



the mead center
for american theater

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

This release has been updated to reflect that *The Originalist* will run through the May 3 extension date, as previously announced, before resuming again on May 19 and running through May 31, 2015.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Greta Hays/Kirstin Franko
press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4056

February 4, 2015

FULL COMPANY ANNOUNCED FOR JOHN STRAND'S
WORLD-PREMIERE POLITICAL DRAMA *THE ORIGINALIST*
STARRING EDWARD GERO AS SUPREME COURT JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA
UNDER DIRECTION OF MOLLY SMITH

AT ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER
MARCH 6-MAY 3 & MAY 19-31, 2015

(Washington, D.C.) Four-time Helen Hayes Award winner and acclaimed D.C. actor **Edward Gero** stars as one of America's most brilliant and polarizing figures—Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia—in the world-premiere political drama *The Originalist*, by Charles MacArthur Award winner and Arena Stage resident playwright **John Strand**. When a bright, liberal law school graduate embarks on a nerve-wracking clerkship with Justice Scalia, she discovers him to be both an infuriating sparring partner and unexpected mentor. How will their relationship affect one of the most incendiary cases ever to reach the nation's highest court? Artistic Director **Molly Smith** directs this daring new play, which offers a rare portrayal of a sitting Supreme Court justice, and for the first time the intimate Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle will be configured into a three-quarter thrust configuration. *The Originalist* runs March 6-May 3, resuming again on May 19 and running through May 31, 2015.

Joining Gero, who returns to Arena Stage following his portrayal of legendary artist Mark Rothko in *Red* in 2012, are **Kerry Warren** (Broadway's *The River*) as Cat, the young clerk who becomes a sparring partner for Justice Scalia, and **Harlan Work** (Taffety Punk's *Charm*) as Brad, an eager Scalia devotee and Cat's opposite in every way.

"There are few other places in the country where this play could have such impact," says **Smith**. "Washington is home to all national politics, and no more so than the debates that happen in the Supreme Court. This is a meaty play—it does not tackle its subject matter lightly. Happily though, John Strand and his subjects have a gift for humor, so prepare to be both challenged and entertained by this piece of historical fiction."

"We're taking a risk here and crossing a boundary," adds **Strand**. "We're creating a play about a sitting Supreme Court justice. We start with a living public figure, identify him by name and craft a fictional drama around him. We use material from his life and work, from this city, from our time. But *The Originalist* is not a bio play or a documentary or a law lecture. It is live theater. It has a story to tell. It has to engage, it has to invite you to feel and think, to laugh and shout and argue."

For the first time, the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle will be reconfigured into its alternatively-designed

—continued—

Arena Stage announces full company for world-premiere political drama *The Originalist*—Page 2

seating layout, featuring audience members seated on three sides of the stage. Guiding the transformation of the space, from Justice Scalia's private chambers, to a Virginia shooting range, to the U.S. Supreme Court, is set designer **Misha Kachman**, along with production designs by costume designer **Joseph P. Salasovich**, lighting designer **Colin K. Bills** and composer **Eric Shimelonis**.

For all 14 preview performances, March 6-18, Strand will participate in post-performance conversations to discuss and answer questions about the process and politics of creating this new American play.

John Strand (*Playwright*) is a resident playwright with Arena Stage through the American Voices New Play Institute. His previous work at Arena Stage includes *The Miser*, an adaptation of the Molière play set in Reagan-era America; *Lovers and Executioners*, winner of the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play; and *Tom Walker*, also commissioned by Arena Stage. His recent work includes the book and lyrics for *Hat! A Vaudeville*, a new musical with a score by composer Dennis McCarthy (South Coast Repertory); *Lincolnesque*, a dark comedy about politics and madness in D.C. (The Old Globe, dir. by Joe Calarco); and *Lorenzaccio*, his adaptation of Alfred de Musset's 1834 French classic (Shakespeare Theatre Company, dir. by Michael Kahn). Strand is the author of the book for the musical *The Highest Yellow*, with a score by Michael John LaChiusa (Signature Theatre, dir. by Eric Schaeffer). Additional plays are *The Diaries* (commissioned by Signature Theatre, MacArthur nomination); *Otabenga*, (Signature Theatre, dir. by Michael Kahn, MacArthur nomination); *Three Nights in Tehran*, a comedy about the Iran-Contra affair (Signature Theatre); and *The Cockburn Rituals* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre). Strand spent 10 years in Paris, where he worked as a journalist and drama critic, writing in English and French, and directed New York University's Experimental Theater Wing in Paris. His novel *Commieland* was published by Kiwai Media, Paris (2013).

