

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CONTACT:

**Arena Stage**Anastasia St. Hilaire, [asthilaire@arenastage.org](mailto:asthilaire@arenastage.org)

## Print Shop PR

Nicole Capatasto, [nicole@printshoppr.com](mailto:nicole@printshoppr.com)

THE DEBATE THAT SHOOK THE NATION.

ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR GREAT AMERICAN COURTROOM  
CLASSIC***INHERIT THE WIND***

By JEROME LAWRENCE and ROBERT E. LEE

Directed by RYAN GUZZO PURCELL

Produced in Association with The Feast

Washington, DC — Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, in association with Seattle-based The Feast, today announced the cast and creative team for *Inherit the Wind*. Rooted in the real-life Scopes “Monkey” Trial, this electrifying courtroom drama by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee chronicles a legal battle over science, religion, and the right to think freely, as the small-town case is thrust into the national spotlight. Directed by The Feast’s Artistic Director Ryan Guzzo Purcell, *Inherit the Wind* will run **February 27 – April 5, 2026**, returning to the **Fichandler Stage** five decades after Arena’s original landmark production. Press night will be held on Thursday, March 5. For tickets and information, visit [arenastage.org/inherit](http://arenastage.org/inherit).

“For decades, *Inherit the Wind* has reminded us that the fight for intellectual freedom is far from abstract, but personal, political, and ongoing,” shared Arena Stage Artistic Director **Hana S. Sharif**. “In a city where ideas shape policy and belief shapes power, *Inherit the Wind* encourages us to think and to consider at what cost we are willing to defend the right to think at all.”

Taking the stand—and the stage—the cast of *Inherit the Wind* boasts many Arena alumni, including **Alex De Bard** (Arena’s *A Wrinkle in Time*), **Billy Eugene Jones** (Arena’s *Stick Fly*), **Rebecca Madeira** (Arena’s *A Wrinkle in Time*), **Ethan Miller** (Arena’s *Watch on the Rhine*), **Natalya Lynette Rathnam** (Arena’s *The Age of Innocence*), **Todd Scofield** (Arena’s *Holiday*), **Holly Twyford** (Arena’s *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*), and **James Whalen** (Arena’s *The Heiress*). The company also features **Jordan Friend** (Round House Theatre’s *A Hanukkah Carol*), **Alyssa Keegan** (Folger Theatre’s *Twelfth Night*), **Alina Collins Maldonado** (Folger Theatre’s *Twelfth Night*), **Dakin Matthews** (*Gilmore Girls*, Broadway’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*), **Noah Plomgren** (Broadway’s *Dead Outlaw*), and **Tristan Turner** (South Coast Rep’s *A Raisin in the Sun*), all making their Arena debut.

This American classic pits two towering legal minds—Matthew Harrison Brady and Henry Drummond, portrayed by **Matthews** and **Jones**, respectively—against each other in a trial that transcends its time. A searing, deeply human portrait of a country still wrestling with the cost of progress, *Inherit the Wind* puts the nation’s never-ending war over faith, truth, and the freedom of thought on the front line.

"[Arena Stage's Founding Director] Zelda Fichandler always challenged artists and institutions to live up to their values and stand up for the truth," said **Purcell**. "*Inherit the Wind* is a play that challenges us to examine how we do that in the face of repression and threat. To be doing this play at Arena Stage is an awesome responsibility and a genuine thrill. I can't wait to share it with DC audiences."

**Purcell** leads a jury of extraordinary creatives that includes set designer **Tanya Orellana** (Berkeley Rep's *Mother Road*), costume designer **An-lin Dauber** (American Repertory Theater's *The Odyssey*), lighting designer **Xavier Pierce** (Broadway's *Clybourne Park*), and sound design and original music by **Paul James Prendergast** (Broadway's *The Great Society*). New York Casting is by **tbd casting co./Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA** and DC Casting is by **Raiyon Hunter, CSA**. The stage manager for this production is **Christi B. Spann** and the assistant stage manager is **Stefania Giron Zuluaga**.

Programmed by **Sharif** as part of Arena Stage's 75th Anniversary Season, this production of *Inherit the Wind* speaks to the bold and brave work Arena has produced in the nation's capital for over seven decades. Arena was proudly the first American theater selected by the State Department to tour the Soviet Union during the Cold War. As part of the 1973 cultural exchange agreement between the two countries, Arena presented Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, directed by Alan Schneider, in repertory with *Inherit the Wind*, directed by Fichandler.

