



ARENA STAGE AND THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND 2014-15 AUDIO DESCRIPTION SERVICES

In an effort to broaden theater access to potential patrons who are blind or vision impaired, the American Council of the Blind through its Audio Description Project has partnered with Arena Stage to make live audio description available at **every performance** of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which runs October 31, 2014-January 4, 2015, and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, which runs April 3-May 3, 2015 at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION AT ARENA STAGE

In 1981, Arena Stage became the first theater to create and offer audio-described performances, in conjunction with The Metropolitan Washington Ear, for patrons who are blind or visually impaired. Audio description is typically offered at one or two designated performances during the run of each production at Arena Stage, and this new audio description initiative with the American Council of the Blind offers patrons the freedom and flexibility to attend any performance throughout the runs of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* with no advance planning or notice required to request these services.

ABOUT AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Audio description is a narration service that provides succinct and vivid language to make the visual images of a theatrical production accessible to people who are blind, have low vision or are otherwise visually impaired. Audio description is typically a carefully timed live commentary of onstage action that guides the listener through new scenes, set designs, costumes, movement and body language. Audio description at Arena Stage is broadcast to an earpiece connected to a small handheld device via an FM transmitter and steno-mask microphone.

Through the initiative with the American Council of the Blind, an audio describer will have the opportunity to attend rehearsals at Arena Stage in order to develop an audio description script and will then make their live narration services available at every performance during the runs of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. Additional offerings include Braille program booklets and a “touch book” that will include swatches of costumes used in the productions.

For more information on the American Council for the Blind’s Audio Description Project, visit acb.org/adp.

For more information on audio-described performances at Arena Stage and to purchase tickets, visit: arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/accessibility/audio-described/index.shtml.

American Council of the Blind Contact: Joel Snyder, jsnyder@audiodescribe.com, 301 920-0218

Arena Stage Contact: Greta Hays, press@arenastage.org, 202-600-4056

###