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ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR SEARINGLY FUNNY BROADWAY HIT

POTUS:

**OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE
SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE**

By SELINA FILLINGER

Directed by MARGOT BORDELON

(Washington, DC) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announced today the cast and creative team for **POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive**. Following a hit 2022 Broadway run, **Selina Fillinger's** (*The Collapse, Something Clean*) White House-set play—catnip for a D.C. audience—will make its premiere in the nation's capital in a production directed by **Margot Bordelon**. The laugh-out-loud feminist farce will run **October 13 – November 12, 2023**, on Arena Stage's iconic in-the-round Fichandler Stage. Press night will be held on **Thursday, October 19 at 8 p.m.** For more information and tickets, please visit arenastage.org/potus.

An endearing homage to those who keep things running behind the scenes, *POTUS* follows seven women of dramatically different backgrounds trying to minimize the damage done by male arrogance and political posturing. Hailed as a “rough-and-tumble feminist comedy” (*The New York Times*), this farce will be led by a tight ensemble of fiercely funny women.

“If you love the series “*Veep*,” then you will be riveted by this raucous and irreverent comedy that tackles the hijinks of saving a bumbling president from his own political demise,” said **Hana S. Sharif**, Arena Stage Artistic Director. “We are welcomed directly into the Oval Office and down the rabbit hole with tour de force performances from a phenomenal ensemble of actors that are unapologetically brash in this spectacular new farce.”

POTUS marks Arena Stage's first production under **Sharif's** leadership as artistic director. She officially stepped into the role earlier this week, continuing an Arena legacy of trailblazing female artistic directors, including Artistic Director Emeritus **Molly Smith** (1998–2023) and Founding Director **Zelda Fichandler** (1950–1991).

“I’m thrilled to be collaborating with Selina Fillinger once again, this time on her wild and wicked farce *POTUS*,” said director **Margot Bordelon**. “This production features seven ferocious female performers and I can’t wait to begin building a show with them that’s athletic, hilarious, and unapologetic. *POTUS* explores power—the women who want it and deserve it, and incorrectly believe that aligning themselves with a corrupt man is going to help them achieve it. What is the personal, political, and spiritual cost of complicity? Is the answer to work within the system or to burn it all down? The play posits that the answer lies in the sisterhood—it’s by aligning with one another, building one another up, bringing each other along, and amplifying each other’s voices that real political and personal change can be made.”

This quintessentially-D.C. story will be brought to life on Arena’s Fichandler Stage by an all-star cast comprised of many D.C.-based favorites.

Returning to Arena are cast members **Naomi Jacobson** (*Mary T. & Lizzy K.*, *A View From the Bridge*) as Harriet, **Natalya Lynette Rathnam** (*Our War*) as Jean, **Felicia Curry** (*Nina Simone: Four Women*, *Disgraced*) as Margaret, **Kelly McAndrew** (*The Great White Hope*, *The Miracle Worker*) as Bernadette, and **Janet Greer** (*The Women*) as the understudy for Harriet/Bernadette.

Making their Arena debuts with *POTUS* are cast members **Megan Hill** (Atlantic Theater’s *Eddie and Dave*) as Stephanie, **Yesenia Iglesias** (Olney Theatre’s *Dance Nation*) as Chris, **Sarah-Anne Martinez** (NYMF’s *Leaving Eden*) as Dusty, **Peregrine Teng Heard** (New Ohio Theatre’s *soot and spit*) as understudy for Jean/Stephanie, and **Jasmine Joy** (The Kennedy Center’s *Shear Madness*) as understudy for Margaret/Chris/Dusty.

In addition to **Bordelon**, the *POTUS* creative team includes Set Designer **Reid Thompson**, Costume Designer **Ivania Stack**, Lighting Designer **Marika Kent**, Original Music and Sound Designer **Sinan Refik Zafar**, Wig and Hair Designer **Tommy Kurzman**, Dialect and Vocal Coach **Lisa Nathans**, Dramaturg **Otis Ramsey-Zöe**, Casting Director **Joseph Pinzon**, New York Casting **Kelly Gillespie, CSA**, Stage Manager **Christi B. Spann**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Dayne Sundman**.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES (in order of appearance)

