

## ARENA STAGE MEDIA ADVISORY

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### ARENA STAGE HOSTS FREE PROGRAMMING AS PART OF LILLIAN HELLMAN FESTIVAL JANUARY 25-FEBRUARY 5, 2017

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater continues the company's season-long **Lillian Hellman Festival** by hosting free programming, including staged readings, panel discussions and film screenings, **January 25-February 5, 2017** to celebrate the iconic playwright, author and political activist.

The programming is bookended by two full productions—the upcoming ***Watch on the Rhine***, which runs **February 3-March 5, 2017**, directed by Jackie Maxwell and starring four-time Academy Award nominee Marsha Mason, and *The Little Foxes*, which kicked off Arena Stage's 2016/17 season.

The Festival continues Arena Stage's tradition of showcasing the work of American Giants in the theater (following festivals for Arthur Miller, Edward Albee and Eugene O'Neill) and is dedicated to the memory of **Zelda Fichandler**, Arena Stage's co-founder and Artistic Director of 40 years.

Up-to-date information on Festival programming can be found at [arenastage.org/hellman-festival/](http://arenastage.org/hellman-festival/).

#### **The Arena Stage Lillian Hellman Festival:** **Cooking with Lillian**

A contemporary take on Hellman's own recipes from her cookbook ***Eating Together: Recollections & Recipes***, co-written by Peter Feibleman. The videos continue to be distributed throughout the season, and previous installments feature The Oval Room Executive Chef **John Melfi**, Hank's Oyster Bar Owner **Jamie Leeds**, The Rasika Group Executive Chef **Vikram Sunderam** and Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. Upcoming installments will feature Tryst Chef **Kevin Eckert** and Corduroy Chef and Owner **Tom Power**. To view the videos, visit [arenastage.org/hellman-festival/](http://arenastage.org/hellman-festival/).

#### **Arena Stage presents Taffety Punk Theatre Company's Reading of** ***Toys in the Attic***

**Directed by Lise Bruneau**

**Wednesday, January 25 at 8:00 p.m.**

#### **In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

*Toys in the Attic* is the last full-length original play that Hellman wrote, and it is said to be somewhat autobiographical. The play focuses on the Berniers sisters, two middle-aged spinsters living in New Orleans after the Great Depression. When their younger brother, Julian, unexpectedly returns home and they find out he has not only married, but has also mysteriously acquired a small fortune, the delicate power structure Carrie and Anna always maintained over him is upset, sending their lives into chaos. Under the direction of **Lise Bruneau**, who plays Sara Muller in Arena Stage's upcoming production of *Watch on the Rhine*, the reading features **Tonya Beckman**, **Audrey Bertaux**, **Daniel Crane**, **Kim Schraf** and **Craig Wallace**.

#### **Film Screening of *Julia***

**Friday, January 27 at 8:00 p.m.**

#### **In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

*Julia* is a 1977 film based on Lillian Hellman's book *Pentimento: A Book of Portraits*. It was adapted for the screen by Alvin Sargent and directed by Fred Zinneman. The film depicts playwright Lillian Hellman (played by Jane Fonda) reuniting in Russia with her longtime friend Julia (Vanessa Redgrave), who urges Hellman to undertake a dangerous mission to smuggle funds into Nazi Germany. The film was nominated for 11 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director for Fred Zinnemann and Best Actress for Jane Fonda. It ended up winning three awards—Best Supporting Actor for Jason Robards, Best Supporting Actress for Vanessa Redgrave and Best Adapted Screenplay for Alvin Sargent's script.

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**Arena Stage presents Howard University's, College of Arts & Sciences, Division of Fine Arts,  
Department of Theatre Arts Reading of  
*The Children's Hour***

**Directed by Raymond O. Caldwell**

**Saturday, January 28 at 8:00 p.m.**

**In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

Hellman's best-known and most-produced work, *The Children's Hour*, is a drama that takes place in an all-women's boarding school. A student who has run away from school accuses the two headmistresses of having an affair in order to avoid being sent back to her home. The accusation leaves the two implicated women struggling to recover their professional reputations and personal lives. Under the direction of Howard University lecturer and director **Raymond O. Caldwell**, the reading features **Devonne Bowman, Ricky Brown III, Brittany Clark, Ezinne Elele, Madison Harris, Danielle King, Tehya Merritt, Shawnee Owens, Chinna Palmer, Kayla Parker, Adanna Paul, Alexcia Thompson, Kevin Thorne II and Kyra Walker.**

**Panel Discussion – Beyond Gender: Inspiring Generations of Female Writers**

**Sunday, January 29 at 4:00 p.m.**

**In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

During this panel, contemporary female playwrights discuss the effect that Hellman's writing, life and legacy have had on their own careers. Panelists include Executive Director of the National New Play Network and Coordinating Producer of the Women's Voices Theater Festival **Nan Barnett**; Georgetown University professor and playwright **Christine Evans**; and playwrights **Mary Kathryn Nagle** and **Karen Zacarias.**

**Reading of *Another Part of the Forest***

**Directed by Amelia Acosta Powell**

**Friday, February 3 at 8:00 p.m.**

**In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

In this biting prequel to *The Little Foxes*, Hellman exposes the history of the Hubbard family. Patriarch Marcus Hubbard is a self-made man who went from rags to riches during the Civil War through sheer exploitation and manipulation of his fellow man. He treats his wife and two sons with nearly as little respect as his laborers, pitting them against each other. He favors his daughter, Regina, but perhaps their relationship is even a little too close. Not unlike *The Little Foxes*, no one but the servants come out of the story untarnished by illegal, immoral or unethical behaviors. Under the direction of Arena Stage Artistic Associate and Casting Director **Amelia Acosta Powell**, the reading features **Shayna Blass, Laura C. Harris, Susan Rome, Michael Russotto and Tom Wiggin.**

**Community-Wide Reading of *Pentimento***

**Saturday, February 4 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

In this multi-hour community reading, members of the public are invited to sit together and read selections of Hellman's 1973 memoir which offers deep insight into the fiercely intelligent woman and dramatic writer and this era of U.S. history. Like the annual New Bedford reading of the text of *Moby Dick*, this out-loud experience gives attendees a chance to read anywhere from a few sentences to a few pages aloud—or just to listen and engage with Hellman's life and work in fresh and immersive way.

**Panel Discussion – Hellman: The Radical**

**Sunday, February 5 at 5:00 pm**

**In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle**

Independent. Outspoken. Headstrong. Brave. Difficult. Communist. Liar. Depending on who you spoke to, those are just some adjectives used to describe Lillian Hellman. She grew up with the Roaring 20s, cut her teeth on politics during the Great Depression, became a fêted writer during WWII, survived the blacklisting of the 50s, became an idol of the women's movement of the 60s and 70s and ended her life in notoriety. This panel explores Hellman's radical lifestyle and the writing that proliferated from it. Panelists include **Jackson Bryer**, editor of *Conversations with Lillian Hellman*, and **Alice Kessler-Harris**, author of *A Difficult Woman: The Challenging Life and Times of Lillian Hellman.*

**All Festival events are FREE but reservations are required. To reserve your tickets, visit [arenastage.org/hellman-festival](http://arenastage.org/hellman-festival) or call the Arena Stage Sales Office at 202-488-3300.**

**The Lillian Hellman Festival is generously sponsored by Beth Newburger Schwartz.**