

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<https://www.arenastage.org/press-room/press-kits/press-kits-landing/jqa-press-kit/>

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES FULL CASTING FOR
WORLD PREMIERE OF AARON POSNER'S *JQA*
MARCH 1 – APRIL 14, 2019

*** Posner directs this provocative look at America's sixth president ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the full company for the world premiere of **Aaron Posner's** *JQA*, recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. The first of Posner's plays that is not adapted from an existing work, *JQA* shines a spotlight with humor and care on an ineffectual presidency, the idea of government and how a society lives in relationship to it, and the American experiment as it continues to evolve. Directed by Posner as well, *JQA* runs **March 1 through April 14, 2019 in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle.**

Each member of the four-person *JQA* cast embodies the persona of the title character at some point throughout the play and, in addition, performs the roles of several other historical American figures. Returning to Arena are **Jacqueline Correa** (Arena and Guthrie Theater's *Native Gardens*) as *JQA*/Abraham Lincoln/Louisa Adams and **Eric Hissom** (Arena's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; American Repertory Theater's *The Tempest*) as *JQA*/John Adams/Henry Clay. Making their Arena debuts are **Phyllis Kay** (Trinity Repertory's *Macbeth*, *Lend Me a Tenor*) as *JQA*/George Washington/Abigail Adams/Louisa Adams and **Joshua David Robinson** (Off-Broadway's *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation*, *The Convent of Pleasure*) as *JQA*/Frederick Douglass/Andrew Jackson.

JQA is the sixth commission to debut as part of Arena Stage's **Power Plays**, an ambitious initiative commissioning and developing 25 new plays and musicals from 25 writers over the course of 10 years. With **Power Plays**, Arena Stage focuses Washington, D.C.'s unique theatrical voice on politics, power and ideas of America, amplifying the theater's role as a national center dedicated to American voices and artists, located in the heart of the nation's capital. The massive undertaking features one story per decade, beginning with 1776 through present day, and builds on the tremendous success of previous Arena Stage commissions and **Power Plays**, including Lawrence Wright's *Camp David*, John Strand's *The Originalist*, and Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Sovereignty*.

"Arena's **Power Play** initiative – to commission 25 plays from 25 writers covering America's history by decade – is bringing some fascinating stories to light," explains Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "Aaron Posner has an impressive career adapting stories for the stage, and now he has created something totally new. The story will follow John Quincy Adams along the path of his life and distinguished career – and remind us of the energy and fire of this American experiment called democracy."

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“John Quincy Adams is a fascinating figure who has only recently become more understood and appreciated,” shares **Posner**. “He was a unique and complicated figure – a truly brilliant man and yet a largely ineffective politician whose political life pre- and post-presidency was far more distinguished than his time as president. Our sixth president, he knew and worked with every president and important American from Washington to Lincoln. His life and times have a lot to tell us about where we are today – and how we got here.”

Posner continues, “As we are seeing every day in absolutely graphic ways, our relationship to our government matters. It is not theoretical. It is practical and important. Here in D.C., the government touches nearly every part of our daily lives. But there is so much that we take for granted. Hopefully this play will nudge people to re-think some assumptions.”

In addition to Posner, the creative team includes Set Designer **Meghan Raham**, Costume Designer **Helen Huang**, Lighting Designer **Jesse Belsky**, Sound Designer **Karin Graybash**, Dialect and Vocal Coach **Lisa Nathans**, Casting Directors **Kate Murray** and **Victor Vazquez**, Stage Manager **Hethyr (Red) Verhoef** and Assistant Stage Manager **Emily Ann Mellon**.

Aaron Posner (*Playwright/Director*) is an award-winning playwright, director, teacher and former artistic director of two LORT theaters. His Helen Hayes Award-winning play, *Stupid F**king Bird*, was one of the ten most produced plays in the country in 2015. Other plays include *Life Sucks* and *No Sisters* (both re-inventions of Chekhov), *District Merchants* (inspired by *The Merchant of Venice*), *Who Am I This Time? & Other Conundrums of Love* (adapted from Kurt Vonnegut), *The Chosen* and *My Name Is Asher Lev* (adapted from Chaim Potok), *Sometimes a Great Notion* (adapted from Ken Kesey) and several more. He has directed more than 150 productions at major regional theaters across the country, including Arena Stage, and currently lives outside of D.C. with his wife, actress Erin Weaver, and his amazing daughter, Maisie.

Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)

Jacqueline Correa (*JQA/Abraham Lincoln/Louisa Adams*) last appeared at Arena Stage as Tania in *Native Gardens* directed by Blake Robison. Her regional theater credits include *Native Gardens* (Guthrie Theater), *Brick City* (Premiere Stages), *Macbeth* (Arkansas Rep), *The Women of Padilla* (Two River Theater), *Hamlet* (Guthrie/The Acting Company), *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (Guthrie/The Acting Company), *Confluence* (Guthrie Theater), *On the Verge* and *American Tet* (CATF) and *Macbeth* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Theater). Other stage credits include *Peter Pan* directed by Mark Lamos, *The Cradle Song* directed by Jonathan Bank and *A Christmas Carol* directed by Joe Dowling. Jacqueline has appeared in the films *The Dog Days* and *Once a Year*. She holds an MFA from the Professional Theater Training Program at The University of Delaware. Instagram: @Ms_Jacqueline_Correa www.JacquelineCorrea.com

Eric Hissom (*JQA/John Adams/Henry Clay*) first appeared at Arena Stage in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. D.C. area credits include *Twelve Angry Men* and *Born Yesterday* at Ford's; *Cyrano*, *Arcadia* (Helen Hayes Award) and *Winter's Tale* at the Folger; *Everything is Illuminated*, *Body of an American* and *Life Sucks* at Theatre J; *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* at Round House; *The Effect* at Studio; *The Vibrator Play* at Woolly Mammoth; and others. Eric did the national tour of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and has worked at regional theaters all over the country, including Seattle Rep, LaJolla Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep, Asolo Rep, The Arden Theatre, Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Cape Playhouse and others. Eric has an MFA from the FSU/Asolo Conservatory.

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Phyllis Kay (JQA/George Washington/Abigail Adams/Louisa Adams) is a longtime member of the Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company and has worked at several regional theaters. Favorite productions include *Macbeth*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Angels in America*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Cider House Rules*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Cherry Orchard*, *All the King's Men*, *Cabaret*, *King Lear*, *Hunchback of Seville*, *Appropriate*, *Death of a Salesman* and *Into the Breeches!* She has appeared in the films *Smithereens*, *Federal Hill*, *Brooklyn Rules*, *The Proposal*, *Fairhaven*, *Some Freaks* and *Polka King*, and on television in *Miller's Court*, *Law & Order*, *The Sopranos* and *Body of Proof*. She is a 2015 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

Joshua David Robinson (JQA/Frederick Douglass/Andrew Jackson) is honored to be making his Arena Stage debut in this production, returning to perform in his hometown for the first time. Joshua has appeared Off-Broadway in *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation* (Theatre at St. Clement's, The New Victory Theater); *The Convent of Pleasure* (Cherry Lane Theatre); and *Sense of an Ending* (59E59 Theatres). Regionally Joshua has been seen in *All the Way* (Cleveland Playhouse); *Sherwood: The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *Three Sisters* (Playmakers Repertory); and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (The Guthrie). Holding an MFA from NYU Graduate Acting, Joshua is always working to use theater as a means to engage with his community and as a vehicle for social change.

For full company biographies, please visit <https://www.arenastage.org/tickets/season-landing/jqa/>.

JQA is generously sponsored by the **David Bruce Smith Foundation**, **Sue Henry and Carter Phillips** and **Susan and Steven Bralove**.

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff – March 13, March 26 and April 10 following the noon performance; March 28 following the 8:00 p.m. performance and April 2 following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

JQA

Written and directed by Aaron Posner

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle | March 1 – April 14, 2019

ABOUT: Complicated, passionate and difficult, John Quincy Adams was a brilliant diplomat, ineffectual one-term President and congressman known for his eloquence, arrogance and integrity. This unique, highly-theatrical play by award-winning playwright Aaron Posner (*Stupid F**king Bird*) imagines key confrontations between JQA and some of America's most dynamic figures: George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, his own father John Adams and more. At once provocative, haunting and hilarious, this power play challenges the way we think of our country, our government and ourselves.

CAST:

JQA/Abraham Lincoln/Louisa Adams: Jacqueline Correa

JQA/John Adams/Henry Clay: Eric Hissom

JQA/George Washington/Abigail Adams/Louisa Adams: Phyllis Kay

JQA/Frederick Douglass/Andrew Jackson: Joshua David Robinson

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director: Aaron Posner

Set Designer: Meghan Raham

Costume Designer: Helen Huang

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Lighting Designer: Jesse Belsky
Sound Designer: Karin Graybash
Dialect and Vocal Coach: Lisa Nathans
Casting Directors: Kate Murray, Victor Vazquez
Stage Manager: Hethyr (Red) Verhoef
Assistant Stage Manager: Emily Ann Mellon

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Tickets for JQA are \$40-95, 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 <https://www.arenastage.org/tickets/savings-programs/>.

Tickets may be purchased online at [arenastage.org](https://www.arenastage.org) by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, 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 March 13, Tuesday March 26 and Wednesday April 10
Alternate time on Sunday, March 31 at 6:00 p.m.

Open-captioned performances: March 20 at 7:30 p.m., April 4 at 8:00 p.m.

Audio-described performance: April 13 at 2:00 p.m.

Full Calendar: <https://tickets.arenastage.org/events/26646?psn=26646>

ARENA STAGE CAFÉ: Prix fixe meals are available at Richard's Place, Arena Stage's casual dining 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 <https://www.arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/prix-fixe/>. The café opens two hours before the show, and reservations are recommended. To **pre-order refreshments**, visit <https://www.arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/richards-place-cafe/concessions/>.

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.

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PARKING: Parking is available in Arena Stage’s on-site garage. Subscribers may purchase parking in advance for \$17. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$20 or on the day of the performance for \$24 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 \$15.

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.

For complete 2018/19 Season details, visit: arenastage.org/tickets/season-landing/.

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 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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