Naomi Jacobson (*Harriet*)’s Arena Stage performances include Mary Todd Lincoln in Tazewell Thompson’s *Mary T. & Lizzy K.* (premiere), *A View From the Bridge*, *The Misanthrope*, and *The Women*, among others. An Affiliated Artist at Shakespeare Theatre, and a company member at Woolly Mammoth, her DC credits include The Kennedy Center, Ford’s Theatre, Studio, Signature, Folger, Round House, Olney, Theater J, and Wolf Trap Opera. She’s traveled to the Guthrie Theater, Goodman Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Rep, Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Indiana Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, and Berkshire Theatre Festival. Voice-over work includes documentaries for NPR, PBS, Discovery Channel, and the Smithsonian. She’s received three Helen Hayes Awards, numerous nominations, the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship, the Anderson-Hopkins Award, and a DC Commission Individual Artist Grant. Visit www.naomijacobson.com for complete resume.

Natalya Lynette Rathnam (*Jean*) last appeared at Arena Stage in *Our War*. Regional credits include *The Last Match*, *The Phlebotomist* (1st Stage); *A Nice Indian Boy* (Olney Theatre Center); *Bars and Measures*, *Shame 2.0*, *When January Feels Like Summer* (Mosaic Theater Company); *It’s Christmas*, *Carol!* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Memoirs of a Forgotten Man* (Washington Stage Guild); *A Wind in the Door*, *Kid Prince and Pablo*, *Mockingbird*, *The Wings of Ikarus Jackson* (Kennedy Center); *4,380 Nights* (Signature Theatre); *Death of A Salesman* (Ford’s Theatre); *The Trojan Women* (Taffety Punk); *The Fire and The Rain* (Constellation Theatre Company); *The Fantasticks* (Rep Stage); *Glassheart* (Rorschach); *Illyria*, *Julius Caesar* (Virginia Shakespeare Festival); *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *All’s Well That Ends Well* (Maryland Shakespeare Festival); *In the Blood*, and *Lyme Park* (The Hegira).

Megan Hill (*Stephanie*) is a Brooklyn-based actor and writer. Her play *The Last Class: A Jazzercise Play* has enjoyed runs in New York, DC, and Seattle. As an actor, she's originated roles in the world premieres of Ramiz Monsef's *The Ants*; Leah Nanako Winkler's *The Brightest Thing in the World* and *Kentucky*; Crystal Skillman's *Open and Cut*; Amy Staats' *Eddie and Dave*; Mara Nelson Greenberg's *Do You Feel Anger?*; Rob Askins' *Hand to God*; and Joshua Conkel and Matt Marks' *The House of Von Macramé*. Megan was nominated for a Drama Desk Award and was named one of the Best Comedic Performances of the Year by *The New York Times* for her portrayal of David Lee Roth in *Eddie and Dave*. BFA Acting/Original Works: Cornish College of the Arts. MFA: ART/MXAT IATT at Harvard. www.meganhill.net Instagram: @meganhillwhat

Felicia Curry (*Margaret*) last appeared at Arena Stage in the Cabaret Nights series. She was last seen on DC stages in *Our Town* at Shakespeare Theatre Company and *My Lord, What a Night* at Ford's Theatre. Curry received a Helen Hayes Award for *Lela & Co.* at Factory 449 where she is a company member. She is also a Resident Company Member at Everyman Theatre and an Artistic Associate at Ford's Theatre. Felicia recently made her Broadway debut in the Tony-nominated revival of *Into the Woods*, and then toured with the show around the country, including The Kennedy Center. She has a Berkshire Theatre Critics Award, a RTCC Award, an Anderson Hopkins Award, and is an AUDELCO nominee for *Queens Girl in the World* at Abingdon Theatre off-Broadway. Felicia has been named one of "12 DC Stage Dynamos" by *The Washington Post* and one of "DC's Biggest Theater Stars" by *Washingtonian* magazine. She is on the WAPAVA Board of Directors and the Emmy-nominated host of *WETA Arts* on PBS.

