

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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May 9, 2016

ARENA STAGE PARTNERS WITH L.A. THEATRE WORKS TO RECORD AND DISTRIBUTE
SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OF *THE ORIGINALIST* BY JOHN STRAND
FEATURING ORIGINAL CAST LED BY EDWARD GERO
AS SUPREME COURT JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA
JUNE 24 & 25, 2016

*** NPR's Nina Totenberg will lead post-show conversations as part of broadcast ***

*** Audio performance will air on public broadcasting stations
and be distributed free to public high schools across the U.S. ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces a unique partnership with L.A. Theatre Works, the nation's leading producer of audio theater, to record John Strand's political drama *The Originalist*, based on Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. The performances will feature the original cast of Arena Stage's world-premiere 2015 production starring Edward Gero as Scalia, Kerry Warren as Cat and Harlan Work as Brad, under the direction of Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith. The recording will take place during two invitation-only performances June 24 at 8:00 p.m. and June 25 at 2:00 p.m. in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle.

L.A. Theatre Works will distribute the recording and associated educational materials, free of charge, to public high school teachers throughout the U.S and broadcast the play nationwide, including on the D.C. area's NPR affiliate station WAMU 88-5 FM.

"After years of looking for an artistic voice for Washington, D.C., it became clear that our voice is specifically a political one," shares Smith. "*The Originalist* is proof of the power of that political voice. When we first told people we were producing a play about Justice Scalia, they responded with dropped jaws. This is a thoughtful play that challenges how we view 'conservatives' and 'liberals' and works to find a political middle between them. We are excited to partner with the excellent L.A. Theatre Works to record the play for listening audiences to experience around the country."

On the collaboration, L.A. Theatre Works Producing Director Susan Albert Loewenberg shares, "We are honored to have the opportunity to record Arena Stage's stellar production of John Strand's *The Originalist*, which so beautifully captures the public and private persona of Justice Scalia. We look forward to sharing this portrayal of his singular and fascinating legal mind with the listening public, teachers and students."

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Page 2—Arena Stage partners with L.A. Theatre Works to record & distribute *The Originalist*

Both performances will be followed by interviews as part of the recording, hosted by Nina Totenberg, NPR's award-winning legal affairs correspondent. Friday evening will feature former law clerks John Bash, clerk for Scalia in 2007, and Tara Kole, clerk for Scalia in 2004, and Saturday participants will be announced at a later date.

About *The Originalist*: When a bright, liberal law school graduate embarks on a nerve-wracking clerkship with Justice Antonin 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?

From the critics:

- “Strand’s daring new play...Edward Gero’s lively performance...lands the laughs, delivers the gravitas and at every turn makes you believe this tantalizing man.” **–*The Washington Post***
- “The country’s most famous legal showman has gotten his show...Scalia, portrayed with terrific verve and snappy humor by Edward Gero.” **–*The New York Times***
- “Entertaining...Edward Gero, who looks remarkably like Justice Scalia, offered an eerily convincing physical impersonation of the justice—down to his Jackie Gleason slow burn, his operatic facial expressions and hand gestures, and his belly laugh.” **–*The Atlantic***
- “Strand’s *The Originalist* has plenty to chew on thanks to the confident direction by Arena’s Molly Smith.” **–*DC Metro Theater Arts***
- “Tightly drawn and mouthwateringly funny...some of the best acting in Washington. Edward Gero is a continuing wonder.” **–*DC Theatre Scene***
- “Provocative...the actors deliver strong performances...a polished production at Arena that’s worthy of an audience willing to be challenged.” **–*Broadway World***

Arena Stage’s 2015 production of *The Originalist* was generously sponsored by Andrew R. Ammerman and John and Linda Derrick.

L.A. Theatre Works (LATW) is the nation’s leading producer of audio theatre with a unique library of 500 recordings of important stage plays. We utilize innovative technologies to make world-class theatre and arts-based teaching tools accessible to global audiences. LATW reaches more than 8 million people annually through our broadcast series carried in 75 public radio markets nationwide, online streaming, live in-performance recording series in Los Angeles, national and international tours, audio publishing, and national education and library outreach programs. LATW is in the vanguard of organizations providing the general public and students with digital access to the arts. Our recordings are available in app, digital download and CD formats through our website and 30 major distributors, including iTunes and Amazon. LATW also partners with national and international organizations, such as the BBC, Radio Beijing Network and Voice of America on co-productions, broadcast distribution and educational projects. www.latw.org.

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

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