



MEDIA CONTACT:  
Leah Yoon Frelinghuysen  
Director of Marketing and Communications

[press@fords.org](mailto:press@fords.org)

Ford's Theatre  
511 Tenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

[www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 29, 2025



FORD'S THEATRE SOCIETY  
ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVES FOR  
*The American Five*

Written by Chess Jakobs  
Directed by Aaron Posner

**September 19 - October 12, 2025**

**Tickets on Sale Now at [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Ford's Theatre Director **Paul R. Tetreault** announced the cast and creative team of **Chess Jakob's world-premiere of *The American Five*** today. In a time of sweeping change and constant threat, five extraordinary individuals unite to shape a moment that would forever alter the course of American history. *The American Five* tells the powerful true story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his closest allies—Coretta Scott King, Bayard Rustin, Stanley Levison, and Clarence B. Jones—as they plan the March on Washington and craft the speech that would become a defining anthem of the civil rights movement. Their collaboration—grounded in strategy, sacrifice, and an unshakable belief in equality—culminated in Dr. King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech and a collective call that continues to resonate today. With urgency and humanity, *The American Five* brings to life a behind-the-scenes story of how the Civil Rights Movement changed the soul of a nation.

*The American Five* was commissioned as part of **The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions**, designed to serve as an artistic incubator for stories about unsung heroes responsible for changing the course of civil rights and equality in American life. All five actors in the production are making their Ford's Theatre debuts, bringing fresh energy and new voices to this powerful world-premiere.

"We are incredibly excited to open our 25-26 season with a world-premiere, kicking off our year-long celebration of America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. *The American Five* exemplifies our mission by drawing us into a defining moment in our history—through the voices of those who dared to imagine a more perfect union. This play not only honors Dr. King and his circle, but also reminds us that real change has always come from courageous collaboration and moral clarity. It is a story for our time—and for all time," said Ford's Theatre Director **Paul R. Tetreault**.

"*The American Five* invites us into the room where history was shaped—not by mythic figures, but by real people grappling with impossible choices, risk, and hope. As artists, we're drawn to those moments where private dialogue becomes public legacy," said director **Aaron Posner**. "This play gives voice to the strategy, friction and humanity behind one of the most iconic speeches in American history. It's not just a story about a march—it's about the minds and hearts that made the march matter."

Performances of the play begin **September 19** and continue through **October 12, 2025**.

**Tickets for performances** of *The American Five* are [now on sale](#) and range from **\$26 to \$53**. Discounts are available for groups, senior citizens, military personnel and those between the ages of 21 and 40. The production is recommended for ages 12 and older.

The Ford's Theatre 2025-2026 season is generously sponsored by **Chevron, Intuit and Lockheed Martin Corporation**. The **Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions** are generously supported by Lead Sponsor: **Boeing**.

### **About *The American Five***

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his inner circle imagined a pluralistic society in which equality and justice are guaranteed for all. In the face of surveillance, intimidation, arrests and life threats, five giants form a powerful coalition to advance civil rights and shape a defining moment in American history. Together, Dr. King, Coretta Scott King, Bayard Rustin, Stanley Levison and Clarence B. Jones plan the March on Washington and craft the speech that would galvanize the nation and inspire generations to advance America's efforts to turn a dream into reality.

### **Creative Team**

**Chess Jakobs** (Playwright) *The American Five*, received the Ford's Theatre Legacy Commission in 2024. Chess's credits include working on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and at regional theatres including Ford's Theatre, Olney Theatre, Steppenwolf, Indiana Rep., and Alliance Theatre.

**Aaron Posner** (Director) Ford's: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *Born Yesterday*. Playwright: *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Life Sucks*, *No Sisters*, *JQA*, *District Merchants*, *Who Am I This Time?* & *Other Conundrums of Love*, *The Chosen*, *My Name Is Asher Lev* and many more.

### **The Cast**

**Aaron Bliden** (Stanley); **Ro Boddie** (Martin); **Renea S. Brown** (Coretta); **Yao Dogbe** (Clarence); and **Stephen Conrad Moore** (Bayard) are all making their Ford's debut.

### **The Designers**

**Andrew R. Cohen** (Ford's debut) is the scenic designer. **Cody Von Ruden** (Ford's debut) is the costume designer. Max Doolittle (Ford's: *Sister Act*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *My Lord*, *What a Night*) is the lighting designer. **Kathy Ruvuna** (Ford's debut) is the sound designer. **Mona Kasra** (Ford's debut) is the projection designer. **Danna Rosedahl** (Ford's: *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Something Moving*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *My Lord*, *What a Night*, *Fences*) is the hair and make-up designer. **Rachel Hirshorn-Johnston** is the dialects and voice director.

### **Accessibility and Special Performances**

At Ford's Theatre, we are committed to ensuring visitors of all abilities can experience the performances, exhibits, history and programs our site has to offer. Ford's Theatre is accessible to persons with disabilities, offering wheelchair accessible seating in both the rear orchestra and balcony sections, accessible restrooms and audio enhancement. For more, [visit the accessibility page](#) on our website.