Molly Smith (*Director*) has served as Artistic Director of Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. since 1998. Her directing credits include *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Camp David*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Oklahoma!*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Great White Hope*, *The Music Man*, *Orpheus Descending*, *Legacy of Light*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Cabaret*, *An American Daughter*, *South Pacific*, *Agamemnon and His Daughters*, *Coyote Builds North America*, *All My Sons* and *How I Learned to Drive* at Arena Stage. Her directorial work has also been seen at the Shaw Festival in Canada, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, Centaur Theatre in Montreal and Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska, which she founded and ran from 1979-1998. Molly has been a leader in new play development for over 30 years. She is a great believer in first, second and third productions of new work and has championed projects like *How I Learned to Drive*; *Passion Play*, a cycle and *Next to Normal*. She has worked alongside playwrights Sarah Ruhl, Paula Vogel, Wendy Wasserstein, Lawrence Wright, Karen Zacarias, John Murrell, Eric Coble, Charles Randolph-Wright and many others. She led the re-invention of Arena Stage, focusing on the architecture and creation of the Mead Center for American Theater and by positioning Arena Stage as a national center for American artists. During her time with the company, Arena Stage has workshopped more than 100 productions, produced 29 world premieres, staged numerous second and third productions and been an important part of nurturing seven projects that went on to have a life on Broadway. Molly recently made her Broadway debut directing *The Velocity of Autumn*, following its critically acclaimed run at Arena Stage in fall 2013. She was awarded honorary doctorates from American University and Towson University.

Cast Biographies

Edward Gero (*Justice Scalia*) last appeared at Arena Stage as Mark Rothko in *Red*. He is a four-time Helen Hayes winner and 14-time nominee. Regional credits include Mark Rothko in *Red* at the Goodman Theatre (co-production with Arena Stage); the title role of *Sweeney Todd* at Signature Theatre; *The Chosen* at Theater J; Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* and Vandergelder in *Hello, Dolly!* at Ford's Theatre; *American Buffalo*, *Shining City* (Helen Hayes nomination) and *Skylight* (Helen Hayes Award) at Studio Theatre; and *The Matchmaker* at CenterStage. In 30 seasons with the Shakespeare Theatre Company, he has played 70 roles, including Helen

—continued—

Arena Stage announces full company for world-premiere political drama *The Originalist*—Page 3

Hayes-winning turns in *Henry IV*, *Richard II* and *Macbeth*. In New York he's appeared at South Street Theatre and Classic Stage Company. Film and TV credits include *Die Hard 2*, *Striking Distance* and narrations for Discovery Channel and PBS. He's an associate professor at George Mason Univ. and instructor at George Washington University's Academy for Classical Acting and University of Maryland.

Kerry Warren (*Cat*) makes her Arena Stage debut in *The Originalist*. She recently closed *The River* on Broadway with Hugh Jackman as an understudy for *The Woman*. Her New York credits include *Good Grief* at Intar (Jessica), *Black Hoodie* (Carri) with ESPA/Primary Stages Reading Series and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Hero) with the Mobile Unit at The Public, directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah. With *Much Ado About Nothing* her cast brought Shakespeare to all five boroughs including prisons, shelters, community centers and the Public Theater. Regionally, she has performed at CenterStage in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Cassandra) and *Macbeth* (Witch/Lady MacDuff/Gentlewoman) for Shakespeare at the Manor on Shelter Island. She is a recent graduate of the Juilliard School (Group 42) and was awarded the President Joseph W. Polisi Prize for "Artist as Citizen."

Harlan Work (*Brad*) appears in his first full production at Arena Stage. Previous performances at Arena include workshops of *Clarkston* by Sam Hunter and *The Age of Innocence* by Karen Zacarias. Other Washington appearances include Rysiek in *Our Class* at Theater J, Delio in *The Duchess of Malfi* with We Happy Few and Sam/George in *Charm* at Taffety Punk. In New York he performed with The Drilling Company, Fundamental Theatre Co. and was a company member of Storm Theatre. Harlan holds a BA from Cornell University and an MFA from the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting.

