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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Abraham Lincoln Institute and Ford's Theatre Society Present the 29th Annual Abraham Lincoln Institute Symposium

Saturday, March 21, 2026, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

[Tickets Available Now](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Ford's Theatre Society and the Abraham Lincoln Institute (ALI) are pleased to announce the **29th Annual Abraham Lincoln Institute Symposium**, taking place **Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Ford's Theatre** in Washington, D.C., co-sponsored by the **Lincoln Group of DC**, which helped originally conceive of the event. This full-day event brings together distinguished scholars and public figures for discussions on President Abraham Lincoln's life, leadership and enduring impact on American civic life—especially in connection with the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Under the theme “Abraham Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence, and the State of Civic Life Today,” the 2026 symposium will feature a dynamic program of panel conversations that explore Lincoln’s historical legacy, the origins of the Civil War, democratic principles and how Lincoln’s ideas continue to resonate in contemporary civic discourse.

“Each year, the Abraham Lincoln Institute Symposium offers audiences the chance to hear directly from leading historians and engage with current scholarship on Abraham Lincoln,” said **Paul R. Tetreault**, director of Ford's Theatre. “By bringing these conversations to Ford's Theatre, the program helps place Lincoln’s leadership in historical context while inviting the public to consider its relevance to civic life today.”

This free, full-day event is open to the public. Advance tickets are encouraged and available now, with seating offered on a first-come, first-served basis on the day of the event.

Symposium Panels and Featured Conversations

The symposium will feature four main panel discussions, including:

- ***Paths to the Civil War***—A conversation between Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Edda Fields-Black** (Carnegie Mellon University), author of *COMBEE: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom during the Civil War*, and **Richard Carwardine** (Oxford University), author of *Righteous Strife: How Warring Religious Nationalists Forged Lincoln's Union*, moderated by **Steve Inskeep** of NPR.
- ***Lincoln and the Declaration's Promise of Equality***—A dialogue with **Akhil Amar** (Yale Law School), author of *Born Equal: Remaking America's Constitution, 1840-1920* (ALI's 2026 book prize winner), and **Lucas Morel** (Washington and Lee University), author of *Lincoln and the American Founding* and *Measuring the Man: The Writings of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln*, moderated by **Jeff Rosen**, CEO Emeritus of the National Constitution Center and Professor of Law at The George Washington University Law School.
- ***Lincoln and Democracy in the Past, Present, and Future***—A panel with Pulitzer Prize-winning historian **Annette Gordon-Reed**, author of *The Heminges of Monticello*, and biographer **Richard Brookhiser**, author of *Founder's Son: A Life of Abraham Lincoln*, moderated by journalist **Judy Woodruff**.
- ***Lincoln, the Declaration, and Civic Life Today***—A concluding session featuring **David Rubenstein** in discussion with the symposium's invited speakers on Lincoln's place in American civic life. Rubenstein is CEO of the Carlyle Group and author of *Abraham Lincoln: His Life in Print*.

The symposium will also feature live music by American folk musicians Jay Ungar and Molly Mason, who will be performing their hit "Ashokan Farewell."

Reserve your tickets now on the Ford's Theatre website. In addition to the speakers, we will hold book signings and opportunities for patrons to explore Lincoln's history with our esteemed guests. Each discussion will conclude with audience questions. Authors will sign books in the Ford's Theatre lobby. Books will be available for purchase at the Ford's Theatre Gift Shop on the day of the symposium.

Ford's Theatre and the Abraham Lincoln Institute thank the **National Endowment for the Humanities** for their generous grant in support of this program.

To learn more, please visit <https://fords.org/event/abraham-lincoln-institute-symposium/>.

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 Washington, D.C. 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*, *The Guard*, *Grace*, *Something Moving* and *The American Five*, 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 Theatre endeavors today 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.

The Abraham Lincoln Institute

The Abraham Lincoln Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting scholarship on the life, times, and legacy of Abraham Lincoln through a free annual symposium, book and dissertation prizes, and a lifetime achievement award. For more information on the Abraham Lincoln Institute, please visit www.lincoln-institute.org.

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