

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KYLE BELTRAN AND NIC ASHE TO HEADLINE  
FORMERLY UNTITLED TARELL ALVIN McCRAANEY PLAY

## WE ARE GATHERED

**\*\*\*Arena Stage will host celebrations of marriage at the end of select performances in their Love Takes Center Stage immersive experience\*\*\***

(Washington, DC) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater revealed today the highly-anticipated title, partial cast, and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity attached to Oscar winner **Tarell Alvin McCraney**'s new play **We Are Gathered**. A world-premiere production about queer love and forest magic from the screenwriter of *Moonlight*, *We Are Gathered* will run **May 16 – June 15, 2025**, on the award-winning theater's **iconic in-the-round Fichandler Stage**. Press Night will be held on May 22. For more information and tickets, visit [arenastage.org/gathered](http://arenastage.org/gathered).

"I write plays about questions that I have," said **McCraney**. "Right now, I'm wondering about marriage. Is it for me? Is it even possible?"

McCraney has penned a modern-day twist on classical Shakespearean wedding plays with **We Are Gathered**. The production follows the wildly funny and irresistibly steamy romance of W. Tre and Free, who met in a shadowy park looking for a good time—only to stumble into love, laughter, and a whole lot more heat than they bargained for. As they approach a milestone anniversary, they wonder if they've met Mr. Right or had a long one-night stand with a lovely Mr. Maybe. With a little support and a lot of confusion from family, friends, and a stranger in the dark, the question remains: will Free and W. Tre find their way together, or will they let fear and a secret lead them apart?

Bringing this romantic comedy to life, the cast of *We Are Gathered* will be led by **Kyle Beltran** (Netflix's *Inventing Anna*) as W. Tre, **Nic Ashe** (Ava DuVernay's *Queen Sugar*) as Free, and **Nikkole Salter** (Arena Stage's *Stick Fly*) as MS MS/Punkin. **Kent Gash** (Ford Theatre's *The Wiz*) takes the helm as director amongst a world-class team of creatives. The full cast and creative team will be announced at a later date.

"My collaboration with Tarell Alvin McCraney is among the most fulfilling and rewarding of my directing career," said **Gash**. "I have been challenged, delighted, enthralled, enriched, and uplifted by Tarell's inspired use of language, his endless reinvention of form, and his commitment to rich and multi-dimensional stories of Black lives."

Amplifying the celebration is the **Love Takes Center Stage** immersive experience that will offer couples an extraordinary chance to exchange their own marriage vows under the spotlight—right on stage during select performances of *We Are Gathered*. Against the backdrop of a powerful story, embraced

by the warmth of community, and immersed in the magic of live theater, their love will take the limelight in a deeply moving and unforgettable experience.

“I always thought that my queerness, my black queerness, was too political to think about marriage or the construct of marriage,” continued **McCraney**. “And then I fell in love, over and over, and quickly realized that there was something...almost indiscernible about wanting to spend your life with someone. A feeling that took root in your heart, and you stopped caring about the political and even the social; suddenly, you could feel a connection on the verge of spiritual. What happens when you run out of excuses? What happens when you look up and see the face of the person you want to spend the rest of your life with staring back at you? Well, you celebrate! You must. This a play about that.”

Love has no boundaries, and this interactive experience is open to all couples who wish to honor their commitment in an extraordinary way. Every love story is worth celebrating, and this is a chance for couples to share theirs under the glistening spotlight. Applications are now open online at [arenastage.org/lovestory](http://arenastage.org/lovestory).

Support for this project is provided by **Deborah Bowles and Derik Burgess** and **Nicholas Goad**.

Tickets are available at [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org). Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 202-488-3300, Tuesday-Sunday, 12-8 p.m.; or in person through the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, D.C., two hours before a performance.

Tickets start at \$59 plus applicable fees. 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](http://arenastage.org/savings-programs).

For all upcoming Arena Stage programming, visit [arenastage.org/season](http://arenastage.org/season).

*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 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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