Yesenia Iglesias (*Chris*) is thrilled to be making her Arena Stage debut with this incredible team. A selection of her DC regional credits includes *Dance Nation* (Olney Theatre Center); *Daphne's Dive*, *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* (Signature Theatre); *A Christmas Carol* (Ford's Theatre); *Kid Prince and Pablo* (Kennedy Center); *Love's Labor's Lost* (Folger Theatre); *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Round House Theatre); *Hamlet*, and *King Charles III* (Shakespeare Theatre Company). Elsewhere in the DMV includes *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *The Arabian Nights* (Constellation Theatre Company), and *The Smartest Girl in the World* (Imagination Stage). Other notable credits include *Passing Strange* (ACT - Seattle), *Mwindo* (Seattle Children's Theatre), and *Water by the Spoonful* (Theatre 22). Yesenia is from Bayamón, Puerto Rico, and holds an MFA from the University of Washington. Instagram: @ye_iglesias

Sarah-Anne Martinez (*Dusty*) is making her debut at Arena Stage! New York credits include *Leaving Eden* (NYMF, Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role Award). Regional credits include *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Addams Family*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Festival 56); and *Hello, Dolly!* (Tulane Summer Lyric). You can see her on television as Teen Marjorie in *Pretty Little Liars: Original Sin*, as well as *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *Blue Bloods*, and *Evil*. Proud Ball State University alum and member of Actors' Equity and SAG-AFTRA. Thank you to the creative team of *POTUS* and to her agents at Stewart Talent. Much love to Brent! Instagram: @sarahmartinezz

Kelly McAndrew (*Bernadette*) is thrilled to return to Arena Stage, where in 2000 she played both Eleanor Bachman in the company's 50th Anniversary Season revival of *The Great White Hope* opposite Mahershala Ali as well as Annie Sullivan in *The Miracle Worker*. She has performed on Broadway as Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Off-Broadway credits include roles with Atlantic Theater Company, MCC, Playwrights Horizons, Primary Stages, Rattlestick, Signature Theatre, TACT, Transport Group, and Women's Project. Her regional credits include ART, Arizona Theatre Co, Baltimore Centre Stage, Berkshire Theatre Fest, Cincinnati Playhouse, City Theatre, Denver Center, George Street Playhouse, Guthrie Theater, Humana Festival, Huntington, New Jersey Shakes, Old Globe, Pioneer Theatre, Pittsburgh Public, Shakespeare on the Sound, St. Louis Rep, Unicorn Theatre, Vineyard Playhouse, Westport, and Yale Rep.

Janet Greer (u/s Harriet/Bernadette) was last seen at Arena Stage in *The Women*. She has performed at The Kennedy Center, Studio Theatre, Scena Theatre, and Source Theatre, and was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award in 2003. Her recent TV and film credits include *Awkwafina is Nora from Queens* opposite BD Wong, lead role in the indie feature *Frank and Edna Take on Le Mans*, NBC's *Homicide: Life on the Street*, and *Girl, Interrupted* opposite Winona Ryder. She is Meisner trained (Maggie Flanigan Studio) and received her BFA from George Mason University. Proud SAG/AFTRA/AEA member. Instagram: @janetgreeractor

Peregrine Teng Heard (u/s Jean/Stephanie)'s New York credits include the world premiere of Chuck Mee's *soot and spit* (The New Ohio), *Call Out Culture: or, the unbearable whiteness of being* (Ars Nova ANT Fest), *Ski End* (Piehole), and *Sehnsucht* (JACK). Peregrine is the artistic director of The Associates Theater Ensemble, with whom she has devised and performed *The Cousinhood* (The Center at West Park), *Sheila* (A.R.T./New York Theatres), *Black Protagonist* (124 Bank Street Theater), and *Freesome* (The Brick). Regional credits include *Tom Jones* and *Remix 38* at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Voice-over work includes ads for Cadillac, Sonos, and Roomba. Peregrine's play *Redemption Story* is a 2023 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference Semifinalist.

Jasmine Joy (u/s Margaret/Chris/Dusty) is so excited to join Arena Stage for this hilarious, elegant production! Local credits include *Shear Madness* (The Kennedy Center); *The Hula-Hoopin' Queen*, *Corduroy*, *The Snow Queen* (Imagination Stage); *Dance Nation* (Olney Theatre Center); *The Mamalogues* (1st Stage); *A Chorus Within Her* (Theater Alliance); *Moon Man Walk* (Constellation Theatre); *A Wind in the Door* (The Kennedy Center TYA); *Womxn on Fire Festival* (Keegan Theatre); *The Powers That Be*, *#solestories* (Venus Theatre); and *The Gulf* (Peter's Alley). You can see Jasmine next in *Is God Is* at Constellation Theatre! You can visit Jasmine's website at www.jasminejoybrooks.com. Jasmine would love to thank her daughter, Calypso, for being her inspiration, her partner Matt, and her mom.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive

