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FOR RELEASE
February 2, 2022; Updated March 30, 2022

**Ford's Theatre Society Announces Casting for
World-Premiere Musical
*Grace***

Music and Lyrics by Nolan Williams, Jr.;
Book by Nolan Williams, Jr., and Nikkole Salter;
Directed and Choreographed by Robert Barry Fleming

A musical celebration of African-American food, family and tradition

March 19 to May 14, 2022
Tickets Start at \$22

Washington, D.C. – Ford's Theatre Society today announced full casting and the design team for **the world-premiere musical *Grace*, with Music and Lyrics by Nolan Williams, Jr.; Book by Nolan Williams, Jr., and Nikkole Salter; and Directed and Choreographed by Robert Barry Fleming.**

The production features **David Hughey, Arica Jackson, Raquel Jennings, Rayshun Lamarr, Jarran Muse, Solomon Parker, Nova Y. Payton, Virginia Woodruff**, with understudies **LaDonna Burns, Jay Frisby, Duawne Starling** and **Kai Brittani White**.

Packed with an eclectic mix of styles including jazz, R&B, rousing up-tempos and raise-the-roof ballads, *Grace* is a new musical examining the little-told history of African-American culinary tradition and the challenges faced by Black-owned businesses. Creator Nolan Williams, Jr., drew inspiration for *Grace* after conducting extensive research on Black culinary history, including the pioneers chronicled in W.E.B. DuBois's seminal work *The Philadelphia Negro*.

"The rich imagery of food born of our hardship and turned into culinary genius by pioneering Black chefs and caterers such as Bogle, Augustin, Prosser, Dorsey, Jones and

Minton spoke to me. I heard these giants' voices and was inspired to imbue their legacies into *Grace*," **Williams said.**

The musical captures a day in the life of the Mintons, a fictional Philadelphia family who gather to mourn the loss of their matriarch and deal with the future of their family restaurant in a changing neighborhood. Heartfelt and hopeful, timely and timeless, *Grace* is the new American musical where, although family comes first, everyone has a seat at the table.

Williams continued, "*Grace* is ultimately a story about culture. It raises questions about how we preserve and honor culture and contemplates the myriad of ways in which culture is lost, disregarded or misrepresented. Now, more than ever, this is an important conversation for us to engage in."

Performances of *Grace* are **March 19 to May 14, 2022**. A media performance is scheduled for **March 30, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are now on sale and range from \$22 to \$81**. Discounts are available for groups, members, senior citizens, military personnel and those younger than age 35. The production is recommended for ages eight and older.

Grace is produced by special arrangement with **Dale A. Mott and his company, Edgewood** (co-produced for Broadway *Lifespan of a Fact*, *Thoughts of a Colored Man* and *A Strange Loop*), and **NEWorks Productions**.

"Nolan has crafted a universal story about family dynamics, expectations and legacy," said **Ford's Theatre Director Paul R. Tetreault**. "Like all of us, the musical's characters are carving their unique paths in the world and adapting to external circumstances as best they can, by grace. We are thrilled to restart our 2021-2022 season with this exciting new work by one of D.C.'s own, and with a company of such tremendous vocal talent."

The Ford's Theatre 2021-2022 season is sponsored by **Chevron**. *Grace* is made possible by Lead Underwriter **ConocoPhillips** as well as the following Underwriters: **Altria Group, Centene Charitable Foundation, The Home Depot, KPMG LLP, Meta** and **United Parcel Service**.

Updated COVID-19 Health and Safety

Face coverings are required for all. Regardless of age, all patrons with tickets to in-person performances are required to show a government-issued photo ID and **proof of full vaccination status** (physical copy or digital photograph of vaccination card, CLEAR app) **or qualifying negative COVID-19 test** upon arrival to their performance for admittance. Negative PCR tests must be dated within 48 hours of the performance; negative antigen tests must be dated within 24 hours of the performance. Rapid at-home tests conducted on-site will be

accepted. Please allow for extra time in advance of the performance should you consider taking a test on-site.

“Fully vaccinated” means 14 days since the final vaccine dose in the regimen.

Acceptable forms of government-issued photo IDs include driver’s licenses and passports.

Patrons under 18 must be accompanied by an adult that meets the above requirements.

Performance ticket holders who do not comply will not be admitted.

Ford’s Theatre COVID-19 guidance is developed in collaboration with the George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates (GW MFA). As one of the largest physician groups in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, GW MFA is recognized for excellence in clinical care, research and training of future care providers. The advice and expertise of the medical staff at the GW MFA has helped Ford’s Theatre Society strengthen its safety procedures to better serve and protect patrons, artists and staff as productions and daytime visits resume. For more information about Ford's Theatre health and safety protocols, visit www.fords.org/performance-safety.

