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For production photos of *THE ORIGINALIST* go to:
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS
JOHN STRAND'S
THE ORIGINALIST,
A TIMELY AND IMPORTANT PLAY ABOUT THE PASSION
AND PEOPLE BEHIND POLITICS,
DIRECTED BY MOLLY SMITH
APRIL 11 - MAY 7, 2017
WITH THE OFFICIAL PRESS OPENING ON APRIL 13

*For the first time ever The Playhouse
will partner with community experts and related organizations to
host conversations after every performance
to encourage civic discourse and open dialogue.*

PASADENA, CA (March 28, 2017) - The Pasadena Playhouse (Danny Feldman, Producing Artistic Director and Sheldon Epps, Artistic Director Emeritus) will present *THE ORIGINALIST* by John Stand and directed by Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith. A Co-production between Asolo Repertory Theatre (Sarasota, FL) and Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.), *THE ORIGINALIST* will be performed at The Pasadena Playhouse (39 S. El Molino Avenue, Pasadena) from April 11, 2017 through May 7, 2017, with the official press opening on Thursday, April 13.

When a bright, liberal law school graduate embarks on a difficult and challenging clerkship with Justice Antonin Scalia, she discovers him to be both an infuriating sparring partner and an unexpected mentor. As the country waits for Scalia's seat to be filled, *THE ORIGINALIST* looks into the complexities of one of the most polarizing Supreme Court Justices of all times. This powerful work portrays the passionate people risking heart and soul to defend their interpretation of the truth, and the constitution.

THE ORIGINALIST is a thought-provoking play that deals head on with the political divide alive in our country today. Pasadena Playhouse's **Producing Artistic Director Danny Feldman** said, "As the State Theater of California, we see this as an opportunity to bring residents from all over the political spectrum together into a shared space for healthy dialogue and discourse, facilitated by relevant organizations and experts from our community. Speakers and panelists will share their

unique perspectives of various themes from the play including: objectivity, different approaches to interpreting the U.S. Constitution, pro-choice vs. pro-life, affordable health care, gun control/rights, equal rights, and more.”

For a full listing of post show engagement events for **THE ORIGINALIST** and community partners and experts, visit PasadenaPlayhouse.org/originalist.

“One of the driving issues in the current political dysfunction is the inability of people with opposing views to come together and have healthy dialogue,” added Producing Artistic Director **Danny Feldman**. “The theater is the perfect setting for us to come together and not only be entertained, but to try to find understanding and respect on all sides. This is a great opportunity to open a dialogue, focused around a really powerful, relevant play.”

“John Strand’s **THE ORIGINALIST** is flat out great, provocative theater. It’s funny, it’s moving and packs some big punches. The play has become more and more meaningful over the past year since Justice Scalia’s passing and with the new administration. Striving for a middle ground feels like an epic struggle these days, said **Director Molly Smith**. “I can’t wait to share this production with the wonderful audience and staff at The Playhouse. Look out, Pasadena.”

Four-time Helen Hayes Award-winner **Edward Gero** reprises his role as Scalia. *The New York Times* boast Gero played the role with “terrific verve and snappy humor,” and *The Washington Post* proclaims, “He (Gero) lands the laughs, delivers the gravitas and at every turn makes you believe this tantalizing man knows and feels American law down to his very bones.” *Sarasota Magazine* which reviewed the production in January 2017 said, “Strand’s careful balance of comic and dramatic moments, Molly Smith’s smart direction and Gero’s flawless portrayal of Scalia, **THE ORIGINALIST** draws you in immediately and keeps you watching.”

In addition to Gero as “Justice Antonin Scalia,” **THE ORIGINALIST** also features Jade Wheeler (Off Broadway’s *Who is Eartha Mae?*) as “Cat” and Brett Mack (Asolo Repertory Theatre’s *The Great Society*) as “Brad.”

Joining John Strand and Molly Smith on **THE ORIGINALIST** are creative team members Misha Kachman (Scenic Design), Joseph P. Salasovich (Costume Design), Colin K. Bills (Lighting Design), Eric Shimelonis (Sound Design), Susan R. White (Original Stage Manager), Hethyr “Red” Verhoef (Production Stage Manager) and Jessica R. Aguilar (Stage Manager).

