

**For immediate release**

**CECILY STRONG STARRING IN JANE WAGNER'S  
"THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE"  
A CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE SHED  
OPENS AT CENTER THEATRE GROUP / MARK TAPER FORUM**

**Jane Wagner's** one-woman show **"The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe"** that features **"Saturday Night Live"** star **Cecily Strong** opens tonight at Center Theatre Group / Mark Taper Forum. Directed by **Leigh Silverman**, **"The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe"** runs through October 23, 2022. Produced in association with Lorne Michaels and Bill Damaschke, **"The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe"** is presented in association with The Shed.

Interweaving the seemingly disparate lives of a punk-rock rebel, a socialite, a feminist, and a deceptively insightful observer, among many others, the Drama Desk-winning Unique Theatrical Experience **"The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe"** earned Lily Tomlin a Tony Award® for Best Actress in a Play. Now Emmy®-nominated actress Cecily Strong slides through the tour-de-force roles created by the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning writer Jane Wagner who is reimagining the legendary one-person play for 2022. This new production was originally produced by The Shed in New York, NY in 2021.

"I have long been fascinated by the mystical implications of quantum theory," said Wagner. "In truth, my dream was to get the audience to experience the universality of the deep interconnectedness of all living things – with Trudy as the guide... I wanted us to flash on just that thought – that we're all connected." The creative team includes **Christine Jones** and **Mary Hamrick** (scenic co-design), **Anita Yavich** (costume design), **Lap Chi Chu** (lighting design), **Jeff Gardner** (sound design), **Joseph Whitmeyer** (wig design), and **Steve Cuiffo** (illusion design) with composition by **Andrea "Slim" Allmond**. The production stage managers include **Michelle Blair**, **Lora K. Powell**, and **Shawna Voragen**.

**Jane Wagner** (*Playwright*) has won numerous awards, including two Peabodys, four Emmys and a Writer's Guild Award for her work in television as well as the seldom-given New York Drama Critics' Circle Special Award for her Broadway success, **"The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe."** Wagner made her writing debut with the acclaimed CBS teleplay entitled **"J.T."** (1969) and her book of the same title. In 1971, Wagner began working with Lily Tomlin on an Edith Ann album, **"Edith Ann: And That's the Truth"** (1972). Wagner's later credits include two more Grammy-nominated albums, **"Modern Scream"** (1975) and **"On Stage"** (1978), which she also produced, eight Lily Tomlin television specials (1973 – 82), three Edith Ann animated specials (1994 – 96), and Edith Ann's book, **"My Life, So Far"** (1994). In

1977, Wagner wrote and directed “Appearing Nitely” for Broadway and also wrote the screenplay for “The Incredible Shrinking Woman.” In 1985, Wagner brought “The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe” to Broadway where it became an acclaimed play of the Broadway season. The hardcover edition of “The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe” became the first play in 20 years to appear on The New York Times Best-Seller list. In 2019, Lincoln Center honored Wagner and Tomlin with a retrospective of their careers, “Two Free Women.” In 2020, Wagner was honored with the prestigious Lambda Literary Visionary Award for her innovative work.

**Cecily Strong** (*Performer*) is best known for her work as a cast member on “Saturday Night Live,” where she recently completed her 10th season. Strong received back-to-back Emmy nominations in 2020 and 2021 for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series for her work on “SNL.” Strong also stars in and produces the hit musical series, “Schmigadoon!,” which will return for its second season on Apple TV+. Her memoir, “This Will All Be Over Soon,” was released in the summer of 2021. In Chicago, Strong improvised regularly at the iO Theater and served as an understudy for the Second City Main Stage and E.T.C. shows. She performed as a member of the Second City national touring company and has also appeared at the Chicago SketchFest, Chicago Just for Laughs, the New York Sketch Fest and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Strong has appeared in the films “The Female Brain” and Paul Feig’s reboot of “Ghostbusters,” as well as Melissa McCarthy’s “The Boss,” “The Bronze” and “The Meddler.” Additionally, Strong headlined the 2015 White House Correspondents’ Dinner. Strong has a BFA in theatre from the California Institute of the Arts.

**Leigh Silverman’s** (*Director*) Broadway credits include “Grand Horizons” (2ST; Williamstown Theatre Festival), “The Lifespan of a Fact” (Studio 54), “Violet” (Roundabout; Tony nomination), “Chinglish” (Goodman Theatre; Longacre) and “Well” (Public Theater; ACT; Longacre). Recent Off-Broadway credits include “Suffs” and “Soft Power” (Public Theater; also the Ahmanson Theatre and Curran); Drama Desk nomination, “Tumacho” (Clubbed Thumb), “Hurricane Diane” (New York Theatre Workshop; Two River Theater), “Harry Clarke” (Vineyard Theatre/Audible, Minetta Lane; Lortel nomination), “Wild Goose Dreams” (Public Theater; La Jolla Playhouse), “Sweet Charity” (New Group), “On The Exhale” (Roundabout), “The Outer Space” (Public Theater) and “Suffs” (Public Theater). Encores include “Bring Me to Light,” “Violet,” “The Wild Party” and “Really Rosie.” In addition to “Soft Power” at the Ahmanson, Silverman directed “The Wake” and “Of Equal Measure” at the Kirk Douglas Theatre and “Yellow Face” at the Taper. Silverman received 2011 and 2019 Obie Awards for Sustained Excellence.

**The Shed** is a new cultural institution of and for the 21st century. It produces and welcomes innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. In its highly adaptable building on Manhattan’s west side, The Shed brings together established and emerging artists to create new work in fields ranging from pop to classical music, painting to digital media, theatre to literature, and sculpture to dance. The Shed seeks opportunities to collaborate with cultural peers and community organizations, work with like-minded partners, and provide unique spaces for private events. As an independent nonprofit that values invention, equity and generosity, The Shed is committed to advancing art forms, addressing the

urgent issues of our time, and making its work impactful, sustainable and relevant to the local community, the cultural sector, New York City and beyond.

**Center Theatre Group**, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, and in collaboration with the five Associate Artistic Directors, Luis Alfaro, Lindsay Allbaugh, Tyrone Davis, Neel Keller, Kelley Kirkpatrick, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1,600 to 2,100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics, and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

For the time being, we will continue to require masks at of our venues. This is consistent with the commitments we have made with our artists, staff, and audiences to ensure their safety. While full vaccination and booster shots are no longer required, they are strongly recommended.

We will continue working closely with The Music Center and L.A. County officials to ensure they are following all applicable health and safety protocols. For more details, please visit [CenterTheatreGroup.org/Safety](https://CenterTheatreGroup.org/Safety).

Tickets for “The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe” are currently on sale and start at \$35. They are available through CenterTheatreGroup.org, Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Offices (at the Ahmanson Theatre) at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012. Performances run Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

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September 28, 2022