Full company bios and images available upon request. Please e-mail press@arenastage.org.

The Originalist is generously sponsored by Andrew R. Ammerman and John and Linda Derrick.

The Originalist Special Events

Post-Show Discussion with Playwright John Strand—Following performances March 6-18, 2015

The court is still in session! Stick around after the show for an exciting post-show discussion with Arena Stage's newest resident playwright, Charles MacArthur Award winner John Strand. Hear from Strand about the process and politics of creating this new American play and share your thoughts and questions about the show.

Post-Show Discussion with Author Joan Biskupic—Sunday, April 12, following the 1:00 p.m. matinee

Join author and editor Joan Biskupic to discuss *The Originalist* and her book *American Original: The Life and Constitution of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia*. Biskupic has covered the U.S. Supreme Court for more than 20 years and is the author of several books, including *Breaking In: The Rise of Sonia Sotomayor and the Politics of Justice* and *Sandra Day O'Connor: How the First Woman on the Supreme Court Became its Most Influential Justice*. Biskupic is an editor-in-charge for legal affairs at *Reuters News*. Before joining *Reuters* in 2012, she was the Supreme Court reporter for the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*. Biskupic is a regular panelist on PBS's *Washington Week with Gwen Ifill*. She will be on hand following the discussion to sign copies of *American Original*, which are available through the Arena Stage Gift Shop.

Additional Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff. March 17 and 25 following the noon performance, April 2 following the 8:00 p.m. performance and April 14 following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

Production Information

The Originalist

By John Strand

—continued—

Arena Stage announces full company for world-premiere political drama *The Originalist*—Page 4

Directed by Molly Smith

March 6-May 3, resuming again on May 19 and running through May 31, 2015

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle

ABOUT: Four-time Helen Hayes Award winner Edward Gero (*Red*) returns to Arena Stage as one of America's most brilliant and polarizing figures: Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. When a bright, liberal, Harvard Law School graduate embarks on a nerve-racking clerkship with Justice Scalia, she discovers him to be both an infuriating sparring partner and an unexpected mentor. How will their relationship affect one of the most incendiary cases ever to reach the nation's highest court? From Charles MacArthur Award winner John Strand (*Lovers and Executioners*) comes this daring new work about passionate people risking heart and soul to defend their version of the truth. This production will be performed in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle in an exciting new three-quarter thrust configuration.

CAST:

Justice Scalia: Edward Gero

Cat: Kerry Warren

Brad: Harlan Work

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director: Molly Smith

Set Designer: Misha Kachman

Costume Designer: Joseph P. Salasovich

Lighting Designer: Colin K. Bills

Composer: Eric Shimelonis

Stage Manager: Susan R. White

Plan Your Visit

TICKETS: Tickets for *The Originalist* are \$55-\$90, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as student discounts, Southwest Nights, Pay-Your-Age tickets 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 Tuesday, 3/17 and Wednesday, 3/25

Full calendar: <http://tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=18276>

Open-captioned performances: 4/1 at 7:30 p.m. & 4/9 at 8:00 p.m.

Audio-described performance: 3/28 at 2:00 p.m.

CATWALK CAFÉ: The Catwalk Café will be open March 6-8 and then again beginning April 3, 2015. **Prix fixe meals** are now available at the Catwalk Café and include a choice of soup or salad, main entrée and dessert.

—continued—

Arena Stage announces full company for world-premiere political drama *The Originalist*—Page 5

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-cafe/. 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 \$18 or on the day of the performance for \$20 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 and Water Street.

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 Producer 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 through the American Voices New Play Institute. Arena Stage 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.

###

Connect with us:

Arena Stage app: itunes.apple.com/app/id673334921

Facebook: facebook.com/arenastage

Twitter: @arenastage, mention *The Originalist* with #TheOriginalist

YouTube: youtube.com/arenastage1

Pinterest: pinterest.com/arenastage

Flickr: flickr.com/photos/arena_stage

Blog: blog.arenastage.org