The Pasadena Playhouse is located at 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101. **THE ORIGINALIST** plays from April 11, 2017 to May 7, 2017, with the official press opening on Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m. Preview performances are on Tuesday, April 11 at 8:00 p.m. and Wednesday, April 12 at 8:00 p.m. Performance schedule is Tuesday - Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. (Notes: There are no Tuesday performances on April 18 and 25. There will be one Sunday evening performance at 7:00 p.m. on April 30.) Tickets range from \$25 - \$80 with premiere seats at \$115. Tickets are available online at PasadenaPlayhouse.org, by phone at 626-356-7529 or at The Pasadena Playhouse Box Office (39 South El Molino Avenue).

The Pasadena Playhouse began in 1917 and was recognized by the State Legislature as the State Theater of California in 1937 for bringing national and international renown to the state as a

center for dramatic art in 1937. Production highlights include the launch of the national tour of *Purlie* (with the Goodman Theatre); *Sister Act: The Musical*, which played in the West End at the London Palladium Theatre and on Broadway at the Broadway Theatre (Five 2011 Tony Award nominations, including Best Musical) and is currently on a national tour; *Baby It's You!*, which played at Broadway's Broadhurst Theatre; and *Looped* starring Valerie Harper, which played at Broadway's Lyceum Theatre (2010 Tony Award Nominee, Best Actress in a Play). Other productions developed at The Pasadena Playhouse include *A Night With Janis Joplin* (2014 Tony Award Nominee), *Stormy Weather: The Lena Horne Story*, *Can-Can* and *Ray Charles Live!*

Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director, Danny Feldman, The Pasadena Playhouse's mission is to enhance the lives of our community through theatrical productions, community programs and education. This year, The Pasadena Playhouse State Theater of California celebrates its Centennial Anniversary.

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BIOGRAPHIES:

JOHN STRAND (Playwright) is an American playwright, journalist, drama critic, and author. Regional works include *Our War*, *Tom Walker*, *The Miser*, *Three Nights in Tehran*, *Charity Royal*, his Charles MacArthur Award-winning *Lovers and Executioners* (Arena Stage), *An Italian Straw Hat* (South Coast Repertory), *Lorenzaccio* (Lansburgh Theatre), *Lincolnesque* (Burstein Family Stage), *Highest Yellow*, *The Diaries*, *Otabenga* (Signature Theatre), and *The Cockburn Rituals* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre). Strand has received multiple playwriting commissions from South Coast Repertory, Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre, and Signature Theatre. He was also named Playwright of the Year by Broadway Play Publishing. Strand is also the author of the novel, *Commieland*, a novel about a popular but aging theme park in rural Pennsylvania that re-creates Communism for Americans through thrice daily performed musical-historical revues.

MOLLY SMITH (Director) has been a leader in new play development for over 30 years. She is a great believer in first, second and third productions and has worked alongside playwrights Sarah Ruhl, Paula Vogel, Wendy Wasserstein, Lawrence Wright, Karen Zacarias, and many others. She has been Artistic Director at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. for almost two decades and founded and led Perseverance Theatre in Alaska for 19 seasons. Under her leadership, Arena Stage is a national center for American voices, has workshopped more than 100 productions, produced 36 world premieres, and been an important part of nurturing eight projects that went on to Broadway including this season's *Dear Evan Hansen*. Her directorial work has been seen at Asolo Rep, Arena Stage, Shaw Festival Theatre, The Old Globe, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Tarragon Theatre, Centaur Theatre, and on Broadway.

EDWARD GERO (Antonin Scalia) is the recipient of four Helen Hayes awards and 16 nominations, including Justice Scalia. Other: Mark Rothko – *RED*, Goodman Theatre/Arena Stage; Gloucester (*King Lear*) with Stacy Keach, Goodman Theatre/Shakespeare Theatre Company; Richard Nixon (*Nixon's Nixon*), Salieri (*Amadeus*), Roundhouse Theatre; Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol*), Ford's Theatre; Sweeney Todd (*Sweeney Todd*), Signature Theatre. 75 roles since 1983 with Shakespeare Theatre Company, most recently King – *Henry IV* with Stacy Keach. Film and TV: *House of Cards*, *Turn: Washington's Spies*, *Striking Distance* and *Die Hard II*. Professor of Theater – George Mason University; 2015 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow. @Edward_Gero

For additional biographies, please send a request to info@pattyonagan.com.