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CONTACT:
Arena Stage

Anastasia St. Hilaire, asthilaire@arenastage.org
Print Shop PR

Nicole Capatasto, nicole@printshoppr.com
ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES POWERHOUSE PRINCIPAL LINEUP FOR

CHEZ JOEY

STARRING
AWA SAL SECKA, SAMANTHA MASSELL, ANGELA HALL, AND KEVIN CAHOON
Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Lyrics by LORENZ HART
New Book by RICHARD LaGRAVENESE
Inspired by John O'Hara's novel, based on the 'Pal Joey' stories published in *The New Yorker*
Choreographed by SAVION GLOVER
Co-Directed by TONY GOLDWYN and SAVION GLOVER

(Washington, DC) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater today announced the principal cast for its Winter 2026 production of **Chez Joey**. Joining previously announced Tony Award winner **Myles Frost** (*MJ the Musical*) in the role of Joey Evans, *Chez Joey* will also star **Awa Sal Secka** (*The Public Theater's Goddess*) as Linda English, **Samantha Massell** (*Fiddler on the Roof*) as Vera Simpson, **Angela Hall** (*Black and Blue*) as Lucille Wallace, and Tony nominee **Kevin Cahoon** (*Shucked*) as Melvin Snyder.

The year is 1940-something, and on the South Side of Chicago, the night scene is sizzling. Enter Joey Evans (**Frost**): an irresistible, slick-talking, velvet-voiced nightclub performer with dreams bigger than the bandstand. But in a city where the right connections mean everything, he finds himself caught between Linda (**Secka**), the bright-eyed chorus girl, and Vera (**Massell**), the wealthy baroness who can bankroll his big break—for a price. With no-nonsense club owner Lucille (**Hall**) and vaudeville-performer-turned-Chicago-social-insider Melvin (**Cahoon**) watching his every move, Joey's got one choice to make: play it straight or risk it all for the spotlight.

Boasting a new book by Oscar-nominated screenwriter **Richard LaGravenese** (*The Fisher King*), alongside fresh jazz arrangements of the legendary catalog of Broadway legends **Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart**, this legendary tale of ambition, seduction, and survival is hotter than ever. This new production, choreographed by Tony Award winner **Savion Glover** (*Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*) and co-directed by actor, director, and producer **Tony Goldwyn** (*ABC's Scandal*) and **Glover**, will run **January 30 – March 15, 2026**, in Arena's **Kreeger Theater**. Press Night will be held on Friday, February 13. For information and tickets, visit arenastage.org/joey.

Including beloved *Pal Joey* standards like “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered,” “What is a Man?,” and “I Could Write a Book,” the score for *Chez Joey* expands to incorporate favorites from the 1957 film adaptation, such as “I Didn’t Know What Time It Was” and “The Lady Is a Tramp.” Rodgers and Hart fans can also expect classics like “My Funny Valentine,” “This Can’t Be Love,” and “I Wish I Were in Love Again,” among others.

The full cast and creative team will be announced in January 2026.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Awa Sal Secka (*Linda English*) is elated to be back at Arena! Lastly, you may have seen her at Arena as Bea in *Jaja’s African Hair Braiding*. Her Off-Broadway and touring credits include Zawadi in *Goddess* at The Public and Bea on the National Tour of *Jaja’s African Hair Braiding*, respectively. Local credits include Sarah in *Ragtime* at Signature, Joanne in *Rent* at the Kennedy Center, Mayme in *Intimate Apparel* at Theater J, The Baker’s Wife in *Into the Woods* at Ford’s, and Ama in *School Girls* and Dottie in *Caroline, or Change* at Round House Theatre. Awa is a proud co-writer of the 2023 MacArthur Award-winning play *The Joy that Carries You*. She is immeasurably grateful to God, the *Chez Joey* team/cast, for her fiancé, Ryan, all her friends, family, and supporters, her agents at Nicolosi & Co., and for her mother, Fatou. Instagram: [@kujichagulia_](https://www.instagram.com/kujichagulia_)

Samantha Massell (*Vera Simpson*) is an actress, singer, writer, and filmmaker. She was last seen on Broadway as Hodel in the acclaimed revival of *Fiddler on the Roof* and made her Broadway debut at age 12 in Baz Luhrmann’s production of Puccini’s *La Bohème*. She has originated starring roles in many world-premiere musicals, including Rosalind Franklin in *Double Helix* (Bay Street), Rebecca in the revival of *Rags* (Goodspeed Opera, Connecticut Critics Circle Award for Best Actress), Karla in *The Flamingo Kid* (Hartford Stage), and Florika in Disney’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (La Jolla Playhouse & Paper Mill Playhouse). On the small screen, Samantha is currently recurring on *Doc*, and has also recurred on *Dynasty*, *Mr. Mercedes*, and *Chicago Fire*, and guest-starred on *NCIS: New Orleans*, *The Good Fight*, and *Elementary*. BFA, University of Michigan, Phi Beta Kappa. For more: [@smaseellings](https://www.instagram.com/smaseellings), www.samanthamassell.com

