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PORTLAND CENTER STAGE RECEIVES \$100,000 AMERICAN EXPRESS GRANT

- Selected to receive one of 12 American Express Performing Arts Fund grants for 2006 -

PORTLAND – August 11, 2006 – American Express today announced Portland Center Stage has been selected as one of the 12 recipients of the American Express Performing Arts Fund grants for 2006. Portland Center Stage will use the grant to help implement several new education, audience enrichment, and community outreach programs being launched this season with PCS’s move to the new Gerding Theater at the Armory. American Express Company’s grant will help support special “Neighborhood Nights” at the theater and “Presentation Skills for Professionals” workshops, as well as content development for the interactive multimedia displays that will be part of the Gerding Theater’s lobby.

“American Express Foundation's generous gift will enable us to introduce new audiences to Portland Center Stage,” said Portland Center Stage Managing Director, Edith Love. “We are particularly excited that their support will allow us to enter into a new area of audience education through the introduction of interactive media screens located in the lobby of our new home in the Gerding Theater at the Armory.”

Demonstrating its ongoing commitment to preserving and enriching the performing arts, American Express Company announced \$1.3 million in grants to be awarded to 12 institutions nationwide to help energize, educate and entice new audiences. Portland Center Stage was chosen as one of the recipients through a highly competitive selection process.

“American Express has been a long time supporter of culture and the arts because of the powerful role they play in the community. Through music and the performing arts, creativity prospers, diversity is celebrated, and local businesses and economies are supported,” said Timothy J. McClimon, president of the American Express Foundation.

“We are thrilled to give Portland Center Stage this grant to attract new and diverse audiences and to help break down barriers to public participation in the arts.”

The American Express Performing Arts Fund was created in 1997 to assist performing arts institutions across the United States to attract broader audiences. Since then, American Express has given almost \$11 million in 107 grants to 58 performing arts institutions throughout the country through this initiative.

The 12 recipients of the 2006 Performing Arts Fund grants are Berkeley Repertory Theatre (Berkeley, CA), The Blumenthal Performing Arts Center (Charlotte, NC), Boston Lyric Opera (Boston, MA), Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Chicago, IL), The Dallas Opera (Dallas, TX), Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis, MN), New York City Opera (New York, NY), New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation (New Orleans, LA), Pennsylvania Ballet (Philadelphia, PA), Portland Center Stage (Portland, OR), San Francisco Opera (San Francisco, CA), and Shakespeare Theatre Company (Washington DC).

Following the mission of the Performing Arts Fund, this year’s grant recipients will use the awards from American Express to increase linkages with existing audiences as well as to attract new and diverse audiences to the arts.

About American Express

American Express Philanthropy makes grants in three major program areas: Cultural Heritage, Economic Independence and Community Service. In 2005, contributions totaled more than \$31 million. Grants, made on behalf of the American Express family of companies, enrich the lives of American Express customers, their families and their communities.

American Express Company (www.americanexpress.com) is a leading global payments, network and travel company founded in 1850.

About Portland Center Stage

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE, established in 1988, is Portland's flagship theater company, attracting more than 90,000 theatergoers annually. With five main stage and four studio theater productions on the 2006-2007 Season, PCS produces a blend of classical, contemporary and world premiere works in addition to its annual summer playwrights festival, Just Add Water/West. PCS is engaged in a \$36 million capital campaign to renovate the historic Portland Armory and create a permanent home for the company in Portland's Pearl District. The Gerding Theater at the Armory, which will house a 599-seat main stage and a 200-seat black box theater, is designed to be the first historic renovation, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. To date, more than \$26 million has been secured for the project. The new Gerding Theater opens to the public with an all-day celebration on October 1, 2006.

Portland Center Stage 2006-2007 Inaugural Season in the Gerding Theater at the Armory

- *West Side Story*, Book by Arthur Laurents; Music by Leonard Bernstein; Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Directed by Chris Coleman, October 3 – November 5, 2006, Main Stage
- *I Am My Own Wife* by Doug Wright, Directed by Victor Pappas, November 7 – December 17, 2006, Studio
- *This Wonderful Life* by Steve Murray, Conceived by Mark Setlock, Directed by Cliff Baker, November 26 – December 24, 2006, Main Stage
- *Misalliance* by George Bernard Shaw, Directed by Chris Coleman, January 9-February 4, 2007, Main Stage
- *Act a Lady* by Jordan Harrison, Directed by Cliff Baker, January 28 – March 11, 2007, Studio
- *The Thugs* by Adam Bock, Directed by Rose Riordan, Feb. 9 – March 10, 2007 (10:30 pm, Friday and Saturday nights only), Studio
- *The Pillowman* by Martin McDonagh, Directed by Rose Riordan, February 18 – March 18, 2007, Main Stage
- *Fences*, by August Wilson, Directed by Jonathan Wilson. April 10-May 6, 2007, Main Stage
- *Bad Dates* by Theresa Rebeck, Directed by Timothy Near, April 15 – June 10, 2007, Studio