

PRESS RELEASE

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STUDIO THEATRE LAUNCHES ITS FIRST AUDIO PLAY, AN ADAPTATION OF SARAH BURGESS'S POLITICAL DRAMA *KINGS*, JUST IN TIME FOR THE 2020 ELECTION

Kings

Written by **Sarah Burgess**
Directed by **Marti Lyons**
An audio play from Studio Theatre
Available to stream beginning **October 29, 2020**

"Awfully funny... the pace is snappy and the intellect is sophisticated...[a] savvy process play about the sausage-making of politics"

—*Washington Post*

"Entertaining and thought-provoking in every sense"

—*DC Metro Theater Arts*

"Sensational"

—*DCist*

As millions across the country are taking to the polls, Studio Theatre will release its first audio play, an adaptation of *Kings*, the lacerating, fast-talking political drama by **Alexandria, VA native Sarah Burgess**. The audio play will be available to **stream for free** beginning **October 29, 2020** on Studio Theatre's website. Arriving just in time for the contentious 2020 election, *Kings* pits a rookie congresswoman against a seasoned political adversary, as the influence of money, power, and backroom dealing test the fortitude of her ideals.

Kings is part of Studio In Your Ears, the Theatre's series of free audio plays that also includes a world premiere of Ike Holter's *I Hate it Here*, a look at a world on the brink of explosion, arriving in late 2020.

"Audio work throws the audience into the middle of the story, putting the focus on the language of the play and actors' craft. *Kings* is a perfect first foray for so many reasons—Sarah's dialogue is whip-smart, the actors are all Studio alums who know how to bring a lot to an intimate space, and Marti is the perfect match for the play's big stories about our political system and small stories of betrayal," said Studio Artistic Director **David Muse**.

Studio originally produced this "taut, smart, queasily of-the-moment" (*Vogue*) drama in 2018. The audio play reunites original *Kings* cast members **Kelly McCrann** and **Laura C. Harris** as two lobbyists with competing agendas and a tangled past. **Gina Daniels** and **Rick Foucheux** will play idealistic political

newcomer Representative Sydney Millsap and entrenched, shrewd Senator John McDowell, respectively. **Marti Lyons**, who helmed the 2018 production, will direct and **Mikhail Fiksel** will sound design.

Studio In Your Ears is generously underwritten by Board Chair **Amy Weinberg** and her husband **Norbert Hornstein**.

About *Kings*

Newly elected congresswoman Sydney Millsap arrives in DC armed with her ideals and sense of duty, and refuses to play by the rules of special interests—or her own party. Kate's a lobbyist who backs winners. The two collide in the audio adaptation of the lacerating comedy Studio produced just after the last midterms. With its snappy dialogue and shrewd look at where power really sits in our government, it's an audio play just in time for November.

About Marti Lyons

Marti Lyons was most recently directing the world premiere of *The Scarlet Letter* by Kate Hamill at South Coast Rep, which, unfortunately, never had a chance to open. Marti previously directed Studio Theatre's productions of *The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe and *Kings* by Sarah Burgess. She most recently directed *How to Defend Yourself* by Lilliana Padilla at Victory Gardens as part of a co-production with Actors Theatre of Louisville. Marti also directed *Cambodian Rock Band* by Lauren Yee (Victory Gardens, City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, Merrimack Repertory Theatre); *Witch* by Jen Silverman (Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles, Writers Theatre in Chicago); *The Niceties* by Eleanor Burgess (Writers Theatre); *Native Gardens* by Karen Zacarías (Victory Gardens); *Botticelli in the Fire* by Jordan Tannahill (Woolly Mammoth); *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Court Theatre); *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Montana Shakespeare in the Parks); *Short Shakes! Macbeth* and *Short Shakes! Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Wit* (The Hypocrites); *The City of Conversation* by Anthony Giardina (Northlight Theatre). She directed *Wondrous Strange* by Meg Miroshnik, Martyna Majok, Jen Silverman, and Jiehae Park (2016 Humana Festival) and *Title and Deed* by Will Eno (Lookingglass Theatre Company). Other projects include Laura Marks's *Bethany*, Marks's *Mine*, and Will Nedved's *Body and Blood* (The Gift Theatre); Catherine Treischmann's *Hot Georgia Sunday* and Theresa Rebeck's *Seminar* (Haven); *Prowess* by Ike Holter, *The Peacock* by Calamity West, and *The Last Duck* by Lucas Neff (Jackalope Theatre); *The Play About My Dad* by Boo Killebrew (Raven Theatre); *Give It All Back* by Calamity West, *Mai Dang Lao* by David Jacobi, *9 Circles* by Bill Cain, *Maria/Stuart* by Jason Grote, and co-directed *The Golden Dragon* (Sideshow Theatre Company). Marti's upcoming work includes *Sense and Sensibility* at American Players Theatre. Marti was the 2015 Maggio Directing Fellow at the Goodman Theatre. She is an ensemble member at The Gift Theatre, an Artistic Associate with Sideshow Theatre Company, and a proud member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

