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For additional press materials, visit the online press kit.

STEP AFRIKA!'S MAGICAL MUSICAL HOLIDAY STEP SHOW RETURNS THIS SEASON WITH NEW WORKS

*****A reimagining of Tchaikovsky's "March of the Nutcracker,"
a percussive spin on beloved carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas,"
and a tribute to the 50th Anniversary of Go-Go Music to be featured in 2026 production of DC's
Favorite Holiday Tradition*****

(Washington, DC) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is thrilled to kick off the 2026 holiday season with the annually-anticipated return of ***Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show***. Widely known as DC's favorite holiday tradition, the all-ages celebration will transform the theater's **Fichandler Stage** into a winter wonderland for a fifth year—following four consecutive sold-out runs. The limited engagement will run **December 4 – 23, 2026**. Press Night will be held on Friday, December 4. For information and tickets, visit **arenastage.org/holiday**.

"Here's to a beautiful and fruitful five years of collaboration," said Arena Stage Executive Producer **Edgar Dobie**. "The *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* continues to lift our spirits and bring joy to Zelda Fichandler Way each winter season. This year has been full of drama in our city, however today we invite you to bring your dancing shoes to take us into the next. Arena is proud to be Step Afrika!'s artistic home in DC, and our hearts and minds are open to continuing for many more."

In tribute to the DC music staple, Step Afrika! is bringing its high-octane crowd-pleaser, "Here We Go-Go," back into the show's lineup for an explosive revival tailor-made for the genre's golden anniversary. Choreographed by **Jakari Sherman** (*The Fruits of Our Labor*), this room-shaking piece seamlessly blends the athletic, body-percussive artistry of stepping with the infectious, polyrhythmic "pocket beats" of Washington, DC's official sound. With live congas, cowbells, and irresistible call-and-response chants, audiences are in for a celebration that will bring the house to its feet in a way that only Step Afrika! can.

"Step Afrika! has a long history with Go-Go, creating our first collaboration over 10 years ago," said Step Afrika! Founder and Executive Producer **C. Brian Williams**. "We even filmed a tribute to the music during COVID that went viral and honored both stepping and Go-Go as unique African-American art forms. I can't wait to bring this work back to the stage and celebrate 50 years of Go-Go with the people of DC."

Other highlights of this year's production includes the show opener, "Twelve Drummers Drumming," and a Step Afrika! reimagining of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "March of the Nutcracker." Inspired by the beloved carol, "Twelve Drummers Drumming" finds crisp snare drums and thunderous quads meeting traditional African drums, symphonic bass drums, marimbas, xylophones, shimmering chimes, and festive bells. In the latter's spirited new interpretation, the Nutcracker trades his traditional toy soldier role to become a Drum Major!

"Step Afrika! dancers are not only the best steppers in the entire world, but they are amazing percussionists as well," added **Williams**. "To witness twelve drummers drumming and dancing in one of DC's most celebrated theaters is my absolute favorite way to start the show! Plus, I promise, you will never see 'March of the Nutcracker' the way Step Afrika! performs it. You gotta see it to believe it."

Leading this year's holiday "step-stravaganza" are Step Afrika! Company members **Kwadjo Bediako**, **Nya Christian**, **Jerod Coleman**, **Ariel Dykes**, **Micaiah Alexander Emanuel**, **Nylah Jackson**, **Terrence Johnson**, **Jayden King**, **Jemeema S. Montrose**, **Keondre Pascal**, **Keanu Powell**, **Zuri Presswood**, **Joshua Anthony Reaves**, **Jesse Sparks III**, **Ericka Still**, **Michaela Taylor**, **Joseph Vasquez**, **Robert Warnsley**, **TreShawn Williams**, and special guest **Jeeda Barrington** as DJ Nutcracker.

The world's first holiday show highlighting the rich African American art form of stepping, *Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* is a family-friendly, high-energy, 80-minute celebration packed with nonstop movement, festive music, and infectious holiday cheer. Get into the spirit of the season with DJ Nutcracker, his Arctic friends—Polo and Pinky the Polar Bears, Popper the Penguin, Ryder the Reindeer—and Step Afrika!'s award-winning performers as they fill the Fichandler with laughter, joy, and merriment.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION
Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show
On the Fichandler Stage
December 4 – 23, 2026

ABOUT: Step into the spirit with the joyful return of DC's favorite holiday tradition, *Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show*! With unforgettable moments for all ages, this family-friendly production is a celebration of music, movement, and cheer—featuring DJ Nutcracker and his Arctic friends alongside the award-winning Step Afrika! performers. As the world's first holiday show highlighting the African American tradition of stepping, this beloved performance promises to bring the spirit of the season to the stage and audiences out of their seats!

We are grateful to **Destination DC** for their promotional support of this production.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS
Child tickets (ages 17 and under) start at $20. Adult tickets start at $57. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change.

Tickets are available at **arenastage.org**. Tickets may also be purchased through the Sales Office by phone at 202-488-3300, Tuesday through Sunday, 12-6PM, 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 or by phone at 202-488-4380.

Arena Stage's many savings programs include discount tickets for those aged 35 and under, as well as military, first responder, and educator discounts. To learn more, visit **arenastage.org/discounts**.

PERFORMANCE TIMES:
Friday, December 4 at 7PM
Saturday, December 5 at 1PM & 6PM
Sunday, December 6 at 1PM & 6PM
Wednesday, December 9 at 12PM

Thursday, December 10 at 7PM
Friday, December 11 at 7PM
Saturday, December 12 at 1PM & 6PM
Sunday, December 13 at 1PM & 6PM
Wednesday, December 16 at 12PM
Thursday, December 17 at 7PM
Friday, December 18 at 7PM
Saturday, December 19 at 1PM & 6PM
Sunday, December 20 at 1PM & 6PM
Tuesday, December 22 at 12PM & 5PM
Wednesday, December 23 at 12PM & 5PM

HBCU, Divine 9, & Friends Night: Thursday, December 10 at 7PM
Rep your colors! Calling all HBCU students, staff, alumni, and friends to come out to the show that will have everyone talking. Use Promo Code HBCU for $40 adult tickets! Stay around after the performance for a dance party by Jeeda the DJ.

FREE Photos with Santa: Sunday, December 20
Santa is making a special stop at the Mead Center, and we're rolling out the red carpet. Join us from 2:30 to 5PM for an afternoon that feels straight out of a childhood memory. Bring your friends, your family, or just your own inner child for a complimentary photo and a moment of festive magic you'll want to treasure.

TRAVEL: Limited parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage for $35. To reserve on-site parking, or for more information on other options around the Mead Center, visit **arenastage.org/parking**.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater*. 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, D.C. Today, under the leadership of 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*

Step Afrika! *Founded in 1994 by C. Brian Williams, Step Afrika! is the world's leading authority on the art form of stepping and the first professional dance company dedicated to the tradition. The Company blends percussive dance styles rooted in historically African American fraternities and sororities, traditional African dance, and contemporary movement into dynamic theatrical experiences that integrate rhythm, storytelling, music, and audience participation. Ranked among the top 10 African American dance companies in the United States, Step Afrika! is Washington, DC's official Cultural Ambassador, touring more than 60 countries and reaching audiences through a 50-city annual tour of American colleges and theaters. Its award-winning arts education programs use stepping to inspire young people, fostering teamwork, discipline, academic achievement, and cultural understanding. Recent artistic achievements include The Fruits of Our Labor, a groundbreaking full-length production exploring the unfinished American experience, and the Company's continued presence at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture, home to the world's first interactive stepping exhibit. stepafrika.org*

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