**Audio-described** performances of *The American Five* are **Thursday, October 2 at 7 p.m.** and **Saturday, October 11 at 2 p.m.** An **ASL sign-interpreted** performance is scheduled for **Thursday, October 9 at 7 p.m.** Accessible seating is available in the rear orchestra.

Beginning Tuesday, September 23, 2025 all performances of *The American Five* 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 can set their phones to airplane mode and connect to the local GalaPro WiFi network before the performance begins. More information at [www.fords.org/visit/accessibility/galapro-captioning](http://www.fords.org/visit/accessibility/galapro-captioning).

**Free First Preview: September 19, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.**

Ford's Theatre partners with TodayTix to give out free tickets for the first performance of each mainstage production in our theatrical season. Tickets are available via the TodayTix app, **beginning 9 a.m. ET on September 15 for the September 19 at 7:30 p.m.** performance of *The American Five*. Visit our website at [www.fords.org/whats-happening/discounts/first-free-preview/](http://www.fords.org/whats-happening/discounts/first-free-preview/) for lottery entry details. Discounts are available for groups, senior citizens, military personnel and young professionals. The **lottery will close at 11:59 p.m. on September 17.**

**Teacher Preview Workshop: September 23, 2025 at 7 p.m.**

**Student matinees** for *The American Five* are on **Friday, October 3, 2025** and **Wednesday, October 8, 2025 at 12 p.m.** Learn more on the Ford's Theatre website.

### **Public Programs**

As a companion to the production, we are offering virtual and in-person programming to delve deeper into the history and theatrical perspectives of this piece.

#### **Cabinet Conversations: *The American Five***

Live Stream: September 27 12:30-1:30 p.m.

History often highlights a few names, but lasting change in American democracy is powered by many voices. Explore some of the unsung heroes of the civil rights movement, the challenges of preserving their stories and the enduring inspiration of the "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial. Join us for this enlightened conversation with playwright Chess Jakobs and director Aaron Posner from the Ford's Theatre World Premiere production of *The American Five*.

Registration for this live stream event will be available in August. Please check back on [fords.org](http://fords.org) for more information.

### **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 Award®-nominated *Come From Away* and the nationally acclaimed *Big River*, to the world premieres of *Grace*, *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. 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 the Ford's Theatre Society, please visit [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org).

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Ford's Education on Twitter: [@fordsedu](https://twitter.com/fordsedu)

Website: [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)

**#FordsTheAmericanFive**

## **FACT SHEET: *The American Five***

**By Chess Jakobs; Directed by Aaron Posner**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his inner circle imagined a pluralistic society in which equality and justice is guaranteed for all. In the face of surveillance, intimidation, arrests and life threats, five giants form a powerful coalition to advance civil rights and shape a defining moment in American history. Together, Dr. King, Coretta Scott King, Bayard Rustin, Stanley Levison and Clarence B. Jones plan the March on Washington and craft the speech that would galvanize the nation and inspire generations to advance America's efforts to turn a dream into reality.

**Dates:** September 19-October 12, 2025. Previews begin September 19.

**Press Night/Media Performance:** Invite Only

**VIP Opening Night:** Invite Only

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

**Times:** Check times [here](#).

**Tickets:** Ticket prices range from **\$26 to \$53** with \$5 service fees. [Get tickets here](#).

### **Events and Programs:**

- ☐ Our [Free First Preview](#) through TodayTix will be on **Friday, September 19, 2025**.
- ☐ Teacher Preview Workshop will be on **Tuesday, September 23, 2025** and Student Matinees will be on **October 3, 2025** and **October 8, 2025**.

**Accessibility:** Audio-described performances are **Thursday, October 2 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, October 11 at 2 p.m.** An **ASL sign-interpreted** performance is scheduled for **Thursday, October 9 at 7 p.m.** Beginning **Tuesday, September 23, 2025**, all performances will be **captioned via the GalaPro App**. For more, [visit the accessibility page](#) on our website.

**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:** The Metro Center station (Red, Blue, Orange and Silver Lines) is two- and one-half blocks north of the theatre from the Eleventh Street exit. The Gallery Place-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.

Learn more about [The American Five](#) and upcoming shows in Ford's Theatre's [2025-2026 season](#) on our website.

Use our hashtag on social media: **#FordsTheAmericanFive**

[www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)

**Information:** (202) 347-4833 – Toll Free: (888) 616-0270 – Groups: (202) 638-2367

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**TikTok:** [@fordstheatredc](#) and **Ford's Education on Twitter:** [@fordsedu](#)

**SHOW STYLE GUIDE: *The American Five***

**By Chess Jakobs; Directed by Aaron Posner**

This is a short style guide with our recommendations on various preferences regarding *The American Five* to inform your coverage of this new work.

- ☐ Please use the full title of the play, *The American Five*, on all references.
- ☐ Our recommended hashtag for the show is #FordsTheAmericanFive.