www.martilyons.com

About Sarah Burgess

Sarah Burgess is currently the showrunner of the upcoming season of *American Crime Story*, about the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. Her pilot, *Compliance*, starring Courtney B. Vance and Mary Louise Parker and directed by Sam Gold, was produced in 2018 through FX and Scott Rudin Productions. In theatre, Sarah's play *Dry Powder* won the 2016 Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award, was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, and was nominated for an Olivier Award in London. *Dry Powder* premiered at The Public Theater in a production directed by Thomas Kail, starring Claire Danes, John Krasinski, Hank Azaria, and Sanjit De Silva. Other plays include *Camdenside* (Ground Floor selection; Berkeley Rep; Kilroys list 2015) and *FAIL: Failures* (ANT Fest). She has written for AMC's *Lodge 49*, *The Tenant* (Woodshed Collective), and *Naked Radio*, Naked Angels' podcast series. Burgess has been a writer-in-residence at SPACE on Ryder Farm and the Cape Cod Theatre Project.

ABOUT THE CAST

Gina Daniels (Rep. Sydney Millsap) was last seen at Studio Theatre as Dr. Lorna James in *The Effect*. Gina has been in the Broadway companies of *Network* and *All the Way*. Her New York, international, and regional credits include *Judgment Day* at the Park Avenue Armory, *The White Snake* at Wuzhen Theatre Festival, *Roe* at Arena Stage and Berkeley Rep, *Angels in America: Parts 1 and 2* at St. Louis Repertory Theatre, as well as shows at Syracuse Stage, Portland Center Stage, Paper Mill Playhouse, TheaterWorks, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Delaware Theatre Company, Baltimore Center Stage, and Pittsburgh Public Theater. In 10 seasons as a company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Gina appeared in over 30 productions. Her television credits include *Manifest*, *Orange is the New Black*, and *High Maintenance*.

Over a long career, **Rick Foucheux** (Senator John McDowell) appeared at many of DC's theatres, including *The Apple Family Plays*, *Far East*, and *Take Me Out* at Studio. He played Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Olney Theatre Center, Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* at Arena Stage, and Lear in *King Lear* at WSC Avant Bard. He was featured in *Cooking with Elvis*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, and *Stupid Fucking Bird* as a member of the acting company at Woolly Mammoth. He is a Helen Hayes Award recipient and in 2017 received the Richard Bauer Lifetime Achievement Award from the Washington Area Performing Arts Video Archive (WAPAVA).

Laura C. Harris (Lauren) returns to Studio Theatre after appearances as Lauren in the stage version of *Kings*, Edward/Victoria in *Cloud 9*, Mandy in *Time Stands Still*, Gena in *Bachelorette*, and Lydia in *Red Speedo*. Other Washington, DC credits include *The Heiress* at Arena Stage; *Silent Sky* at Ford's Theatre; *Fairview* at Woolly Mammoth; *Curious Incident...*, *NSFW*, *Seminar*, *Amadeus*, *Young Robin Hood*, and *26 Miles* at Round House Theatre; *The Flick* and *Tender Napalm* at Signature Theatre; *Vicuña* at Mosaic Theater; *Awake and Sing!* at Olney Theatre Center; *Love and Information*, *Passion Play*, and *World Builders* at Forum Theatre; *Our Class* at Theater J; and *The Winter's Tale* and *The School for Scandal* at Folger Theatre. She is a graduate of Middlebury College.

