

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For press materials for *The Little Foxes*, visit the online press room:
arenastage.org/news-press/press-room/press-kits-photos/productions/the-little-foxes
Username: arenapress / Password: arena1617

ARENA STAGE KICKS OFF LILLIAN HELLMAN FESTIVAL WITH *THE LITTLE FOXES*
BEGINNING FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2016,
ANNOUNCES FULL FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING
AND DEDICATES FESTIVAL TO THE LATE CO-FOUNDER OF ARENA STAGE
ZELDA FICHANDLER

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater will kick off the company's **Lillian Hellman Festival** Friday, September 23 with the beginning of previews for *The Little Foxes*, starring Emmy Award winner **Marg Helgenberger** (*CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*). This is the first of two full productions as part of the Festival, which 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).

Leading up to Arena Stage's production of *Watch on the Rhine*, the theater will host FREE programming designed to explore and celebrate the iconic playwright, author and political activist. The Festival will include readings of her plays *Toys in the Attic* presented by **Taffety Punk Theatre Company**, *The Children's Hour* presented by **Howard University's Department of Theatre Arts** and *Another Part of the Forest* produced by Arena Stage; a film screening of *Julia*; two panel discussions, a video series highlighting Hellman's cookbook recipes with all-star chefs; and a community-wide reading of her memoir *Pentimento*. Full details below.

Following the loss of Arena Stage's co-founder and Artistic Director of 40 years, **the theater dedicates the Lillian Hellman Festival to the memory of Zelda Fichandler.**

"Coming off of the Women's Voices Theater Festival, I thought this would be the perfect moment to go back to one of our most influential female writers and celebrate a true American Giant: Lillian Hellman," shares Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "She lived life large as a writer, radical activist and lover of the juiciness of life. She's dangerous and provocative and brilliant at her craft as a writer."

Smith continues, "When we lost Zelda this past summer, we lost Arena's American Giant. She was the architect of the not-for-profit movement through her speeches and ideas. Each of us in the theater have a bit of her star inside us. She was, in many ways, the mother of us all. Like Hellman she was a pioneer, a passionate artist, an influential teacher and inspiring activist."

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The Arena Stage Lillian Hellman Festival: *

Festival Programming:

All Festival events are FREE but reservations are required. To reserve your tickets visit arenastage.org/hellman-festival or call the Arena Stage Sales Office at 202-488-3300.

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 will be distributed throughout the festival. To view the first in the series featuring Executive Chef of The Oval Room D.C. **John Melfi** baking Peach Cobbler visit arenastage.org/hellman-festival.

Future installments will include Tryst Chef **Kevin Eckert**, The Rasika Group Executive Chef **Vikram Sunderam** at Rasika, Executive Chef and Owner of Hank's Oyster Bar **Jamie Leeds**, Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith** and Corduroy Chef and Owner **Tom Power**.

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

Thursday, January 26 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.

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.

Another Part of the Forest

Directed by Arena Stage Casting Director Amelia 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.

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. Writers will be announced at a later date.

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 to be announced at a later date.

Community-Wide Reading of *Pentimento*

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

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle

In this multi-hour community reading, members of the public are invited to come up to the podium and read anywhere from a few sentences to a few pages of Hellman's 1973 memoir, which offers deep insight into the fiercely intelligent woman and dramatic writer and an era of U.S. history. Like the annual New England reading of the text of *Moby Dick*, this out-loud experience engages everyone in Hellman's life and work in fresh and immersive way.

**Details are subject to change.*

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

Full Productions:

The Little Foxes

By Lillian Hellman

Directed by Kyle Donnelly

In the Kreeger Theater | September 23-October 30, 2016

There are people who eat and there are those that get eaten. First in line to be served is Regina Giddens, clawing her way to wealth with her equally calculating brothers. When their plan to control the local cotton mill is thwarted, they'll turn to ever more devious schemes, even as it further divides their family. Starring Emmy Award winner **Marg Helgenberger** (*CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*), Lillian Hellman's classic tale of greed, betrayal and all the sordid ties that bind takes sibling rivalry to unimaginable heights and reveals how far a ruthless family can bend the rules before they break each other.

Watch on the Rhine

By Lillian Hellman

Directed by Jackie Maxwell

In the Fichandler Stage | February 3-March 5, 2017

Golden Globe Award winner **Marsha Mason** (*The Goodbye Girl*) leads an ensemble cast as Fanny Farrelly in Lillian Hellman's suspenseful masterpiece *Watch on the Rhine*. With America on the brink of entering World War II, Fanny's daughter escapes to the D.C. suburbs with her German husband, a man deeply involved in anti-fascist movements. But with an Eastern European guest with ulterior motives also living in their midst, tensions rise as it becomes clear that no one's safety can be guaranteed—at home or abroad.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director 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. Arena Stage 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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