

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:
arenastage.org/press-room/press-kits/1920-press-kits/right-to-be-forgotten-press-kit/

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES WORLD PREMIERE OF SHARYN ROTHSTEIN'S *RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN* OCTOBER 11 – NOVEMBER 10, 2019

*** Seema Sueko directs this riveting new drama about privacy, social media
and human forgiveness in the age of the Internet ***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the full company for the world premiere of **Sharyn Rothstein's** (*By the Water*, USA Network's "Suits") timely tale about one man's fierce battle to reclaim his right to privacy. Filled with secrets, lies and political backstabbing, *Right to be Forgotten* centers around a young man's mistake that haunts him online a decade later. Desperate for a normal life, he goes to extraordinary lengths to cut himself off from his past. In a time when everyone has their own version of the truth and their own way of spreading it, who decides which truths get buried and which live forever online? Directed by Deputy Artistic Director **Seema Sueko**, *Right to be Forgotten* runs **October 11 – November 10, 2019 in the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle.**

"Sharyn Rothstein has written a complex and profound story that asks how human emotions like love, second chances and forgiveness can co-exist with technology, which is inhuman and inhumane," shares **Sueko**. "It's a thrilling sci-fi of sorts that breaks open the consequence of 25 years of the public web and this "parallel world" we've created on the Internet. We looked for actors who are artistically agile with great range and I am so pleased to announce this cast."

Making their return to Arena Stage, **John Austin** (Arena's *Kleptocracy*) portrays Derril Lark, a young man fighting to erase his past from the Internet, and **Guadalupe Campos** (Arena's *Native Gardens*) plays Eve Selinsky.

Making their Arena Stage debuts are **Melody Butiu** (Broadway's *Doctor Zhivago*) as Marta Lee, **Rachel Felstein** (Taffety Punk's *Antigonick*) as Annie Zahirovic, **Shubhangi Kuchibhotla** (Constellation Theatre's *White Snake*) as Sarita Imari and **Edward O'Brien** (Red Bull Theater's *The White Devil*) as Alvaro Santos.

"*Right to be Forgotten* is a play about what happens when our humanity clashes with our technology. The play asks the question: who should control memory on the Internet? It's a play I wrote because I had more questions than answers, and I hope everyone who sees the show will leave with a different opinion about the characters and their choices," explains **Rothstein**. "I couldn't be more thrilled that the play is having its premiere at Arena Stage, in the heart of where these questions about technology and regulations are being most hotly debated right now."

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In addition to Sueko, the creative team includes Set Designer **Paige Hathaway**, Costume Designer **Ivania Stack**, Lighting Designer **Adam Honoré**, Sound Designer **Andre Pluess**, Projection Designer **Shawn Duan**, Dialect and Vocal Coach **Zach Campion**, Dramaturg **Jocelyn Clarke** and Stage Manager **Kurt Hall**.

Sharyn Rothstein's (*Playwright*) plays include *By the Water* (Manhattan Theatre Club/Ars Nova, Neglect (Ensemble Studio Theater), *All the Days* (McCarter Theatre Center), *Landladies* (Northlight Theatre), and *Tell Me I'm Not Crazy* and *Camp Monster* (Williamstown Theater Festival). She was a writer and producer for the USA legal drama "Suits" and has developed shows for Bravo and Apple. Sharyn is the winner of the American Theater Critics Association Francesca Primus Prize and four-time recipient of the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. Sharyn holds an MFA in dramatic writing from NYU as well as a master's in public health, Hunter College; and a BA in sociology, Vassar College.