By Selina Fillinger

Directed by Margot Bordelon

In the Fichandler Stage | October 13 – November 12, 2023

ABOUT: When the Commander-in-Chief publicly calls his wife a “See You Next Tuesday,” all H-E-Double Hockey Sticks breaks loose. A searingly funny Broadway hit, *POTUS* follows how seven women of dramatically different backgrounds minimize the damage done by male arrogance and political posturing, in an endearing homage to the women who keep things running behind the scenes.

CAST:

Harriet: Naomi Jacobson*

Jean: Lynette Rathnam*

Stephanie: Megan Hill*

Margaret: Felicia Curry*

Chris: Yesenia Iglesias*

Dusty: Sarah-Anne Martinez*

Bernadette: Kelly McAndrew*

u/s Harriet/Bernadette: Janet Greer*

u/s Jean/Stephanie: Peregrine Teng Heard*

u/s Margaret/Chris/Dusty: Jasmine Joy*

CREATIVE TEAM:

Playwright: Selina Fillinger
Director: Margot Bordelon
Set Designer: Reid Thompson
Costume Designer: Ivania Stack
Lighting Designer: Marika Kent
Original Music and Sound Design: Sinan Refik Zafar
Wig and Hair Designer: Tommy Kurzman
Dialect and Vocal Coach: Lisa Nathans
Dramaturg: Otis Ramsey-Zöe
Casting Director: Joseph Pinzon
New York Casting: Kelly Gillespie, CSA
Stage Manager: Christi B. Spann*
Assistant Stage Manager: Dayne Sundman*

*Members of Actors' Equity Association

POTUS is made possible by a generous gift from **Beth Newburger Schwartz**, made in honor and welcome of **Hana S. Sharif** as Arena Stage's new Artistic Director. Additional support is provided by **Sheila Stampfli**.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Tickets for *POTUS* are \$56-95 plus applicable fees. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change. Arena Stage's many savings programs include "pay your age" tickets for those aged 30 and under, student discounts, and "Southwest Nights" for those living and working in the District's Southwest neighborhood. To learn more, visit arenastage.org/savings-programs.

Tickets are available at arenastage.org. Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300, or in person at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, D.C., Tuesday-Sunday, 12-8 p.m.

Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.
Weekday matinees at 12 p.m. on October 26, November 1, and November 8

Early Curtains: Sunday, November 5 at 6 p.m.

Southwest Nights: Sunday, October 29 at 7:30 p.m. and Friday, November 10 at 8 p.m.

Audio-Described Performance: Saturday, October 28 at 2 p.m.

ASL-Interpreted Performance: Saturday, November 11 at 8 p.m.

Mask-Required Performances: Sunday, October 22 at 2 p.m.; Tuesday, October 31 at 7:30 p.m.;

Saturday, November 4 at 8 p.m.; and Wednesday, November 8 at 12 p.m.

Closed Captioning: GalaPro begins Friday, October 20

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with the show beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with staff and artists on October 24 following the 7:30 p.m. performance; on November 2 following the 8 p.m. performance; and on October 26, November 1, and November 8 following the 12 p.m. matinees.

Full Calendar: arenastage.org/tickets/calendar

SAFETY: Arena Stage recommends but does not require that patrons wear facial masks in our theater except in our occasional mask-required performance. These conditions are subject to change, and Arena continues to consult with medical professionals, monitor government best practice recommendations, and engage in industry trainings to ensure the health and safety of our patrons, artists, and staff. For up-to-date information, visit arenastage.org/safety.

TRAVEL: Limited parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage for \$18 to \$30, including drive-up valet parking for \$30. Call 202-488-3300 to purchase in advance. For more information on transportation and other parking options around the Mead Center, visit arenastage.org/transportation.

For complete 2023/24 Season details, visit arenastage.org/season.

The first racially integrated theater in our nation's capital and a pioneer of the regional theater movement, Arena Stage was founded on August 16, 1950, in Washington, D.C., by Zelda Fichandler, Tom Fichandler, and Edward Mangum. Today—nearly 75 years later—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 ground-breaking 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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