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James Ijames, Blanka Zizka, Yury Urnov, and Morgan Green.

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For the Wilma's Next Chapter: Four Artistic Directors Instead of One

James Ijames, Yury Urnov, and Morgan Green will join Blanka Zizka in a rotating leadership model, and Leigh Goldenberg has been named managing director.

BY AMERICAN THEATRE EDITORS

PHILADELPHIA: The [Wilma Theater](#) has announced multiple changes in their leadership, including the introduction of director Morgan Green, performer and playwright [James Ijames](#), and director Yury Urnov as three new co-artistic directors under the leadership of longtime artistic director [Blanka Zizka](#), and Leigh Goldenberg as the theatre's new managing director. The Wilma is calling this new artistic vision "The Next Chapter."

"The Wilma Next Chapter is an exciting, bold rethinking of how to run a major regional theatre," said Wilma board chair John Rollins in a statement. "We are creating a new artistic leadership model based in collaboration, trust, and multiplicity of voices. I am excited for our audiences and supporters to embrace this new vision and to see it impact the national scene."

Beginning in 2020, Green, Ijames, and Urnov will join artistic director Zizka as a team of rotating artistic leaders. As part of this new collaborative process, each co-artistic director will have the chance to serve as the lead artistic director for one season while collaborating with the other co-artistic directors for the other seasons.

The 2019-20 season will be Zizka's last as sole artistic director. After that, Urnov will serve as the lead artistic director for the 2020-21 season, followed by Ijames in 2021-22, then Green in 2022-23. The lead artistic director, in collaboration with the co-artistic directors, will be in charge of selecting the season's shows as well as the artistic teams. The artistic director cohort will also help develop new work and other artistic ventures while supporting the Wilma's fundraising and marketing.

"I'm thrilled for these three artists to join me in the artistic leadership of the Wilma," Zizka said in a statement. "Together we will create a new energy, develop new ideas and aesthetics, invigorate our programming, and in collaboration with the rigorous artistry of HotHouse actors bring a new richness and excitement into the Wilma productions."

While Zizka will remain in a central role as one of the four co-artistic directors, she will also continue to oversee the Wilma HotHouse company, the theatre's five-year-old resident

company, which incubates new work and inspired the idea for and values of the “Next Chapter.”

Goldenberg, the new managing director, will replace interim managing director Neil Kutner. Former managing director [James Haskins](#) left the Wilma to join the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis in March 2019 after 13 seasons with the Wilma. Previously, Goldenberg served as the executive director of Theatre Philadelphia where she started Philly Theatre Week.

Morgan Green, who hails from the San Francisco Bay Area, is a co-founder of New Saloon, a Brooklyn-based experimental theatre company. James Ijames is a Philly-based performer and playwright who has appeared regionally and nationally and whose plays have been produced all over the U.S.; he is also a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia's first playwright producing collective. And Yury Urnov is a Moscow-born director who has helmed more than 40 productions in his home country, Europe, and Africa, and who in the U.S. recently directed *Hedda Gabler* and *Ubu Roi* at Cutting Ball Theater in San Francisco, *Thr3e Zisters* at Salvage Vanguard Theater in Austin, *The Pillowman* at Forum Theater in D.C., and *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* at the Wilma.

The Wilma Theatre, founded in 1973, develops adventurous works that reflect contemporary life and all its intricacies. Zizka has been the theatre's artistic director since 1981.

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The season will feature the world premiere of a 'Hamlet' adaptation from James Ijames and productions of 'Fairview' and 'Heroes of the Fourth Turning.'



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