

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 event details visit: arenastage.org/gala

**ARENA STAGE HOSTS ONE-NIGHT-ONLY GALA
WITH TONY AND GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING
PERFORMER HEATHER HEADLEY
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020**

***** Daniel Korengold and Ann Stock to lead Arena Stage's 70th Anniversary Gala *****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater will host the 70th Anniversary Gala, presented by **Ourisman Automotive Group**, on **Wednesday, May 13, 2020** at **The Anthem (901 Wharf Street, SW)** with Tony and Grammy Award-winning actress **Heather Headley** headlining the event. The evening includes a cocktail reception, three-course seated dinner and a one-night-only performance featuring a variety of Headley's beloved Broadway songs and personal selections.

The performance will feature the presentation of the **Beth Newburger Schwartz Award**. The award was first presented to Arena Stage board chair Beth Newburger Schwartz in 2016, Arlene Kogod in 2017, Muriel Bowser in 2018, Nina Totenberg in 2019 and celebrates a female leader who strives to better the community in which she lives through her own unique strengths and talents. An awardee will be announced at a later date.

Daniel Korengold, Arena Board of Trustees member, serves as the Gala's chair, and the **Honorable Ann Stock**, former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, serves as the honorary chair.

Heather Headley is a Tony and Grammy Award-winning actress and performer. Headley made her Broadway debut as Nala in the original Broadway cast of *The Lion King* and went on to win Tony and Drama Desk Awards for her portrayal of the title role in *Aida*. She earned an Olivier Award nomination for her West End stage debut in *The Bodyguard* and returned to Broadway in 2016 in the Tony-winning revival of *The Color Purple*. Headley is also a Grammy-winning recording artist for her R&B/Gospel record "Audience of One."

All proceeds will benefit all Arena Stage artistic and educational programs. Arena Stage is one of the only theaters dedicated to producing American plays and playwrights. Additionally, Arena Stage offers seven robust Community Engagement programs that provide arts education activities to more than 10,000 young people in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan community, as well as internationally with its Voices of Now program.

The 70th Anniversary Gala is presented by Ourisman Automotive Group and generously sponsored by Diamond Sponsor AT&T and Platinum Sponsor Exelon.

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Event Schedule

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

6 p.m. Cocktail reception

7 p.m. Award presentation and seated dinner

8:30 p.m. One-night-only performance with Heather Headley

For additional event details, visit: arenastage.org/gala.

For information on individual ticket or table purchases please contact Maria Corso at 202-600-4025 or email mcorso@arenastage.org.

For information on corporate sponsorship packages, please contact Shayla Hines at 202-600-4030 or email shines@arenastage.org.

For media inquiries, please email press@arenastage.org.

Heather Headley (Featured Performer) is a Tony and Grammy Award-winning actress and performer. In 1997, Headley won a Tony Award for the role of Nala in the original Broadway cast of the Tony-winning musical *The Lion King*. Headley was asked to audition for the title role in the writing duo's next Broadway venture together, *Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida*. Her portrayal of the Nubian princess, Aida, won her the praise of critics and another prestigious Tony Award. She also received the coveted Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actress in a Musical. She has also been named as one of *People Magazine's* 50 Most Beautiful People and *Essence Magazine's* 30 Women To Watch. In 2012, Headley made a triumphant return to the stage, starring in *The Bodyguard* in London's West End. She continued her musical success with her 2002 debut album, "This Is Who I Am." Two songs, "He Is" and the album track "I Wish I Wasn't," both emerged as Top 5 R&B and Dance chart hits. In 2009, Headley released "Audience of One" for which she won the Grammy Award for the Best Contemporary R&B Gospel Album. She made her return to Broadway in 2016 starring in the Tony Award-winning musical, *The Color Purple*, playing the role of Shug Avery. Headley has also had a recurring role on "Chicago Med."

Beth Newburger Schwartz is an entrepreneur who has started and sold several businesses. She is currently president and CEO, Epoch Communications, Richlynd Federal and Middle Finger Productions. Beth is known in preservation circles for her work as director of communications for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She served as a senior political appointee in both Clinton administrations, first in the White House Women's Office and later as associate administrator, General Services Administration. In addition to her professional career, Beth is past chair of Arena Stage and currently vice president, past chair and trustee of the National Children's Museum, trustee of the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, President's Council of Cornell Women, the Boat Owners Association of the United States and chairman of the board of Apollo Enterprise Imaging. Beth shared her love of theater and the arts with her late husband, Richard Schwartz, founder and chairman of BoatUS and an extraordinary philanthropist.

Daniel L. Korengold (Gala Chair) currently serves as president of Ourisman Automotive of Virginia in Alexandria. He is a graduate of Trinity College and has lived in the DMV community for over 60 years. He is involved with various charities in the area including Mt. Vernon, Winterthur, the Decorative Arts Society, Blair House, Holton Arms School, Washington Antiques, National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Nantucket Historical Association. Korengold is past chairman of Norwood School, the Washington Performing Arts Society and Washington Automobile Dealers Association. He also served on the boards of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington, the Chevy Chase Club, Landon School, Travelers Aid, National Child Research Center and Trinity College. He currently serves on the boards of the National Rehabilitation Hospital and the Sconset Trust. He enjoys golf, decorative arts, antiques, travel and fitness, and has raised four children with his wife, Martha.

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The Honorable Ann Stock (Honorary Chair) currently serves as Chairman of the Board of the Meridian International Center in Washington, D.C. and served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, from June 2010 until July 2013. Previously, she was Vice President of Institutional Affairs at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Deputy Assistant to the President and White House Social Secretary, Vice President of Corporate Communications for Bloomingdale's and Deputy Press Secretary for Vice President Walter F. Mondale. Currently, Stock, a graduate of Purdue University, is a Board Member of Americans for the Arts, IREX and the White House Historical Association.

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 groundbreaking 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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