#### **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

**Alex De Bard** (*Understudy Rachel*) DC Credits include: *A Wrinkle in Time* at Arena Stage; *Hair, Private Jones, Passing Strange, Into the Woods, Rent, Gun & Powder* at Signature Theatre; *Tick, Tick... BOOM!* (Helen Hayes Nominated- Outstanding Supporting Performer) at Monumental Theatre Company; *Hello Dolly, Frozen, Kinky Boots, A.D. 16* at Olney Theatre Center; *Little Women, First Date* at NextStop Theatre Company; *Amazing Grace* at The Museum of the Bible; *The Velveteen Rabbit, Elephant & Piggie, Fancy Nancy, Blueberries for Sal* at Adventure Theatre. REGIONAL: *I And You* at McCarter Theatre; *Private Jones* at Goodspeed Musicals. EDUCATION: CUA, BM. UPCOMING: *I And You* at Olney Theatre Center. IG: [@alexbardmusic](https://www.instagram.com/alexbardmusic) / [@alex\\_debard](https://www.instagram.com/alex_debard)

**Jordan Friend** (*Ensemble*) is a New York-based actor, singer-songwriter, and playwright. Arena Stage debut! DC area: *A Hanukkah Carol* (Round House Theatre, world premiere), *A Delicate Ship* (4615 Theatre), *Disgraced* (NextStop Theatre). Regional: *Rock of Ages* (Sharon Playhouse, Connecticut Critics Circle Award), *The Winter's Tale* and *Sense & Sensibility* (American Shakespeare Center), *Mystic Pizza* (La Mirada/West Coast Tour), *Company* (The Spot). Jordan is currently developing *Again & Again & Again*, an original solo rock musical about OCD (first conceived and performed during lockdown as a virtual tour). His music can be streamed on all major platforms; his debut EP, *The Spinning Season*, releases this spring. Cabaret/Performance Fellowship, Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center. BFA, Ithaca College. Instagram: [@jordanfriend](https://www.instagram.com/jordanfriend). [www.yourfriendjordan.com](http://www.yourfriendjordan.com). To Mom, Dad, Yale, Peggy, and Gabrielle, with love.

**Billy Eugene Jones** (*Drummond*) previously appeared in the Arena Stage's production of *Stick Fly*. Broadway credits: *Our Town, Purlie Victorious* (Outer Critics Circle Nomination), *Fat Ham, A Soldier's Play, The Book of Mormon, A Raisin in the Sun, The Trip to Bountiful, The Big Knife, The Mountaintop, Passing Strange, Radio Golf* and *Gem of the Ocean*. Off-Broadway credits include *Fat Ham* (Public Theater/[Obie Award]), *On Sugarland* (NYTW/ [Obie Award, Audelco Award for best actor, Drama Desk Nomination for best actor]), *Where the Mountain Meets the Sea* (Manhattan Theater Club), *Much Ado About Nothing* (NYSF), *Pitbulls* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre), *The Jammer* (Atlantic Theatre Company), *In the Footprint* (The Civilians), *Waiting for Godot* and *Three Sisters* (Classical Theatre of Harlem). Billy is a graduate of Yale School of Drama.

**Alyssa Keegan** (E.K. Hornbeck) Actor, mental health coach, dancer and visual artist. Creator/owner of Empowered Performer Project; Somatic Education for Performing artists. Their theatre credits include *Twelfth Night* and *Richard III* at Folger Theater, Scenarios and Contractions at Studio Theater; *Come From Away* at Ford's Theatre; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Helen Hayes Award, Best Actress), *How I Learned to Drive*, and *Becky Shaw* at Round House Theater; *Gloria, Botticelli in the Fire*, and *Shipwreck* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; *Vanity Fair* at Shakespeare Theatre Company; *Digging Up Dessa* at The Kennedy Center; and working with the Labor Heritage Foundation in honor of laborers during the pandemic. TV credits include *Law & Order: SVU*, *New Amsterdam* (NBC), and *Bull* (CBS). They are the voice of Reagan Somerset in K.F Breene's bestselling book series *Demon Days*, *Vampire Nights*.

