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M E D I A R E L E A S E

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE TO CELEBRATE THE BLUES

Announcing a change in programming for the 2011-2012 season

November 4, 2011 – PORTLAND, ORE. Artistic Director Chris Coleman announced today a change in the 2011-2012 season lineup at Portland Center Stage. The final production of the season will be the Tony-nominated, Broadway musical [*It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*](#), by Charles Bevel, Lita Gaithers, Randal Myler, Ron Taylor and Dan Wheelman. The originally planned season closer *The Universal Mind* has been postponed.



"We've had our eyes—and ears—on *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* for a few years now," said Coleman, "but hadn't yet managed to program it into a season. When we realized we'd need to replace *The Universal Mind* this season it seemed like the perfect option, and we were fortunate that co-creator/director Randal Myler was available to come to Portland at the right time. *Blues* is just the excitement we need to close out the season."

From African chants and Delta spirituals to the urban electricity of a Chicago nightclub, from dusty backroads bluegrass to the twang of a country juke joint, *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* is a stirring retrospective of blues classics that summons the soul of American music. Over two dozen musical numbers are featured, including "I'm Your Hoochie-Coochie Man," "Goodnight, Irene," "Fever," "Walkin' After Midnight," "The Thrill is Gone" and "Let the Good Times Roll."

Described by Lincoln Center in New York, presenter of the Broadway run, as "a terrifically entertaining revue which traces the history of the blues from its origins in Africa through the American South to all points beyond," *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* was cheered at theaters around the country as it made its way to New York in 1996.

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues begins previews on Tuesday, May 22, **opens on Friday, May 25** and runs Tuesday through Sunday on the Main Stage through **June 24, 2012**. Tickets are on sale now and range from \$25 - \$69. Patrons who already had tickets to *The Universal Mind* have been contacted and will receive tickets to *Blues* for the same date and time as their previously issued tickets. More information on *Blues*, including how to purchase tickets, is available at www.pcs.org/blues.

Planning for the current season began in the fall of 2010, when *The Universal Mind* was first proposed by Randy Johnson, also the creator of last season's popular *One Night with Janis Joplin*. Almost immediately there developed a tremendous amount of interest to develop the project from a number of key partners, but over the course of the past year all parties realized that, in the current economic climate, more time would be needed to fully develop the resources to properly launch the complex piece.

“Season selection is part science and part alchemy,” explained Coleman. “The alchemy part—what is the most exciting art we can present? Who are the artists we most want to work with? —is absorbing, but the science part—what is the best balance to a season? How can we harness the resources required to do the work we’d like to do?—is also necessary. This sometimes means that, particularly with world premieres, we find we need to alter a plan made a year earlier. We do everything we can to present the season as announced, but in the months from when we select our season to when we actually launch it, many things can happen—ranging from artist availability changes to resource development—that make it necessary for us to be nimble and have alternatives ready.” For more insight by Chris Coleman into how seasons are programmed, visit www.pcs.org/season-selection.

Critical response for *It Ain’t Nothin’ But the Blues*:

"Lifts you up, lays you out and leaves you screaming for more!" —*Denver Post*

"A nonstop, joyous spree of entertainment!" — *Newark Star-Ledger*

"If you're looking for a good time, you won't be disappointed!" — *Baltimore Sun*

"Looking for a sure cure to the blues? Latch on to a ticket for *IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES*. More than a musical feast... it is a potent blend of visual eloquence and historical sweep that engages the eye and touches the heart, while its songs soothe the ear, occasionally work mischief on the funny bone and always raise the spirits." — *The New York Times*

"This is a rip-roaring experience! Things are really boppin' and hoppin' at this foot-stomping tribute to the blues. It is one of those galvanizing shows that defies you to sit silently in your seat. *IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES* will leave you feeling exhilarated!" — *Daily News*

“A master class on the birth of the blues.” — *NJ Star Ledger*

[PORTLAND CENTER STAGE](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as a branch 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 discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY houses a 599-seat Main Stage and the 200-seat black box Ellyn Bye 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.