The Creators

Nolan Williams, Jr., (Book, Music and Lyrics) has dedicated his professional career to the curation of works that illuminate issues of civil rights, social justice and cultural curiosities. His extensive body of creative work includes directing and producing the television special *Becoming Douglass Commonwealth*; and musical stage productions including *Stirring the Waters Across America* at The Kennedy Center; *Go, Tell It!* at Lincoln Theatre and *Devine Hamer Gray* (in development).

Williams’ choral and orchestral works have been premiered by major American orchestras. He has garnered songwriting credits on two Grammy-nominated projects. Williams also has produced arts and educational programming through his [NEWorks Productions](#) in partnership with The Kennedy Center and Philadelphia’s Mann Center; and developed cultural programming with the Smithsonian, U.S. State Department and the Embassies of India, France and South Africa. He is one of The Kennedy Center’s inaugural Social Practice Residents. Learn more at nolanwilliamsjr.com.

Nikkole Salter (Book) is an OBIE Award-winning actress and writer of eight full-length plays including the Pulitzer Prize nominated *In the Continuum*. She has been commissioned by six institutions, been produced on three continents, in five countries and published in 12 international publications. Her work has appeared in more than 20 Off-Broadway, regional and international theatres. Amid an emerging acting and writing career, Salter’s deep sense of social

responsibility led her to co-found (with NSangou Njikam) and serve as Executive Artistic Director of The Continuum Project, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that creates innovative artistic programming for community empowerment and enrichment. Their first bi-annual endeavor, The Legacy Program: Residency – an arts education, youth development initiative – launched in 2009 at the William Alexander Middle School in Brooklyn, NY.

Salter is an active member of the Actors Equity Association, the Screen Actors Guild/American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Actors Center; and sits on the Council of the Dramatists Guild and serves as Chair of the Board of the Theatre Communications Group.

Director and Choreographer

Robert Barry Fleming is Executive Artistic Director of Actors Theatre of Louisville. Fleming previously served as Associate Artistic Director at Cleveland Play House and as Director of Artistic Programming at Arena Stage. World premieres commissioned, developed and championed during this tenure at Arena include the 2017 Best Musical Tony Award winner *Dear Evan Hansen*, Karen Zacarias's *Destiny of Desire* and the 2017 Pulitzer Prize winner, *Sweat*, by Lynn Nottage. Fleming was also a tenured professor and Chair of the University of San Diego Theatre Arts and Performance Studies Department. His Actors Theatre Direct new media credits include COVID-Classics: *One-Act Plays for the Age of Quarantine*, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End* and *Romeo & Juliet. Louisville 2020*. Live event directing and choreography credits include *Are You There?* and *Once On This Island* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), and productions at Cleveland Play House, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Tantrum Theater.

The Designers

The world-premiere of *Grace* features **Scenic Design by Jason Ardizzzone-West, Costume Design by Dominique Fawn Hill, Lighting Design by Xavier Pierce, Sound Design by David Budries, Hair and Wig Design by Nikiya Mathis, Dramaturg Martine Kei Green-Rogers, Creative Consultant Sheldon Epps, Orchestrations by Joseph Joubert and Music Director Nolan Williams, Jr.**

The production team also includes **Stage Managers Jessica R. Aguilar, Craig A. Horness and Taryn Friend.**

Special Performances and Events

Ford's Theatre is accessible to persons with disabilities, offering wheelchair accessible seating and restrooms, audio enhancement Braille and large print playbills. **Audio-described**

performances of *Grace* are April 12, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. and April 30, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. A **sign-interpreted** performance is April 14, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. A **sensory-friendly** performance is May 7, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

Beginning March 21, 2022, all performances of *Grace* will be captioned via the **GalaPro App**. GalaPro is available from the App Store or Google Play and allows patrons to access captioning on demand through their phone or tablet device. Patrons set their phones to airplane mode and connect to the local GalaPro Wifi network before the performance begins. More information can be found at www.fords.org/visit/accessibility/galapro-captioning.

Free Preview: March 21, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

Ford's Theatre partners with TodayTix to give out free tickets for a preview performance of each mainstage production in our theatrical season. Four-hundred tickets are available via the TodayTix digital lottery, beginning 10:00 a.m. ET on March 14 for the March 21 7:30 p.m. performance of *Grace*. To enter the digital lottery, patrons must **download the TodayTix app** (available in Apple App Store or the Google Play Store), open it and select the "Free Preview" performance for *Grace*. Winners will be notified by email and push notification between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. ET on the day of the first preview. Winners must confirm their winning tickets (up to two) in the TodayTix app within one hour of being notified. Visit www.fords.org/free for additional details.