Seema Sueko (*Director*) joined the Arena Stage staff in July 2016 as deputy artistic director and has since directed *The Heiress*, *The Price* and *Smart People* at Arena. She previously served as associate artistic director at The Pasadena Playhouse and executive artistic director of Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, a theater company in San Diego she co-founded. Her directing and acting credits include Denver Center, The Pasadena Playhouse, People's Light, The Old Globe, San Diego Repertory, Yale Repertory, 5th Avenue Theatre and Native Voices, among others. As a playwright, she received commissions from Mixed Blood Theatre and Center Stage. Her work has been recognized by the California State Assembly, NAACP San Diego, Chicago Jeff Awards, American Theatre Wing and American Theatre magazine. Seema developed the Consensus Organizing for Theater methodology, has done research on the neuroscience of acting, created the Green Theater Choices Toolkit and serves on the Diversity Committee of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

Cast Biographies (in alphabetical order)

John Austin (*Derril Lark*) last appeared at Arena Stage as Valentin in *Kleptocracy*. Other D.C. credits include Trond/German Husband in *Oslo* (Round House Theatre) and Frank in *Melancholy Play* (Helen Award, Outstanding Production; Constellation Theatre). With National Players (Olney Theatre Center), John toured America as Montano in *Othello*, the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland* and Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*. In Austin, Texas, John originated the role of Young Zeus in *Zeus in Therapy* (B. Iden Payne Award, Outstanding Young Performer; Tutto Theatre Company). Training: BFA in Acting, Summa Cum Laude, from Boston University; Certificate in Classical Acting from L.A.M.D.A. The Bette Davis Foundation awarded John the Bette Davis Prize, for excellence in the acting profession. Upcoming: *Easy Women Smoking Loose Cigarettes* (Signature Theatre). Instagram: @johnaustinaactor. www.johnaustinaactor.com

Melody Butiu (*Marta Lee*) is making her Arena Stage debut. She has appeared on Broadway in *Doctor Zhivago*, Off-Broadway in David Byrne's *Here Lies Love* at The Public Theater, and has performed regionally in *South Pacific* (Finger Lakes MTF), *Vietgone* (Denver Center), *M. Butterfly*, *Shipwrecked* and *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (South Coast Repertory), *Merrily We Roll Along* (Wallis Annenberg Center), *Sunday in the Park with George* (Huntington Theatre), *Stage Kiss* (Geffen Playhouse) and also at Seattle Repertory, American Conservatory Theater, Getty Villa, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Kirk Douglas Theatre, East West Players, San Diego Repertory and La Jolla Playhouse. Melody's TV and film credits include "The Patients", "The Kominsky Method", "NCIS:LA", "Kingdom", "Rizzoli & Isles", "Major Crimes", "Gotham", "NCIS", and "True Blood". melodybutiu.com Instagram: @mellowdeebiee

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Guadalupe Campos (*Eve Selinsky*) last appeared at Arena Stage in the ensemble for *Native Gardens*. Other D.C. credits include work with The Kennedy Center TYA, Olney Theatre Center, Studio Theatre, Theatre Alliance, Arts on the Horizon and GALA Hispanic Theatre. Regional credits include work with Theatre Squared, Arkansas Staged, The Border Theatre and North Dakota Shakespeare. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The University of Texas El Paso and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Arkansas. She studied Long-form Comedy in NYC at The Upright Citizens Brigade. Guadalupe is a bilingual teaching artist for Shakespeare Theatre Company and is also the current Director of Paso Nuevo, GALA Hispanic Theatre's after school program for at-risk youth. Instagram: @guadalupecamposm

Rachel Felstein (*Annie Zahirovic*)'s D.C. credits include *Antigonick* (Taffety Punk), *Summerland* (Washington Stage Guild) and *Lake Effect* (Tonic Theater at the Kennedy Center). Rachel is also looking forward to appearing with Mosaic Theater Company in their upcoming production of *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World*. New York credits include *This American Life - As Seen on Radio* (BAM), readings and productions with Ensemble Studio Theatre and *wRETCH - the final concert* (Fresh Fruit Festival). Regional credits include *Fun Home* (Virginia Stage Company), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey) and the most recent national tour of *Man of La Mancha*. Rachel is a proud MFA graduate of the Academy for Classical Acting and studied acting with Terry Knickerbocker. www.rachelfelstein.com