**Rebecca Madeira** (Rachel) is so happy to return to Arena Stage! She was last seen at Arena in the world premiere of *A Wrinkle in Time* (Ensemble/Mrs. Which u/s). Other credits include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Philia u/s) and *Sweeney Todd* (Swing) at Signature Theatre; *Anything Goes* (Hope) at Milton Theatre; *Seussical* (Gertrude) at Light Opera of New Jersey; and *Amadeus* (Constanze) at the Algonquin Arts Theatre. She holds a BA in Music from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts, and she was a finalist in the 2025 Lotte Lenya Competition. Love and thanks to her family!

**Alina Collins Maldonado** (Understudy Ensemble) as an actor has most recently appeared in *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet* at the Folger Theatre. She was a Helen Hayes nominee for lead actor in the Spanish world premiere of *Native Gardens* at Gala Hispanic Theater. Alina has also appeared in productions at The Shakespeare Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Ford's Theater, The Kennedy Center, 1st Stage, Theater Alliance, and Imagination Stage. [www.alinacollinsmaldonado.com](http://www.alinacollinsmaldonado.com) [@alina\\_cm\\_](mailto:@alina_cm_)

**Dakin Matthews** (Brady) Arena Stage: Debut. Broadway: *Camelot*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *Waitress the Musical*, *The Audience*, *Rocky*, *The Best Man*, *A Man for All Seasons*, Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. Off-Broadway: *Henry IV* (TFANA), *Freedomland* (Playwrights Horizons), *Hostage*, *School for Scandal*, *Women Beware Women* (Acting Company). Regional Theatre: 250 productions. Film and Television: 30 films (including *True Grit*, *Bridge of Spies*, *Lincoln*, and *Zero Charisma*), 300 TV appearances (including "Gilmore Girls," "King of Queens," "The Gilded Age," and "Etoile"). Dakin is founding member of the Antaeus Company, Acting Company, and Sam Mendes' Bridge Project, an award-winning playwright, dramaturge, and translator of Spanish Golden Age plays, a Shakespeare scholar and teacher of Shakespeare Masterclasses around the world, and an Emeritus Professor of English (CSUEB).

**Ethan Miller** (Understudy Cates, Understudy Ensemble) is thrilled to be returning for his second show at Arena Stage! Previously Ethan played Joshua in *The Watch On The Rhine*. Other DC credits include, *Prayer for the French Republic* (Theater J), *The Waverly Gallery* (1st Stage), *The Chosen* (1st Stage), *The Last Match* (1st Stage), *Dory Fantasmagory* (Imagination Stage). New York credits include, *This Much I Know* (59E59th). Other regional credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Theater at Monmouth), *Paint Your Wagon* (The Jacksonhole Playhouse). Notable film credits include, *Citified* (Blue Rocket Productions) and *Devils* (West Egg Media).

**Noah Plomgren** (Cates) is very happy to be making his Arena Stage debut in the company of these brilliant artists and theatremakers. Most recently, Noah appeared Off-Broadway in *Anna Christie* at St. Ann's Warehouse, and on Broadway in *Dead Outlaw*. Other favorite credits include the national tours of *Finding Neverland*, *Hair*, and *Galileo* (Berkeley Rep), *Sweat* (The Guthrie), *Grounded* (Metropolitan Opera), *Sense & Sensibility* (Cape Playhouse), *All is Calm* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), *Cabaret* (Ogunquit Playhouse), *Noises Off* (Pittsburgh Public), and others at Goodspeed, The Rev, Bay Street Theater, City Theater Company, and The Hangar Theater. Television credits include *Law & Order: Organized Crime*. Education: Carnegie Mellon. Instagram: [@plomegranate](https://www.instagram.com/plomegranate)