Ford's Theatre Society

One of the most visited sites in the nation's capital, Ford's Theatre reopened its doors in 1968, more than a hundred years after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Operated through a partnership between Ford's Theatre Society and the National Park Service, Ford's Theatre is the premier destination in the nation's capital to explore and celebrate Abraham Lincoln's life and legacy.

Ford's Theatre Society was founded under the guidance of executive producer **Frankie Hewitt**, who, during her 35-year tenure, established Ford's as a living, working theatre producing performances that highlighted the diversity of the American experience. Since the arrival of **Paul R. Tetreault** as Director, critics and the theatre going public have recognized Ford's for the superior quality of its artistic programming. With works from the Tony-nominated *Come From Away* and the nationally acclaimed *Big River*, to the world premieres of *Meet John Doe*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black*, *Liberty Smith*, *Necessary Sacrifices*, *The Widow Lincoln* and *The Guard*, Ford's Theatre is making its mark on the American theatre landscape. In the past

decade, the mission of Ford's Theatre Society expanded to include education as a central pillar. This expansion led to the creation and construction of the Center for Education and Leadership, which opened in February 2012. Under the current leadership of Board of Trustees Chairman **Phebe N. Novakovic** and through the lens of Lincoln's leadership and legacy, Ford's today endeavors to advance Lincoln's "unfinished work" with programs and performances that cultivate empathy, encourage dialogue and bridge divides in American life.

For more information on Ford's Theatre and Ford's Theatre Society, please visit www.fords.org.

#FordsGrace #GraceTheMusical

Ford's Theatre on Twitter and Instagram: @fordstheatre

Ford's Theatre on Facebook: www.facebook.com/fordstheatre

Grace The Musical Instagram: @Grace.themusical

Grace The Musical Twitter and Facebook: @gracethemusical

PHOTOS: Photos of Nolan Williams, Jr., Williams with *Grace* ambassadors Sheila Johnson and Carla Hall, plus the Ford's Theatre and *Grace* logos are available for use with permission at this [Dropbox link](#). Production photos will become available the week of March 21, 2022.

FACT SHEET: *Grace*
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Directed and Choreographed by Robert Barry Fleming

Created by celebrated D.C. composer Nolan Williams, Jr., *Grace* examines the little-told history of African-American culinary tradition and the challenges faced by Black-owned businesses. The musical captures a day in the life of the Mintons, a Philadelphia family who gather to mourn the loss of their matriarch and deal with the future of their family restaurant in a changing neighborhood. Heartfelt and hopeful, timely and timeless, *Grace* is the new American musical where, although family comes first, everyone has a seat at the table.

Dates: March 19 to May 14, 2022
Media Performance: March 30, 2022

Location: Ford's Theatre is located at 511 10th Street NW, between E and F Streets.

Tickets: \$22-\$81

Times: Monday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m. (except March 24); Fridays and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. (except April 1, 8, 22).
Matinees at 11:30 a.m. April 1, 8, 22.

COVID-19 Safety: Face masks are required for all. Regardless of age, everyone with tickets to in-person performances is required to show a government-issued photo ID and proof of full vaccination status (physical copy or digital photograph of vaccination card) or proof of a qualifying negative test upon arrival to their performance for admittance. Negative PCR tests must be dated within 48 hours of the performance; negative antigen tests must be dated within 24 hours of the performance. Rapid at-home tests conducted on-site will be accepted. Please allow for extra time in advance of the performance should you consider taking a test on-site. "Fully vaccinated" means 14 days since the final vaccine dose in the regimen. Acceptable forms of government-issued photo IDs include driver's licenses and passports. Patrons under 18 must be accompanied by an adult that meets the above requirements. Performance ticket holders who do not comply will not be admitted.

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PARKING:

Paid parking is available at several independent neighborhood garages: the 24-hour QuickPark at the Grand Hyatt (entrance on 10th Street between G and H Streets NW), the Central Parking Garage (entrance on 11th Street between E and F Streets NW), and the One Parking garage below Ford's Theatre (at 511 10th Street, NW).

METRO:

Metro Center station (Red, Blue, Orange and Silver Lines) is two- and one-half blocks north of the theatre from the Eleventh Street exit. Gallery PI-Chinatown station (Red, Yellow and Green Lines) is two- and one-half blocks north of the theatre from the G Street exit. For further information, call Metro at (202) 637-7000.

Tickets at www.fords.org
Information: (202) 347-4833 -- Toll Free: (888) 616-0270 -- Groups: (202) 638-2367
Ford's Theatre on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook: [@fordstheatre](https://twitter.com/fordstheatre) #FordsGrace #GraceTheMusical