

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Anastasia St. Hilaire

asthilaire@arenastage.org

Amy Killion, Bucklesweet

amy@bucklesweet.com, 703-559-9714**For additional press materials, visit the online Press Room:**www.arenastage.org/press-room/press-kits/2324-press-kits/the-migration**ARENA STAGE CELEBRATES STEP AFRIKA! PARTNERSHIP
WITH PRESENTATION OF EXPANDED PRODUCTION OF*****THE MIGRATION:
REFLECTIONS ON JACOB LAWRENCE***

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater closes its 2023/24 Season with Step Afrika!'s *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence*. As part of a five-year collaboration between the award-winning theater and trailblazing dance company, this landmark work returns to D.C. **June 7 – July 14, 2024**, in Arena Stage's **Kreeger Theater**.

The Migration is a thought-provoking, soul-affirming blend of art, music, and stepping. Step Afrika!'s signature polyrhythmic percussive symphony offers an emotionally impactful journey through Jacob Lawrence's iconic portrayal of the cross-country trek taken by more than six million people in search of opportunity. Audiences are invited to immerse themselves in vivid and powerful stories of African-Americans migrating North from the southern states at the turn of the 20th century.

"It is a gift to close my first season as artistic director with this profoundly beautiful and groundbreaking exploration of Jacob Lawrence's meditation on Black exodus, hope, possibility, and progress through the Great Migration," said Arena Stage Artistic Director **Hana S. Sharif**. "I am proud to collaborate with two of Washington, D.C.'s most venerable institutions, as we collectively uplift the urgency and vibrancy of *The Migration* to the Kreeger stage."

The Migration Series, a sweeping group of 60 paintings evocatively depicting the Great Migration, was created in 1940-1941 by the celebrated leading African American artist Jacob Lawrence. Shortly after completion, the panels were split between The Phillips Collection in D.C. and New York City's Museum of Modern Art.

Inspired by the riveting history embodied in the 30 paintings of Lawrence's work housed at The Phillips, Step Afrika! Founder and Executive Producer **C. Brian Williams** developed this powerful and transformative dance-theater piece. *The Migration* debuted at D.C.'s Atlas Performing Arts Center in 2011, traveled off-Broadway for a sold-out run at the New Victory Theater in 2017, and has toured extensively around the country. For the first time in the piece's decade-long history, Step Afrika! reunites Lawrence's full story with access to all 60 panels of his series. Arena Stage audiences will experience the expanded production's premiere as part of Step Afrika!'s 30th Anniversary celebration. Following the Arena run, *The Migration* will travel this fall to five cities across the country, including Chicago, IL; Berkeley, CA; and Richmond, VA.

“The idea for Step Afrika! first entered my mind when I was only 21 years old, just a few months after having graduated from Howard University here in Washington, D.C.,” said **Williams**. “I never imagined that this concept—scribbled on an airplane paper napkin—would become one of the largest African American Dance Companies in the world today and carry me to more than 60 countries across the globe and cities and towns all over the United States.”

Founded in 1994 by **Williams**, Step Afrika! is the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Under Williams’ leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America’s cultural exports, touring more than 60 countries across the globe and ranking as one of the top 10 African American Dance Companies in the US. 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.

For more information and to buy tickets, please visit www.arenastage.org/migration.

Press Night will be held on **Thursday, June 6 at 8 p.m.**

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

THE MIGRATION: REFLECTIONS ON JACOB LAWRENCE

By Step Afrika!

In the Kreeger Theater

June 7 – July 14, 2024

ABOUT: Inspired by the iconic 60-panel painting series, Step Afrika!’s *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence* tells the story of one of the largest movements of people in United States history—when millions of African American migrants moved from the rural South to the industrial North in the early 1900s to escape racial oppression. The award-winning company’s signature work combines its hallmark style of percussive dance-theater with the paintings’ images, colors, and motifs to bring history to life through pulsating rhythms and stunning movement.

The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence is presented through generous funding from **Reg Brown and Tiffeny Sanchez** and made possible by **Altria** with additional support provided by **B. Thomas Mansbach**.

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

PLAN YOUR VISIT

TICKETS: Tickets are \$41-95 plus applicable fees. Ticket prices and availability are subject to change. Arena Stage’s many savings programs include discounts for U.S. military veterans, personnel, spouses, and families; “pay your age” tickets for those aged 30 and under; and “Southwest Nights” for those living and working in the District’s Southwest neighborhood. To learn more, visit arenastage.org/savingsprograms.

Tickets are available at arenastage.org. Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300, or in person at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, D.C., Tuesday-Sunday, 12-8 p.m.

Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300

Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Weekday matinees at 12 p.m. on June 12, June 27, and July 3

No performances on June 25, July 4, or July 5

Southwest Nights: Friday, June 7, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, June 8, at 8 p.m.; Sunday, June 9, at 7:30 p.m.; Tuesday, June 11, at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, June 14, at 8 p.m.; Thursday, July 11, at 8 p.m.

Audio-Described Performance: Saturday, June 15, at 2 p.m.

Mask-Required Performances: Tuesday, June 18, at 7:30 p.m.; Wednesday, July 3, at 12 p.m.; Sunday, July 7, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, July 13, at 8 p.m.

Post-Show Conversations

Connect with the show beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with staff and artists on June 12, June 27, and July 3 following the 12 p.m. matinees; on June 18 following the 7:30 p.m. performance; and on June 20 following the 8 p.m. performance.

The Phillips Collection Staged Reading

Arena Stage and Step Afrika!, in community partnership with The Phillips Collection, invite audiences to experience a staged reading of five 10-minute plays commissioned in response to the painting series. The program will be held at The Phillips Collection on June 13, 2024, at 7 p.m., followed by a discussion with the reading's cast. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors and students with ID. For tickets, visit phillipscollection.org/migration-series.

TRAVEL: Limited parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage for \$18 to \$30, including drive-up valet parking for \$30. Call 202-488-3300 to purchase in advance. For more information on transportation and other parking options around the Mead Center, visit arenastage.org/transportation.

SAFETY: Arena Stage recommends but does not require that patrons wear facial masks in our theater except in our occasional mask-required performance. 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.

About Arena Stage

The first racially integrated theater in our nation's capital and a pioneer of the regional theater movement, Arena Stage was founded on August 16, 1950, in Washington, D.C., by Zelda Fichandler, Tom Fichandler, and Edward Mangum. Today—nearly 75 years later—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. arenastage.org.

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