati Playhouse); *The Syringa Tree* (Jungle Theater); *Time Stands Still*, *The 39 Steps*, *Dollhouse*, *Major Barbara*, *Home Place*, *The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde* and *As You Like It* (The Guthrie); *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Tartuffe*, *The Seagull* and *The Miser* (Theatre de la Jeune Lune); La Jolla Playhouse; Berkeley Repertory; Trinity Repertory; Actors Theatre of Louisville; Alley Theatre; and Wilma Theater. Film/TV credits include *Lady Dynamite*, *Detective Fiction* and *Older Than America*. Sarah is a 2012 McKnight Theater Fellow and received the Cincinnati Acclaim Award and Princess Grace Honorarium.

Kenya Alexander (*Roxanne*) makes her Arena Stage debut. Regional credits include *Beneatha* in *A Raisin in the Sun* (Ebony Repertory Theatre and Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Pecola* in *The Bluest Eye* (Cape Fear Regional Theatre) and *Hester/La Negrita* in *In the Blood* (Carnegie Mellon). Her international credits include *Irina* in *The Seagull* (Moscow Art Theatre). Hailing from Houston, Texas, Kenya received her B.F.A. in acting at Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama. During her senior year she accepted an elite invitation to attend a semester abroad at Europe's premier theater school, MXAT (Moscow Art Theatre School). Many thanks to God and her family for their undying love and support!

Mark Bedard (*Henry McClusky/Robert Flowers*) is pleased to make his Arena Stage debut. He appeared Off-Broadway in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Pearl Theatre) and *Fashions for Men* (Mint Theater). Before that, he was a company member for several years at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where some of his favorite plays were *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Paradise Lost*, *She Loves Me*, *Animal Crackers* and *The Cocoanuts*, the last of which he adapted. Additional regional credits include *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare Theatre Company), *Touchstone* in *As You Like It* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare) and *Hysterium* in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Geva Theatre). www.markbedard.com

Zoe Bishop (*Emily*) makes her Arena Stage debut. She spent time performing at Everette KidStage as Splat's Mom in *Splat the Cat*, Grandma Georgina in *Willy Wonka Kids*, Hiccup's Girlfriend in *How to Train Your Dragon* and ensemble in *Peter Pan*. Zoe participated in weekly improv performances at LA Connections Comedy Club for several months. Her film/TV credits include *My Son Wants to Be Gay*, *Geo Tag*, the *Healthy Eating* video series on Amazon.com and various commercial work. Twitter: @ZoeCStart, Instagram: @ZoeCStart.

Sara Bruner (*Norma McCorvey*) makes her Arena Stage debut. Regional credits include *Twelfth Night*, *Fingersmith*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Black Swan Lab* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Boeing Boeing* (Delaware Theatre Company); *The Fantasticks* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); *Sweeney Todd*, *Richard III*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Cabaret*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Mousetrap*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Crucible*, *The Tempest*, *Hay Fever* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Great Lakes Theater); *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *As You Like It*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Scapin* (Idaho Shakespeare Festival); and *Brilliant Traces*, *The Physics of Regret*, *Lobby Hero*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (Boise Contemporary Theatre). TV credits include *MDs*.

Catherine Castellanos (*Connie Gonzalez*)'s regional credits include *Richard II* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Tempest*, *Pygmalion*, *The Pastures of Heaven*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Triumph of Love*, *Richard III*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Henry IV*, *The Seagull* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (California Shakespeare Festival); *Church Lady* in *Between Riverside and Crazy* (American Conservatory Theater); *A Lie Of The Mind* (Magic Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* (Yale Repertory); *Soulographie* (La MaMa.); and San Jose Repertory. She is a company member with Campo Santo/Intersection for the Arts and recipient of Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle and Dean Goodman Drama-Logue Awards.

