

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional press materials, visit the online press room:

<https://www.arenastage.org/press-room/press-kits/press-kits-landing/turn-me-loose-press-kit/>

### GRETCHEN LAW'S *TURN ME LOOSE* EXTENDS BY ONE WEEK DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 21, 2018

(Washington, D.C.) The D.C.-area premiere of *Turn Me Loose*, Gretchen Law's intimate, no-holds-barred drama about the extraordinary and explosive life of Dick Gregory, will receive an additional six performances during its run at Arena Stage. Under the direction of John Gould Rubin, *Turn Me Loose* now plays through October 21, 2018 in the Kreeger Theater.

*Turn Me Loose* chronicles Gregory's rise as the first Black comedian to expose audiences to racial comedy; in confronting bigotry head-on with biting humor and charm, Gregory turned activism into an art form. Obie Award-winner and former stand-up comedian Edwin Lee Gibson portrays the comedian-activist, with John Carlin as Stand-up Comic/Emcee/Interviewer/Heckler/ Cabbie.

Tickets may be purchased online at [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org), by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, D.C.

#### Critical acclaim for *Turn Me Loose*:

- “*Turn Me Loose* would be totally lost without a strong performer playing Dick Gregory and here Edwin Lee Gibson embodies Gregory to the point that you believe you are watching Gregory himself onstage. Gregory's voice and mannerisms are spot on. If you were to put an original recording and Gibson's performance side by side, you won't be able to tell the difference. His performance is that good.” – **Broadway World**
- “[Edwin Lee] Gibson's got a good cold stare and an equally winning way of luring you into his confidence, and the audience hangs with him as he pauses before delivering a laugh line or a sermon.” – **Washington Post**
- “Played with puckish glee and moral rage by [Edwin Lee] Gibson, Dick Gregory is finally given his due and brought to vivid life in *Turn Me Loose*. Gibson is terrific as Gregory, young and old.” – **DCist**
- “Five Stars. *Turn Me Loose* is a cool, slick, and powerful production. It's a pared down set with a jazz club feel that sets the mood for a seemingly wayward journey. But like good jazz, there is flow and rhythm that moves you: mind, body, and soul.” – **DC Theatre Scene**
- “Arena Stage's D.C.-area premiere of *Turn Me Loose* is a love letter to the legacy of Mr. Gregory, a deeply personal exploration of his work, his frustration and suffering, and an ode to his deep intelligence and grace in the face of a changing, but persistently unjust world.” – **DC Metro Theater Arts**

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*Turn Me Loose* is presented in association with John Legend, Get Lifted Film Company, Mike Jackson, The Will and Jada Smith Family Foundation, Beth Hubbard, The Private Theatre, Eric Falkenstein, SimonSays Entertainment, Jamie Cesa and Jana Babatunde-Bey.

*Turn Me Loose* is generously sponsored by Beth Newburger Schwartz and Donald Wallace Jones, Dr. Betty Jean Tolbert Jones and Tracey Tolbert Jones.

**ABOUT:** This intimate and no-holds-barred drama chronicles Dick Gregory's rise as the first Black comedian to expose audiences to racial comedy. His comedy spared no one, including politicians, celebrities and the white supremacists who were part of his regular audience. In confronting bigotry head-on with biting humor and charm, Gregory turned his activism into an art form, risking his own safety at each performance. "Scorchingly funny and brilliant" (*The New York Times*), *Turn Me Loose* is an exuberant and raw tribute to Gregory's life as a civil rights activist, comic genius and unapologetic provocateur.

**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](http://arenastage.org)

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