**Natalya Lynette Rathnam** (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to be back at Arena for this production! (D.C.): *The Age of Innocence*, *POTUS*, *Our War* (Arena Stage); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Everyman Theatre); *Lend Me A Soprano*, *A Nice Indian Boy* (Olney Theatre); *A Wind in the Door*, *Kid Prince and Pablo*, *The Wings of Ikarus Jackson*, *Mockingbird* (Kennedy Center); *Death of a Salesman* (Ford's Theatre); *The Last Match*, *The Phlebotomist* (1st Stage); *4,380 Nights* (Signature Theatre); *Bars and Measures*, *Shame 2.0*, *When January Feels Like Summer* (Mosaic Theatre); *Trojan Women* (Taffety Punk). Helen Hayes Nominee - Outstanding Supporting Actor & Ensemble. Additional Regional: *The Ceremony* (Chuang Stage, Boston); *Dracula: A Feminist Revenge* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *The Figs* (American Stage Theatre, FL); *It's Christmas, Carol!* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Illyria, Julius Caesar* (VA Shakespeare Festival). Insta: [@natalyalynetterathnam](https://www.instagram.com/natalyalynetterathnam)

**Todd Scofield** (*Ensemble, Understudy Brady*) DC Area: Arena Stage: *Holiday*, *City of Conversation*, *Sovereignty*; Shakespeare Theatre: *King Lear*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Our Town*, *Richard III*, others; Folger Theatre: Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Caliban in *Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Henry VIII*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, others; Round House Theatre: *Ink*, *Oslo*, *The Book of Will*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, others; Signature Theatre: *Ragtime*; Kennedy Center: *Mister Roberts*; also Theater J, Studio, Ford's, Olney, Adventure Theatre, Imagination Stage, and Everyman Theatre. REGIONAL: Arden Theatre: *Freud's Last Session*, *PlayMakers*, Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater, Charlotte Rep, and North Carolina Shakespeare Festival. Television: recurring role in *The Wire*.

**Tristan Turner** (*Howard, Ensemble*) is thrilled to be making his debut at the Arena Stage with such a prominent piece of American theatre. Past credits include the world premiere of *Pru Payne* (Arizona Theatre Co.), *Twelfth Night* (Utah Shakespeare Fest.), and *A Raisin in the Sun* (South Coast Rep.). Tristan has also made appearances on *All-American* (The CW), *The Residence* (Netflix), and starred in an indie film that premiered at Tribeca Film Festival in 2025. He would like to thank God, his family, and his close friends, for continuing to be his North Star. Follow his journey on IG [@tristanturn](https://www.instagram.com/tristanturn) or on TikTok [@turnerhudo](https://www.tiktok.com/@turnerhudo)

**Holly Twyford** (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to be back at Arena for her 10th production having previously appeared in *The Plough and the Stars*, *Arcadia*, *The Miser*, *An American Daughter* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (nominated for Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Play), among others. Holly has performed in over eighty productions in theaters in and around the Washington area including Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre, Roundhouse Theatre and Woolly Mammoth Theatre, and, most recently, at The Shakespeare Theatre in *Guys and Dolls*. Holly has received many Helen Hayes Award nominations and has won Outstanding Actress four times. She was honored with Shakespeare Theatre Company's for her portrayal of Anna in Harold Pinter's *Old Times*. Holly is proud to be a Lunt-Fontanne Fellow, a member of the Studio Theatre's Cabinet, and a Ford's Theatre Associate Artist. She has worked on commercials, voiceovers, educational films, training films, TV, and independent films. Holly is proud to be a resident of Washington, D.C.

**James Whalen** (*Understudy Drummond, Understudy Ensemble*) ARENA STAGE: *The Heiress*, *The Little Foxes*. THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY: *Uncle Vanya*, *King Lear*. ROUND HOUSE THEATRE: *The Inheritance*, *Small Mouth Sounds*, *NSFW*. SIGNATURE THEATRE: *Daphne's Dive*, *Ragtime*. WOOLLY MAMMOTH: *Shipwreck*. EVERYMAN THEATRE: *And Then There Were None*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Ghosts*, *Tribes*, *The Dresser*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Time Stands Still*, *Betrayal*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. REP STAGE: *True West*, *Boeing Boeing*. THE OLNEY THEATRE CENTER: *Colossal*, *DA*. Theatre J: *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *The Argument*, *Race*. ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE: *Dracula*. The Washington National Opera: *Porgy and Bess*. THE KENNEDY CENTER: *Shear Madness*. MOSAIC THEATRE COMPANY: *Fabulation*. TV/FILM: *Law and Order: SVU*, *House of Cards*, *VEEP*, *I Love You But I Lied*, *Money Matters*, *Mistaken*, and *A Beautiful Mind*.

