

PRESS RELEASE

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**NEXT UP ON PSALM'S SALONS AT STUDIO: DC WOMEN OF COLOR IN THEATRE;
SERIES EXTENDED**

Studio's series of digital salons—**Psalm's Salons at Studio**—continues its exploration of equity in theatre on **August 20 at 5 p.m.** with **Natalie Graves Tucker, Farah Lawal Harris, and Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi**. Together they represent numerous facets of the region's arts sector—organizational leadership, playwrights, actors, directors, and more. With host **Psalmayene 24**, the panel will discuss navigating the theatre industry as a woman of color, support systems for women of color in the arts, and opportunities for trans and non-binary people in the field. Occurring shortly before the March on Washington and during the centenary of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, guests will also share their experiences during the ongoing global protests for racial justice and their power in our current political moment.

Events are free and streamed live on Studio Theatre's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

The series has also been extended—Studio will present three additional broadcasts once a month, from September–November 2020.

Psalm's Salons are an online gathering space to highlight the work of creatives, signal-boost local and Black-owned businesses, kick back to live music, and promote a sense of community. Each broadcast, **DJ Nick tha 1da** spins live music, sampling from the Library of Congress Citizen DJ tool.

"I'm beyond excited to have Natalie, Farah, and Dane as guests for this upcoming salon as they represent a few of the most compelling artists in the DMV. It's especially gratifying to be amplifying these phenomenal Black women's voices at a time when the value of Black lives is a central and urgent public issue," said **Psalmayene 24**.

"Psalm's last two Salons have really captured something of the communal feeling I miss so much from making plays—interesting artists, talking about art in ways that are engaging and challenging. Dane, Farah, and Natalie are such smart theatremakers, working across many different parts of DC's theater ecosystem. I'm looking forward to hearing their take on our current moment as well as their plans and dreams for what's next," said Studio's Artistic Director **David Muse**.

Psalm's Salons are supported by a capacity building grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's (DDCF) Building Demand for the Arts program. The program funds artists and arts institutions working to forge long-lasting relationships with diverse audiences. Studio, working with Psalm, has committed to expand on its efforts to forge meaningful connections with African American millennial audiences in DC. The grant funds engagement efforts through the 2020-2021 season.

DDCF's Building Demand for the Arts program supports organizations and artists in joint efforts to ignite interest and engagement in jazz, theatre, and contemporary dance. This program is predicated on the beliefs that artists are key connectors to communities, and that artists and organizations can work together in imaginative new ways to attract and engage audiences. These grants also promote deeper partnerships, longer relationships, and new kinds of conversation and cooperation between organizations and artists.

About the Artists

Psalmayene 24 (host) is an award-winning director, playwright, and actor. Directing credits include *Native Son* by Nambi E. Kelley at Mosaic Theater Company, *Word Becomes Flesh* (recipient of five 2017 Helen Hayes Awards, including Outstanding Direction of a Play) by Marc Bamuthi Joseph at Theater Alliance, and *The Shipment* by Young Jean Lee at Forum Theatre. He has received commissions from the African Continuum Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Imagination Stage, The Kennedy Center, Theater Alliance, Solas Nua, and Mosaic Theater Company. His one-man play, *Free Jujube Brown!*, is published in the anthology *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy: Theater from the Hip-Hop Generation* (TCG).

Nick "tha 1da" Hernandez's (DJ/Sound Design) recent work includes: *The Hip-Hop Children's Trilogy* with playwright Psalmayene 24 (Imagination Stage); *Fences* (Ford's Theater); *Native Son* and *Les Deux Noir* (Mosaic Theater); *Word Becomes Flesh* (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Production) at Theater Alliance; *Long Way Down* and *Darius & Twig* (The Kennedy Center); and *Havana Hop* and *All the Way Live* with sibling Paige Hernandez (Discovery Theater). Additionally, Nick has produced for Hot 97 FM, Red Bull Big Tune, Netflix, DC Public Library system, and Smithsonian Associates.

Natalie Graves Tucker is an actor, voiceover artist, communications professional, and hustler. She is the Executive Director for Artomatic, Social Media Manager for Theater Alliance, and Founder of Blackstage DC. After 20 years, she walked away from a multicultural marketing career at AARP to be an artist full time. She has appeared on DC-area stages such as Studio Theatre, Theater Alliance, African Continuum Theatre, Folger Theatre, and 1st Stage. She can be seen in training videos for AARP, AETNA, and the US Postal Service, and in commercials for Pillpack, NFL Shop, and America's Best Eyewear.

Farah Lawal Harris (she/her/hers) is a first-generation Nigerian playwright, actress, poet, mother, Artistic Director of Young Playwrights' Theater (YPT), and Producing Playwright with The Welders. Farah also co-founded DC-based theatre companies The Saartjie Project and Wild Women Theatre. She deeply believes in the power of Black womxn and their stories and aims to make people feel less alone through her art, which is her activism. At YPT, she created the social justice performance series *Silence is Violence* and was included on the 2020 Kilroys List. For more information, visit farahlawalharris.com.

Dubbed the Ancient Jazz Priestess of Mother Africa, **Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi** is a Nigerian, Cuban, Indigenous, American Performance Artist, Author, Playwright (*Klytmnestra: An Epic Slam Poem, For Black Trans Girls...*, *Ghost/Writer*), a two-time Helen Hayes Award-nominated Choreographer (2016, 2018), Advocate (*Founder of the Inanna D Initiatives*), Educator, and co-editor of the *Black Trans Prayer Book*. She is the first Trans woman of color to be nominated for a Helen Hayes Award (2016), and in DC to publish a work of Fiction (*Yemaya's Daughters* (2013)). She costars as Patra and acts a story consultant for the new web series *King Ester*.

ABOUT STUDIO THEATRE

Studio Theatre is Washington's premier venue for contemporary theatre, "where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights" (*Variety*). One of the most respected midsized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings

characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio's work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

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