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ARENA STAGE
ANNOUNCES FIRST FIVE PRODUCTIONS OF
ITS 2026/27 SEASON

*THE FALL AND WINTER LINE-UP INCLUDES A WORLD-PREMIERE MUSICAL,
A WORLD-PREMIERE DANCE EVENT, A TONY-NOMINATED TOUR-DE-FORCE DRAMA,
A PULITZER PRIZE AND TONY AWARD-WINNING BLOCKBUSTER PLAY,
AND THE RETURN OF DC'S FAVORITE HOLIDAY TRADITION*

THE 76th SEASON KICKS OFF WITH:

The World Premiere of

THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

By Step Afrika!

Directed by Jakari Sherman

with Conrad R. Kelly II and Vusi Mdoyi

Fichandler Stage

September 10 – November 1, 2026

The World Premiere of

NIKOLA

A NEW MUSICAL

Book and Lyrics by Nikko Benson and Benjamin Halstead

Music by Nikko Benson

Choreography by Katie Spelman

Directed by Marshall Paillet

Kreeger Theater

October 2 – November 29, 2026

Tony Award Nominee

PRIMA FACIE

By Suzie Miller

Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle

November 13, 2026 – January 17, 2027

The Highly Anticipated Return of DC's Favorite Holiday Tradition

STEP AFRIKA!'S

MAGICAL MUSICAL HOLIDAY STEP SHOW

Fichandler Stage

December 4 – 23, 2026

Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award Winner

PURPOSE

By Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

Fichandler Stage

February 5 – March 28, 2027

SEASON TICKET PACKAGES NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

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(Washington, DC) Arena Stage Artistic Director **Hana S. Sharif** and Executive Producer **Edgar Dobie** today announced the first five productions of the company's 76th season, carrying forward the theater's seven-decade-long commitment to delivering powerful, urgent, and entertaining theater to the nation's capital.

"Arena Stage has always been a home for artists and audiences who dare to imagine beyond the present moment," shared **Sharif**. "As we launch our 76th Season, we are proud to present an exciting collection of productions that capture the full spectrum of the American spirit—from timeless stories to urgent new voices. These are stories of movement, music, memory, and transformation; of spectacle and intimacy, complexity and beauty. Together, they celebrate the extraordinary inspiration, innovation, and humanity of our collective journey."

The 2026/27 Season will kick off this September with the ground-shaking world premiere of ***The Fruits of Our Labor*** from **Step Afrika!**. The highly anticipated next installment of a multi-year collaboration between the award-winning theater and trailblazing dance company, ***The Fruits of Our Labor*** reflects on the endurance, labor, and beliefs that continue to shape the American story. Directed by **Jakari Sherman** with **Conrad R. Kelly II** and **Vusi Mdoyi**, this bold new production blends stepping, percussion, poetry, and song into a rhythmic composition of percussion and patriotism, in celebration of America's 250th anniversary.

In October, autumn winds will usher in a high-voltage new musical from **Nikko Benson** and **Benjamin Halstead** about Nikola Tesla and his battle for power, progress, and the price of

genius. When Nikola Tesla finds himself up against one of the most powerful figures of his time —Thomas Edison—he pushes himself, his followers, and the limits of electric power to dangerous extremes to connect the world and reach his vision of a new tomorrow. Directed by **Marshall Paillet**, with music supervision by **Dominic Fallacaro**, and choreography by **Katie Spelman**, *NIKOLA – A New Musical* is an electrifying story of invention, innovation, and the cost of seeing the world differently.

Prima Facie, a Tony-nominated legal drama by **Suzie Miller** about the gripping examination of the space between the law and justice follows in November, in its first-ever U.S. regional staging. A tenacious defense attorney is at the height of her career defending men accused of sexual assault. When an unthinkable event forces her from one side of the courtroom to the other, what follows is a reckoning with the law's patriarchal power and the gap between the burden of proof and truth. *Prima Facie* is an intimate, one-woman tour de force about what happens when someone who once believed in the system realizes it no longer protects her.

In December, Step Afrika! returns with DC's favorite holiday pastime! An annually sold-out step-tastic tradition, *Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* is back to delight families for a fifth year. Join DJ Nutcracker and his Arctic friends for this electrifying journey of high-energy stepping, festive music, and non-stop holiday cheer.