## **PRODUCTION INFORMATION**

## **INHERIT THE WIND**

**By Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee**

**Directed by Ryan Guzzo Purcell**

**Produced in Association with The Feast**

**In the Fichandler Stage | February 27 – April 5, 2026**

**ABOUT:** Based on the real-life Scopes “Monkey” Trial, this electrifying courtroom drama pits two towering legal minds against each other in a small-town battle over science, religion, and the right to think freely. As the town becomes a stage for national attention, personal conviction clashes with public opinion in a trial that transcends its time. *Inherit the Wind*, the American classic by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, is a searing, deeply human portrait of a country still wrestling with the cost—and courage—of progress.

## **CAST**

Understudy Rachel: Alex De Bard\*

Ensemble: Jordan Friend\*

Drummond: Billy Eugene Jones\*

E.K. Hornbeck: Alyssa Keegan\*

Rachel: Rebecca Madeira

Understudy Ensemble: Alina Collins Maldonado\*

Brady: Dakin Matthews\*

Understudy Cates, Understudy Ensemble: Ethan Miller\*

Cates: Noah Plomgren\*

Ensemble: Natalya Lynette Rathnam\*

Ensemble, Understudy Brady: Todd Scofield\*

Howard, Ensemble: Tristan Turner\*

Ensemble: Holly Twyford\*

Understudy Drummond, Understudy Ensemble: James Whalen\*

## **CREATIVE**

Playwrights: Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

Director: Ryan Guzzo Purcell

Set Designer: Tanya Orellana

Costume Designer: An-lin Dauber

Lighting Designer: Xavier Pierce

Sound Designer and Original Music: Paul James Prendergast

New York Casting: tbd casting co./Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA

DC Casting: Raiyon Hunter, CSA

Stage Manager: Christi B. Spann\*

Assistant Stage Manager: Stefania Giron Zuluaga\*

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association

*Inherit the Wind* is made possible through generous funding from **Herb and Dianne Lerner**. This production is sponsored by **Decker Anstrom and Sherry Hiemstra** with additional support from **Susan E. Carter**.

## **PLAN YOUR VISIT**

### **TICKETS:**

Tickets start at \$73. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change.

Tickets are available at [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org). Tickets may also be purchased through the Sales Office by phone at 202-488-3300, Tuesday through Sunday, 12-8 pm, or in person at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, Washington, DC, Tuesday through Sunday, 2 hours before the show begins on performance days.

Groups of 10 or more may book tickets at [arenastage.org/groups](http://arenastage.org/groups) or via email at [groups@arenastage.org](mailto:groups@arenastage.org).

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](http://arenastage.org/savings-programs).

**PERFORMANCE DATES:**

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday at 7:30PM

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8PM

Saturday and Sunday at 2PM

Weekday matinees at 12PM on March 11, March 25, April 1, and April 2

*Times are subject to change. Please confirm on the website upon booking.*

**Southwest Night Performances:** Friday, February 27 through Wednesday, March 4

**Early Curtain Performance:** Sunday, March 29 at 6PM

**Audio-Described Performance:** Saturday, March 21 at 8PM

**Closed Captioning:** GalaPro begins Friday, March 6

**College Night:** Saturday, February 28 at 8PM

**Pride Night:** Wednesday, March 4 at 7:30PM

**Young Professionals Night:** Saturday, March 7 at 8PM

**HBCU Night:** Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30PM

**Post-Show Conversations**

Connect with the show beyond the performance at a post-show conversation on March 24 following the 7:30PM performance, and on March 25 and April 2 following the 12PM matinees.

**TRAVEL:** Limited parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage for \$22 to \$40; call 202-488-3300 to purchase in advance. Drive-up valet parking is also available for \$40, cash only. For more information on transportation and other parking options around the Mead Center, visit [arenastage.org/parking](http://arenastage.org/parking).

**DINING:** Enjoy sumptuous Beijing-style cuisine at Philippe Chow, the official Restaurant Partner of Arena Stage, located directly across Maine Avenue from the theater. Whether it's a casual dinner or a special occasion, enjoy the Arena Stage dining experience that will get you to the show on time! Ask for one of the Arena Stage menus starting at \$59 per person. Learn more about Philippe Chow at [philippechow.com](http://philippechow.com).

**For complete Arena Stage 2025/26 Season details, visit [arenastage.org/75](http://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](http://arenastage.org)*

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