

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Anastasia St. Hilaire, Arena Stage
asthilaire@arenastage.org

Amy Killion, Bucklesweet
amy@bucklesweet.com
703-559-9714

Ring in the Holidays at Arena Stage with

STEP AFRIKA!'S MAGICAL MUSICAL HOLIDAY STEP SHOW

(Washington, D.C.) Tickets are now on sale for **Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show**, presented by **Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater** on its iconic in-the-round **Fichandler Stage**. The festive, family-friendly “step-travaganza” will run **December 9 – 18, 2022**, and press night will be held on **Friday, December 9 at 8 pm**. Please visit arenastage.org/stepshow for more information and to purchase tickets.

As the world's first holiday show incorporating the African American tradition of stepping – characters include fabulous furry friends from the Arctic Kingdom, “Popper the Penguin” and “Polo the Polar Bear,” and let's not forget “DJ Nutcracker” – *Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* is a unique, music-filled holiday event for the entire family where – spoiler alert – kids might even get to dance on Arena's fabulous Fichandler Stage!

“We love presenting Step Afrika!'s groundbreaking work,” said Arena Stage Artistic Director, **Molly Smith**. “Their distinctive and explosive performances stay with audiences long after the music has died down, and their innovative and absolutely magical holiday show is the perfect way for theater- and dance-loving families to bring in the holidays. I can't wait!”

Founded in 1994 by **C. Brian Williams**, Step Afrika! is the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Step Afrika! blends percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities; traditional African dances; and an array of contemporary dance and art forms into a cohesive, compelling artistic experience. Performances are much more than dance shows; they integrate songs, storytelling, humor, and audience participation. The blend of technique, agility, and pure energy makes each performance unique and leaves the audience with their hearts pounding.

“There is no other holiday performance like Step Afrika!'s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show*. This production was created with the entire family in mind and has become a longstanding tradition for

many in the DMV,” said C. Brian Williams. “After months of touring all over the world from Bolivia to Bangor, Maine, we are thrilled to be home and celebrate the holidays in Washington, D.C.”

Under Mr. Williams’ leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America’s leading cultural exports. Step Afrika! has toured more than 60 countries across the globe, and the company now ranks as one of the top 10 African American dance companies in the United States. Mr. Williams was recently honored as a 2022 National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellow. He is featured in the documentary, “Roots of American Culture,” a celebration of the artistry of all the 2022 National Heritage Fellows, which is scheduled for release November 17.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Step Afrika!’s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show*

On the Fichandler Stage

December 9 – 18, 2022

ABOUT: As the world’s first holiday show highlighting the African American tradition of stepping, Step Afrika!’s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* is a feast for the eyes and ears. Fabulous and furry friends from the Arctic Kingdom — Popper the Penguin and Polo the Polar Bear — along with DJ Nutcracker ensure a fun and exciting experience for the entire family!

Support for Step Afrika!’s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* is provided by Virginia McGehee Friend.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Tickets for Step Afrika!’s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* are \$56-\$95 plus applicable fees. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change. For information on savings programs, such as “pay-your-age” tickets, student discounts, Family Fun Packs, Southwest Nights, and heroes’ discounts, please visit arenastage.org/savings-programs.

Tickets may be purchased online at arenastage.org, by phone at 202-488-3300 or in person at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, DC, Tuesday–Sunday, 12–8 p.m.

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

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Friday, December 9, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, December 10, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 11, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Tuesday, December 13, at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, December 15, at 8 p.m.
Friday, December 16, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, December 17, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 18, at 4 p.m.

Full Calendar: arenastage.org/tickets/calendar

SAFETY: Arena Stage requires patrons, staff, and volunteers to wear facial masks while inside a performance space at the Mead Center. We recommend but do not require that patrons wear facial

masks in our public, non-theater spaces. 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 and the Public Parking Garage at 1101 Fourth Street, SW, one block from the Mead Center for American Theater, and ranges from \$18-27. Please visit arenastage.org/transportation for information on transportation to and parking around the Mead Center and call 202-488-3300 to purchase parking in advance.

For complete 2022/23 Season details, visit arenastage.org/season.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer 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 and impacting the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its eighth decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

Step Afrika! Founded in 1994 by C. Brian Williams, Step Afrika! is the world's first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping—a polyrhythmic, percussive dance form that uses the body as an instrument. Step Afrika! promotes stepping as a contemporary dance genre through critically acclaimed performances and arts education programs. Creatively engaging audiences in this nascent art form, the Company creates new full-length productions that expand on stepping's unique American history.

With 14 full-time dancers and administrative team of 6, Step Afrika! is one of the top 10 U.S. African American dance companies. The Company reaches thousands each year through a 50-city tour of American colleges and theaters and performs globally as an official U.S. Cultural Ambassador. New work, such as *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence and Drumfolk*, tour to major U.S. cities. Step Afrika! is featured at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture with the world's first interactive stepping exhibit. stepafrika.org

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