The winter will conclude with Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's *Purpose*, a wickedly smart, deeply-felt, and ultimately devastating Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning family drama about faith, inheritance, and long-held secrets. Meet the Jaspers—a Black political dynasty of civil rights leaders, pastors, and congressmen who have long anchored Black American life. But beneath the surface, cracks and secrets simmer. When the youngest son, Naz, returns home with an unexpected guest, long-buried resentment boils over, fracturing the family's foundation.

Three additional productions taking place in spring and summer of 2027, to close out the 2026/27 Season, will be announced this fall.

Season packages are now available for purchase at arenastage.org/subscribe.

2026/27 SEASON DETAILS

THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

By Step Afrika!

Directed by Jakari Sherman

with Conrad R. Kelly II and Vusi Mdoyi

September 10 – November 1, 2026

In the Fichandler Stage

In commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, Step Afrika! premieres *The Fruits of Our Labor*—a powerful new production exploring rhythm, resilience, and the unfinished story of the American experience.

Blending stepping, percussion, and striking visual imagery, this visceral new piece examines what it means to believe in a nation still in the making. Created in collaboration with artists

Jakari Sherman, Conrad R. Kelly II, and Vusi Mdoyi, the explosive movement and a bold palette of red, white, and blue, ask the nation: What have we inherited and what are we still fighting to become?

NIKOLA – A NEW MUSICAL

Book and Lyrics by Nikko Benson and Benjamin Halstead

Music by Nikko Benson

Choreography by Katie Spelman

Directed by Marshall Paillet

October 2 – November 29, 2026

In the Kreeger Theater

Nikola – A New Musical charts the rise of famed inventor Nikola Tesla from unknown engineer to eccentric genius to “mad scientist.” As his celebrity rises and the war of the currents with Thomas Edison heats up, Nikola pushes himself, his followers, and the limits of electric power to dangerous extremes to connect the world and reach his vision of a new tomorrow.

Nikola features book and lyrics by Nikko Benson and Benjamin Halstead, music by Nikko Benson, music supervision by Dominic Fallacaro (& *Juliet*), choreography by Katie Spelman (*The Notebook*), and direction by Marshall Paillet (*Private Jones*). Meet the visionary. See the visionary electric musical.

PRIMA FACIE

By Suzie Miller

November 13, 2026 – January 17, 2027

In the Arlene and Robert Kogod Cradle

Tessa is a brilliant criminal defense attorney who has fought her way to the top of her field, defending men accused of sexual assault. She knows how to win, and she trusts the system that made her success possible. But when the unthinkable happens to her, she finds herself sitting where her clients' accusers once sat.

What follows is a reckoning with the law's patriarchal power and the gap between the burden of proof and truth. *Prima Facie* by Suzie Miller is an electrifying, award-winning one-woman show that doesn't just ask what justice means. It demands we do something about it.

STEP AFRIKA!'S MAGICAL MUSICAL HOLIDAY STEP SHOW

December 4 – 23, 2026

In the Fichandler Stage

Step into the holiday spirit with the joyful return of *Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show*, where the rich tradition of African American stepping blends with the magic of the season. Enjoy laughter, songs, and dance with the award-winning Step Afrika! performers. Then join DJ Nutcracker and his Arctic friends onstage to amplify the festive atmosphere. This vibrant, fun-filled show promises a memorable adventure for the entire family, captivating your heart and senses.

PURPOSE

By Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
February 5 – March 28, 2027
In the Fichandler Stage

Meet the Jaspers—a Black political dynasty of civil rights leaders, pastors, and congressmen who have long anchored Black American life. But beneath the surface, cracks and secrets simmer. When the youngest son, Naz, returns home with an unexpected guest, long-buried resentment boils over, fracturing the family's foundation.

Wickedly smart, outrageously funny, and ultimately devastating, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning *Purpose* is a provocative, deeply felt exploration of legacy, belonging, and the cost of believing in something bigger than yourself.

Subscription packages are now on sale and may be purchased by visiting arenastage.org/subscribe. Packages may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300, Tuesday through Sunday, from 12PM until 6PM, or in person at the Arena Stage Sales Office, at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, Tuesday through Sunday, 2 hours before a performance.

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 ground-breaking 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.
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