Kelly McCrann (Kate) is returning to Studio Theatre after her debut in *Kings* in 2019. Her select theatre credits include *The Convent of Pleasure* at Cherry Lane Theatre; *Twelfth Night* at Classic Stage Company; *The Rover* at World Financial Center; *Look Back In* at Dixon Place; *After the Revolution* and *Pride and Prejudice* at Baltimore Center Stage; and *Richard II* at Allentown Shakespeare in the Park. Television and film credits include *Elementary* on CBS; *The Path* on Hulu; *Louie* on FX; *The Comedian* (Taylor Hackford); and *Accommodations* (Amy Miller Gross). She has also appeared in various commercials for Ikea, Toyota, and others. She attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and received her MFA from Columbia University, where she received the Andy Griffith Scholarship and the Shubert Presidential Award, respectively.

And featuring **Brian Quijada** (*Miscellaneous*), whose Off Broadway and regional theatre acting credits include The Kennedy Center, 1st Stage, The Public Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Realm, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Victory Gardens, and Actors Theatre of Louisville.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Mikhail Fiksel (Sound Designer) is a designer, composer, musician, and DJ, based in Chicago and Brooklyn. He is delighted to work with Studio Theatre, having previously designed and composed for their production of *The Wolves*. His other theatrical credits include productions with The Public Theater, Signature Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare, Victory Gardens, Writers Theatre, The Geffen, The Old Globe, Playwrights Horizons, The Civilians, Pigpen Theatre Co., La Jolla Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club, Center Theatre Group, Albany Park Theatre Project, and Third Rail Projects. Audio work includes multiple audio plays and podcasts with Make-Believe Association, where he is Head of Audio Production, as well as projects with

Audible, WBEZ, and All Classical Portland. He is a proud member of USA and the Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association.

Adrien-Alice Hansel (Dramaturg) is the Literary Director at Studio, where she has dramaturged the world premieres of *Queen of Basel*, *The Remains*, *No Sisters*, *I Wanna Fucking Tear You Apart*, *Animal*, *Red Speedo*, *Dirt*, *Lungs*, and *The History of Kisses* as well as productions of *Cry It Out*, *Translations*, *Curve of Departure*, *The Effect*, *Wig Out!*, *Straight White Men*, *Cloud 9*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Constellations*, *Jumpers for Goalposts*, *Bad Jews* (twice), *The Apple Family Plays*, *Invisible Man*, *Sucker Punch*, *The Golden Dragon*, and *The New Electric Ballroom*, among others. Prior to joining Studio, she spent eight seasons at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, where she headed the literary department and coordinated project scouting, selection, and development for the Humana Festival of New American Plays. She is the co-editor of eight anthologies of plays from Actors Theatre and editor of eight editions of plays through Studio. Adrien-Alice holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

Allie Roy (Stage Manager) has been stage managing at Studio since 2015 and feels extremely lucky to have been asked to take part in *Kings*, their first journey into the world of audio plays. You might recognize many of the in-person productions that Allie has stage managed for Studio over the years, which include: *If I Forget*, *Translations*, *Curve of Departure*, and *Straight White Men*. When Allie is not at Studio, you can find her stage managing at multiple theatres all over the DMV area: The Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, and Signature Theatre, to name a few. Allie is very eager to get back to producing live theater, but until then she hopes that this new version of *Kings* will help fulfill that desire for art. Please stay safe and healthy until we can all meet again in the theatre.

Nancy Krebs's (Dialect Consultant) credits with Studio Theatre include *Kings*, *The Children*, *Translations*, *Constellations* (Helen Hays Award winning production), *Animal* (world premiere), *The Habit of Art* (American premiere), *The Walworth Farce* and *The New Electric Ballroom* for the theatre's Enda Walsh Festival, and *Look Back in Anger*. She is the Resident Vocal/Dialect Coach with the Annapolis Shakespeare Company – the Classic Theatre of Maryland; representative productions include *Hamlet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Oliver!*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Blithe Spirit*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tempest*, *Alice and the Book of Wonderland*, *Richard III*, *Twelfth Night*, *Poe...and All the Others*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Three Sisters*, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Our Town*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Macbeth*. She has also worked with regional theatres including Theater J, Olney Theatre Center, Rep Stage, Everyman Theatre, Center Stage, and The Colonial Players. Nancy teaches privately and internationally, operating her own voice studio—The Voiceworks—and is an accomplished singer/songwriter/musician. She belongs to Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Actors' Equity Association, and the Voice and Speech Trainers Association.

Additional Production support provided by **Lauren Halvorsen** (Production Research, Original Dramaturg) and **Ben Truppin-Brown** (Audio Engineer).

STUDIO THEATRE

Studio Theatre is Washington's premier venue for contemporary theatre, "where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights" (*Variety*). One of the most respected midsized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio's work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 70 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

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