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Gina Daniels (*Aileen*) makes her Arena Stage debut. Broadway credits include *All the Way*. Regional credits include nine seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Our Town* (Portland Center Stage); *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Paper Mill Playhouse); *Broke-ology* (TheatreWorks); *Measure for Measure* (Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival); *Doubt* (Kansas City Repertory); *Cyrano* (Willamette Repertory); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Private Lives* and *Hamlet* (Shakespeare Santa Cruz); *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth* and *Dracula* (Delaware Theatre Company); *An Ideal Husband* (Center Stage); *The Story* (Milwaukee Repertory); *Medea* (Pittsburgh Public Theater); *A Christmas Carol* (Geva Theatre); *The Exonerated* (Charlotte Repertory); *As You Like It* (Arden Theatre); and *Much Ado About Nothing* (TheatreVirginia). TV credits include *Orange is the New Black*. www.gina-daniels.com

Pamela Dunlap (*Mary/Molly*) previously appeared at Arena Stage in *The Cherry Orchard* and *You Can't Take It With You*. She created the role of Agnes in A.R. Gurney's *Love and Money* (Signature Theatre), created the role of Lana in *The Early Girl* Off-Broadway and played Marjorie Baverstock in Broadway's *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*. Regional theater credits include Pittsburgh Public Theater, South Coast Repertory, Mark Taper Forum, Hartford Stage, St. Louis Repertory and Pioneer Theatre. She is featured in the upcoming film *Wetlands* opposite Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje. Pamela has had recurring roles on *Mad Men*, *Commander in Chief*, *Maron*, *Doll* and *Em*, and was most recently seen as Barb in *Girls*. She studied with Sanford Meisner, received an OOB Award and is a member of Circle Repertory Acting Company.

Richard Elmore (*Justice Blackmun*) was last seen at Arena Stage in *Equivocation*. Regional credits include 33 seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and work with Seattle Repertory, Milwaukee Repertory, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Playhouse, Alliance Theatre, Indiana Repertory, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Denver Center, Utah Shakespeare Festival, California Shakespeare Festival, Virginia Stage Company, Mill Mountain Theatre, Court Theatre, Geva Theatre, San Jose Repertory, Delaware Theatre Company, TheatreWorks, Portland Center Stage and Artists Repertory Theatre. More than 100 radio, television and print commercials. He is the winner of five Drama-Logue Awards and received his B.A. from Arizona State University.

Susan Lynskey (*Linda Coffee*)'s Arena Stage credits include *Noises Off*, *Proof*, *Well, Born Yesterday*, *Intimations for Saxophone*, *Book of Days* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. D.C.-area credits include *Living Out* and *Pride and Prejudice* (Round House), *Ghost-Writer* (MetroStage), *The BFG* (National Theatre/Imagination Stage), *Intimate Apparel* (African Continuum), *The Laramie Project* (Olney Theatre Center), Signature Theatre, Center Stage, Theatre J, Ford's Theatre and Folger Theatre. As an associate artist with Olney, she also appeared in *Hay Fever*, *The 39 Steps*, *Farragut North* and *Rancho Mirage*. Film/TV credits include *Turn*, *National Treasure: Book of Secrets*, *The Wire*, *The Visiting*, *Random Hearts*, *Contact*, *Homicide*, *The West Wing* and *G.I. Jane*. Susan is an associate professor of theater and performance studies at Georgetown University.

Amy Newman (*Ronda*) makes her Arena Stage debut. Regional credits include *Great Expectations* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Miracle Worker*, *The Liar*, *Tribes*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Red Herring*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of The Christmas Carol*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *Design for Living* and *All My Sons* (Artists Repertory Theatre, resident artist since 2014); *JAW: A Playwrights' Festival* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Portland Center Stage); *Middletown*, *Gidion's Knot*, *Noises Off* and *Or* (Third Rail Repertory Theatre); and *God's Ear*, *Freakshow* and *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (Theatre Vertigo). Film/TV credits include *Grimm*. Amy is the recipient of Drammy Awards for *Gidion's Knot* and *God's Ear* and received her B.A. from Temple University.

The creative team for *Roe* includes Set Designer **Rachel Hauck**, Costume Designer **Raquel Barreto**, Lighting Designer **Jane Cox**, Composer & Sound Designer **Paul James Prendergast**, Projection Designer **Wendall K. Harrington**, Stage Manager **Jeremy Eisen** and Assistant Stage Manager **Marne Anderson**.

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Page 5—Casting announced for D.C. premiere of *Roe* by Lisa Loomer

For full company bios please visit arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/roe.