Angela Hall (*Lucille Wallace*) illuminated the Broadway stage as a featured performer in the Tony Award-winning musical *Black and Blue*, performing alongside jazz and tap legends such as Ruth Brown, Jimmy Slyde, and Bunny Briggs. She has performed in national touring companies of *Big River* and *The Tap Dance Kid*. Additional show credits include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Dancin’ in the Street*, and *For Colored Girls...* Angela’s film and television credits include *Modern Love*, *Mo’ Better Blues*, *Mad Love*, *Mr. Wonderful*, and Bob Altman’s *The Player*. She holds a BFA in Musical Theater (Boston Conservatory), MS in Teaching (Fordham), and MS in Educational Administration (Fordham). She is thankful for her supportive family and to God for showers of bountiful blessings! Instagram: [i_am_angelahall](https://www.instagram.com/i_am_angelahall)

Kevin Cahoon (*Melvin Snyder*) received Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations for his role as Peanut in *Shucked* on Broadway. Other Broadway includes the original companies of *The Lion King*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, as well as *The Who’s Tommy* and *The Rocky Horror Show*. Off Broadway, Kevin was also part of the original companies of *Hedwig and The Angry Inch*, *The Wild Party*, and *The Shaggs*, as well as the revivals of *How I Learned to Drive* and *The Foreigner*, for which he received a Lortel nomination. On TV, Kevin created roles on *Monarch*, *GLOW*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Nurse Jackie*, and others. Films by Robert Zemeckis, Woody Allen, Madonna, and regional theaters such as The Guthrie, Williamstown, The Old Globe, among others.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

CHEZ JOEY

Music by Richard Rodgers

Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

New Book by Richard LaGravenese

Inspired by John O'Hara's novel, based on the 'Pal Joey' stories published in *The New Yorker*

Choreographed by Savion Glover

Co-Directed by Tony Goldwyn and Savion Glover

In the Kreeger Theater | January 30 – March 15, 2026

ABOUT: The year is 1940-something, and Chicago's night scene is sizzling. Enter Joey Evans. A slick-talking, velvet-voiced songster with dreams bigger than the bandstand. But in a city where the right connections mean everything, he is caught between a bright-eyed chorus girl and a wealthy widow who can bankroll his big break—for a price. As the lights dim and the music swells, Joey's got a choice to make: play it straight or risk it all for the spotlight. This classic Rodgers and Hart score, including "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," "What Is a Man?," and "I Could Write a Book," now includes "This Can't Be Love" and "The Lady Is a Tramp," among others. Co-directed by actor, director, and producer Tony Goldwyn and Tony Award-winning choreographer Savion Glover, the stakes are high, the music is hot, and the game of romance and ambition never sounded so good.

CAST

Joey Evans: Myles Frost*

Linda English: Awa Sal Secka*

Vera Simpson: Samantha Massell*

Lucille Wallace: Angela Hall*

Melvin Snyder: Kevin Cahoon*

*Members of Actors' Equity Association

Support for *Chez Joey* is provided by **David and Patricia Fisher; Daniel Korengold, Martha Dippell, and Ourisman Automotive of Virginia;** and **Catherine and Chris Guttman-McCabe.** Special thanks to **Boston Consulting Group.**

Arena Stage offers this production in memory of long-time usher and patron, **Anne Buzalski**, in grateful recognition of her very generous bequest.

Tickets are available at arenastage.org. Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300, Tuesday–Sunday, 12–8PM, or in person at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, DC, Tuesday–Sunday, two hours before the show begins on performance days.

Tickets start at \$83. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change. Arena Stage's many savings programs include "pay your age" tickets for those aged 35 and under; military, first responder, and educator discounts; student discounts; and "Southwest Nights" for those living and working in the District's Southwest neighborhood. To learn more, visit arenastage.org/savings-programs.

Groups of 10+ may purchase tickets at arenastage.org/groups or by phone at 202-488-4380.

For complete Arena Stage 2025/26 Season details, visit arenastage.org/75.

The first racially integrated theater in our nation's capital and a pioneer of the regional theater movement, Arena Stage was founded in 1950 in Washington, DC. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Hana S. Sharif and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, 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 groundbreaking 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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