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## N E W S      R E L E A S E

### PORTLAND CENTER STAGE'S 2008-2009 SEASON CELEBRATES THE GENIUS AND MADNESS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

*20<sup>th</sup> Century classics and hot off the press World Premieres will explore the great questions of the modern era.*

**February 25, 2008-** From scientists on the brink of breakthrough to politicians on the brink of disgrace to Rock star talent blooming in the glare of reality TV, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century will get a full and public airing during Portland Center Stage's just announced **2008-2009 Season**, exploring along the way some of the most profound, unsettling and entertaining questions of modern life.

The 9 play lineup includes a string of classics that go right to the heart of modern iconography: the quintessential American musical *Guys and Dolls*, the classic satire of contemporary manners, Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the return of Mead Hunter's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. Some of the most fascinating personalities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be explored, from philosopher scientists in *R. Buckminster Fuller: The History (and Mystery) of the Universe*, to unforgettable public figures in *Frost/Nixon*, to intriguing social mavens in *Grey Gardens*. Rounding out the season will be a trio of premieres: The American Premiere of *How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found*, Nancy Keystone's epic World Premiere, *Apollo*, and a brave new work from a woman at the epicenter of America's thirst for homegrown superstars: Storm Large's autobiographical *Crazy Enough*.

Why did we go to the moon (and what did it cost us?) What do we owe to our public figures? And what do they owe us? What's the price of fame? How do we decide who we are? And what do we do when identity fails? These are just some of the questions raised by this heady and ambitious season. The Main Stage will open with *Guys and Dolls*, the deliciously entertaining gangster fable that helped to make gangsters and their molls into enduring archetypes of American life. *Guys and Dolls* will play on the Main Stage **Sept. 23 – Oct. 6, 2008**.

Opening the Studio theater season will be *R. Buckminster Fuller: The History (and Mystery) of the Universe*, a one man show that takes you inside the mind of one of the foremost scientists and philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most famous for his invention of the geodesic dome, Buckminster Fuller was a prolific scientist, philosopher and engineer who dedicated his life the question: Does humanity have a chance to endure successfully on planet Earth, and if so, how? *R. Buckminster Fuller: The History (and Mystery) of the Universe* will play in the Studio **Oct. 14 – Dec. 7, 2008**.

The holidays will bring the return of Mead Hunter's smash hit adaptation of the holiday classic *A Christmas Carol*, updated with new surprises that will stretch the technical capacity of PCS beautiful new Main Stage and revive the perennial question of the season of sharing: Where does wealth reside? In our net worth or in our relationships? *A Christmas Carol* will play on the Main Stage **Dec. 2 - 28, 2008**.

The New Year will bring the unveiling of Nancy Keystone's *Apollo*. This sprawling World Premiere multi-media event explores the birth of the U.S. space program, its employment of former Nazi scientists and their surprising intersection with the Civil Rights Movement, diving along the way into some of the headiest issues of the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, asking: What did we sacrifice to become the America we are today? And was it worth it? *Apollo* plays on the Main Stage **Jan. 13 - Feb. 8, 2009**.

The problems of notoriety and identity get turned upside down in *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found*, an American Premiere production from Fin Kennedy that follows an advertising executive down the rabbit hole of modern bureaucracy as he attempts to systematically erase all official record of his existence. It's a shockingly inventive answer to the question: What do you do when your identity becomes a trap? *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found* will play in the Studio **Jan. 27 – Mar. 22, 2009**.

Meanwhile on the Main Stage, the “trap” of identity will get a stylish makeover with Oscar Wilde’s turn-of-the-century mistaken identity romp *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In it, two gentlemen seek to woo two lovely, smart and stylish women. The catch? They’ve both assumed the name of Ernest (for delightfully complicated reasons) and now the women think they are in love with the same man. What’s in a name? Indeed. *The Importance of Being Earnest* will play on the Main Stage **Feb. 24 – Mar. 22, 2009**.

The spring will bring the return of one of the most fascinating personalities to grace the PCS stage when Storm Large presents her World Premiere autobiographical musical *Crazy Enough*. Rock and roll goddess, breakthrough actress and reality TV veteran, Storm started life with a terrible secret: at 9 years old she was told she would be clinically insane before she was 30. Through stories and song, Storm reveals the provocative answers she found to the question: How do you survive (and thrive) knowing that everything you know about yourself could disappear tomorrow? *Crazy Enough* will premiere in the Studio **Mar. 31 – Jun. 7, 2009**.

No exploration of the American century would be complete without its most controversial President. In Peter Morgan’s *Frost/Nixon*, the final hours of Nixon’s presidency are presented with ticking time bomb intensity under the baleful glare of studio lights. In it, journalist David Frost turns the screws on the man behind the Watergate scandal, ultimately wresting a tacit admission of guilt from the president. This probing drama from the screenwriter of *The Last King of Scotland* asks the audience to consider: What role should our public figures play? And how do the media both define and obscure that role? *Frost/Nixon* will play on the Main Stage **Apr. 14 – May 10, 2009**.

The season will close with one last tale of madness in the glare of public life: *Grey Gardens*, the smash musical sensation about Edith Bouvier Beale and her daughter, “Little Edie,” the eccentric relatives of Jackie Kennedy Onassis. Once the brightest names in the New York social register, these two women became notorious East Hampton recluses. From the glittering high society of 1940s New York to the tabloid headlines that rocked the Kennedy clan in the ‘70s, *Grey Gardens* takes you inside the fascinating world of “America’s royalty,” asking: When should the private be made public? And what are the limits of America’s right to know? *Grey Gardens* will play on the Main Stage **May 26 – Jun. 21, 2009**.

Season subscriptions open for sale on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Subscriptions range from \$50 - \$538. Single tickets range from \$28.50 to \$68.50 with \$10 Rush Tickets available for all performances 15 minutes before show time, cash sales only. **The 30 and under discount returns this year**, with a \$20 ticket available to all students and patrons under 30 years old. Evening performances in both the Main Stage and the Studio begin at 7:30 pm, with weekday matinees at noon and weekend matinees at 2 pm.

**PORTLAND CENTER STAGE** inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as an offshoot of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including the PCS GreenHouse, a school of theater.

**THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY** houses a 599-seat Main Stage and a 200-seat black box Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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**Main Stage**

**Studio**

***Guys and Dolls***

A Musical Fable of Broadway  
based on a story and characters of Damon Runyon  
Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser  
Book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows  
directed by Chris Coleman  
**September 23 – October 26, 2008**

***R. Buckminster Fuller: The History  
[and Mystery] of the Universe***  
written and directed by D.W. Jacobs  
**October 14 – December 7, 2008**

***A Christmas Carol***

adapted by Mead Hunter  
from the Novel by Charles Dickens  
**December 2- 28, 2008**

American Premiere  
***How to Disappear Completely  
and Never Be Found***  
by Fin Kennedy  
directed by Rose Riordan  
**January 27 – March 22, 2009**

World Premiere

***Apollo***

written and directed by Nancy Keystone  
**January 13 – February 8, 2009**

***The Importance of Being Earnest***

by Oscar Wilde  
directed by Chris Coleman  
**February 24 – March 22, 2009**

World Premiere  
***Crazy Enough***  
written and performed by Storm Large  
directed by Chris Coleman  
**March 31 – June 7, 2009**

***Frost/Nixon***

by Peter Morgan  
Directed by Rose Riordan  
**April 14 – May 10, 2009**

***Grey Gardens***

book by Doug Wright, music by Scott Frankel, and lyrics by Michael Korie  
Director TBA  
**May 26 – June 21, 2009**