***Roe* is generously sponsored by Susan and Steven Bralove.**

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff—January 25, February 1 and February 14 following the noon performance; January 31 following the 7:30 p.m. performance and February 16 following the 8:00 p.m. performance.

Production Information

Roe

By Lisa Loomer

World-premiere co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Berkeley Repertory Theatre

Directed by Bill Rauch

In the Kreeger Theater | January 12-February 19, 2017

ABOUT: The lawyer: a young, brilliant, courageous woman arguing *Roe v. Wade* before the Supreme Court. The plaintiff: a complex, single woman seeking to end an unwanted pregnancy. The landmark 1973 case legalized abortion, but also began their separate journeys that would come to mirror the polarization in American culture. With shocking turns and surprising humor, *Roe* illuminates the difficult choices women make and the passion each side has for its cause.

CAST:

Ron Weddington/Jay Floyd/Flip Benham: Jim Abele

Sarah Weddington: Sarah Jane Agnew

Roxanne: Kenya Alexander

Henry McClusky/Robert Flowers/Others: Mark Bedard

Emily/Others: Zoe Bishop

Norma McCorvey: Sara Bruner

Connie Gonzalez/Ofelia/Others: Catherine Castellanos

Aileen/Barbara/Uma/Others: Gina Daniels

Mary/Molly/Others: Pamela Dunlap

Justice Blackmun/Dr. Kennedy/Others: Richard Elmore

Linda Coffee/Judy/Peggy/Others: Susan Lynskey

Ronda/Helen/Others: Amy Newman

CREATIVE TEAM:

Playwright: Lisa Loomer

Director: Bill Rauch

Set Designer: Rachel Hauck

Costume Designer: Raquel Barreto

Lighting Designer: Jane Cox

Composer & Sound Designer: Paul James Prendergast

Projection Designer: Wendall K. Harrington

Stage Manager: Jeremy Eisen

Assistant Stage Manager: Marne Anderson

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Plan Your Visit

TICKETS: Tickets for *Roe* are \$40-90, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as pay-your-age tickets, student discounts, Southwest Nights and hero's discounts, visit arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs.

Tickets may be purchased online at arenastage.org, by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth St., SW, D.C.

Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380
TTY for deaf patrons: 202-484-0247

Info for patrons with disabilities: 202-488-3300

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Weekday matinees at noon on Wednesday, 1/25; Wednesday, 2/1; & Tuesday, 2/14

Full calendar: tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=22928

Open-captioned performances: 1/25 at 7:30 p.m.; 1/28 at 2:00 p.m.; & 2/9 at 7:30 p.m.

Audio-described performances: 1/28 at 2:00 p.m.

CATWALK CAFÉ: **Prix fixe meals** are now available at the Catwalk Café and include a choice of soup or salad, main entrée and dessert. Pre-ordered meals are only \$22 (\$25 if purchased that day). To pre-order and see the menu, call 202-488-3300 or visit arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/the-café/. The Catwalk Café opens two hours before the show, and reservations are recommended.

To **pre-order drinks** from the Catwalk Café for up to 50% savings (\$6 house wine and beer), visit tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=1007.

METRO: Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is only one block from the Waterfront-SEU Metro station (Green Line). When exiting the station, walk west on M Street toward Sixth Street, and the main entrance to the Mead Center is on the right.

PARKING: Parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage. Subscribers may purchase parking in advance for \$16. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$19 or on the day of the performance for \$22 on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited handicapped parking is available by reservation. Advanced parking must be reserved by calling 202-488-3300. The entrance to the Mead Center garage is on Maine Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets, and the garage closes one hour after the day's last performance ends. Patrons can also park at the Public Parking Garage at 1101 Fourth Street, one block from the Mead Center, for \$11. Street parking is also available along Maine Avenue.

VALET PARKING: Arena Stage offers valet service at no additional cost to patrons with accessibility needs who call 202-488-3300 in advance to request valet parking. On days when valet parking is being used for accessibility, it is also available to general patrons one hour prior to show time for \$25, based on availability. To use valet parking, pull up to the main entrance on Sixth Street.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays and impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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