Shubhangi Kuchibhotla (*Sarita Imari*) is excited for her debut performance at Arena Stage and is over the moon to be here! Other D.C. credits include: *White Snake* as ensemble (Constellation Theatre); *The Comedy of Errors* as Foley Artist, *Love's Labour's Lost* as Maria and *The Miser* as Marianne (Annapolis Shakespeare Company) and *Twelfth Night* as Feste, *The Mail Order Bride* as June and *The Amish Project* as Velda (UMBC Theatre Department). Shubhangi graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore County with her BFA in Acting ('18). Instagram: @Shubhyk. Website: kshubhangi.com. So much love to all my family, friends and mentors!

Edward O'Brien (*Alvaro Santos*) is excited to be making his Arena Stage debut. Most recently, Edward was seen Off-Broadway as Gasparo in Red Bull Theater's critically acclaimed production of *The White Devil*. Other recent work includes Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), Walter Lee in *A Raisin in the Sun* (Triad Stage) and originating the role of Ronald Hitchens in Bruce Graham's world premiere production of *Sanctions* (Delaware Stage). He is a repeat performer at Connecticut's Westport Playhouse where he performed in Joanne Woodward's directorial finale of *A Member of the Wedding*. He can be seen on various television shows and later this year portraying the iconic role of Ralph Ellison in the film "Shirley" starring Elizabeth Moss and Michael Stuhlbarg. www.edwardoblenis.com. Instagram: @eddieboy_o

For full company biographies, please visit arenastage.org/tickets/1920-season/right-to-be-forgotten/

Right to be Forgotten is generously sponsored by **Joan and David Maxwell** and is the recipient of an **Edgerton Foundation New Play Award**.

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff on October 29 following the 7:30 p.m. performance, October 30 following the 12 p.m. performance, November 5 following the 12 p.m. performance and November 7 following the 8 p.m. performance.

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PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Right to be Forgotten

By Sharyn Rothstein

Directed by Seema Sueko

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle | October 11 – November 10, 2019

ABOUT: The Internet never forgets. A young man's mistake at 17 haunts him online a decade later. Desperate for a normal life, he goes to extraordinary lengths to erase his indiscretion. But freedom of information is big business, and the tech companies aren't going down without a fight. Secrets, lies and political backstabbing abound in this riveting new drama about one man's fierce battle to reclaim his right to privacy. Playwright Sharyn Rothstein (*By the Water*, USA Network's "Suits"), winner of the prestigious 2015 Primus Prize and whose work has been called "touching & affecting" (*New York Times*), has written a striking allegory about privacy, social media and human forgiveness in the age of the internet.

CAST:

Derril Lark: John Austin

Marta Lee: Melody Butiu

Eve Selinsky: Guadalupe Campos

Annie Zahirovic: Rachel Felstein

Sarita Imari: Shubhangi Kuchibhotla

Alvaro Santos: Edward O'Brien

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director: Seema Sueko

Set Designer: Paige Hathaway

Costume Designer: Ivania Stack

Lighting Designer: Adam Honoré

Sound Designer: Andre Pluess

Projection Designer: Shawn Duan

Dialect and Vocal Coach: Zach Campion

Dramaturg: Jocelyn Clarke

Stage Manager: Kurt Hall

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Tickets for *Right to be Forgotten* 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 arenastage.org/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 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

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PERFORMANCE DATES:

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday at 2 p.m.

Weekday matinees at noon on Wednesday, October 30 and Tuesday, November 5

Closed captioning: GalaPro begins Friday, October 18

Open-captioned performance: Thursday, November 7 at 8 p.m.

Audio-described performance: Saturday, November 9 at 2 p.m.

Southwest Night: Tuesday, October 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Full Calendar: arenastage.org/tickets/calendar

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 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 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.

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 2019/20 Season details, visit: arenastage.org/tickets/subscriptions.

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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