

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

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WITH THE AMERICAN VOICE AWARD**

(Washington, DC) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater presented the **American Voice Award** to **Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)** on **Thursday, April 10, 2025**, as part of the Opening Night celebration for the world-premiere production of **Larissa FastHorse's *Fake It Until You Make It***.

Established in 2005, the American Voice Award honors public officials recognized for their extraordinary support of and advocacy for American arts and arts education. **Senator Klobuchar** is the first woman elected to represent the State of Minnesota in the United States Senate. Over four terms, she has built a reputation of putting partisanship aside to help strengthen the economy and support families, workers, and businesses. Senator Klobuchar has long been a fierce advocate for the arts, recognizing the profound impact they have on the economy on local and national scales. At the height of lockdown in 2020, she introduced the bipartisan Save Our Stages Act to provide essential relief to arts organizations and venues. This landmark legislation led to the creation of the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, which distributed more than \$16 billion to over 13,000 arts organizations and venues across the country— including Arena Stage. The award was presented by Arena Stage Artistic Director **Hana S. Sharif** at the pre-performance dinner.

"It is a distinct privilege to present this award to Senator Klobuchar on the Opening Night of *Fake It Until You Make It*, a play that takes a humorous—but sharply insightful—look at the complexities of service, and how what makes us unique is so often at the root of our commonalities," said **Sharif** in her remarks. "Senator Klobuchar is known for her sense of humor as much as her persistence, and the American Voice Award celebrates the joy we can find in the full expression of our individuality."

American Voice Award recipients previously honored by Arena Stage include Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, Representative Judy Chu (D-CA), Senator Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), the late Representative John Lewis (D-GA), and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), among others.

FastHorse's *Fake It Until You Make It* follows the escalating rivalry between Wynona, the Native American proprietor of N.O.B.U.S.H., and River, her white counterpart at Indigenous Nations Soaring. As their collision ensnares colleagues and bystanders, secrets highlighting the absurdities of ambition and authenticity are unraveled. At its core, *Fake It Until You Make It* is about being whoever you want to be, even when it's not who you are. Directed by **Michael John Garcés**, the world-premiere co-production with **Center Theatre Group** runs through May 4, in Arena Stage's Kreeger Theater.

The *Fake It Until You Make It* Opening Night celebration included a reception in the Bank of America Lower Lobby, a seated dinner in the Molly Smith Study, the performance in the Kreeger Theater preceded by a blessing from **Elton Naswood**, Executive Director for the Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQ+ Center for Equity and International Two-Spirit Ambassador **Mel Willie**, and a post-show reception in the Margot Kelly Grand Lobby.

Support for *Fake It Until You Make It* is provided by **AARP**, **Daniel W. Hamilton**, and **The Molly Smith Fund for New Work**.

In addition to *Fake It Until You Make It* production sponsors, the Opening Night Celebration is supported by **Boston Consulting Group**.

The first racially integrated theater in our nation's capital and a pioneer of the regional theater movement, Arena Stage was founded in 1950 in Washington, D.C. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Hana S. Sharif and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. We produce plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep, and dangerous in the American spirit, and present diverse and groundbreaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Consistently contributing to the American theatrical lexicon by commissioning and developing new plays, Arena Stage impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement and serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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