



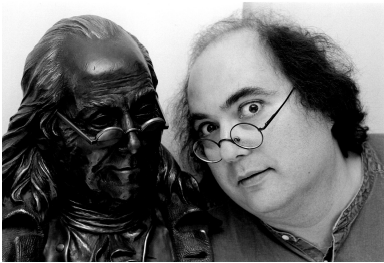
PRESS CONTACT: Trisha Pancio
503.445.3763
trishap@pcs.org

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

3 SHOWS IN, 3 SHOWS OUT AND ONE SHOW KICKED UPSTAIRS: ANNOUNCING A RESHUFFLED 2009/2010 PCS SEASON

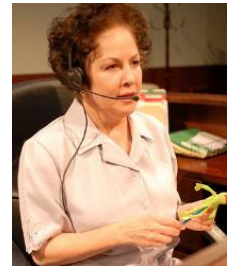
Two Broadway glitches and a pair of runaway hits cause Portland Center Stage to reshuffle the deck of the 2009/2010 Season, mixing in a Receptionist, a beloved Founding Father and a wild Indian Adventure.

May 14, 2009- Three studio titles will change and one production will move to the Main Stage in a major revision of the Portland Center Stage 2009/2010 season. Early strong seller *The Chosen* will move to the Main Stage, replacing *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (which will be deferred to future season). In the studio, a possible Broadway tour causes our production of *Thurgood Marshall* to be postponed, and *The Best So Far* will be put on hold to give it a bit more gestation (and New York fundraising) time.



In exchange, Portland Center Stage invites the return of last season's runaway fringe hit *The Receptionist* (remounted in the studio by our own Rose Riordon) plus *Ben Franklin Unplugged* (a meditation on fatherhood through the cracked lens of one of our beloved founding fathers) and *Mike's Incredible Indian Adventure* (think dots, not feathers... with a bit of *Waiting for Guffman* thrown in for good measure).

The reshuffled season achieves a couple of important goals: It retains the over all scope and scale of the original season (10 shows on 2 stages with the right mix of music, drama, humor and relevance) while allowing us to capitalize on the unexpected success of two smart shows that deserve to reach a wider audience (*The Receptionist* and *The Chosen*).



Simultaneously with the season re-edit, Portland Center Stage leadership have been busy with a backstage edit, trimming the season budget by a prudent 12%, in ways that will be largely invisible to the theatergoing audience, all while maintaining current staffing and salary levels.

Artistic Director Chris Coleman explains,

*"If you have to make changes to a season after you've announced,
you would be hard pressed to find a more exciting list of shows.
The Josh Kornbluth piece is fascinating,
I am delighted we get to offer a longer life to a show as exciting as The Receptionist
and Mike's Incredible Indian Adventure is going to be a hoot and a half."*

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The complete **revised 2009/2010 season schedule** is as follows:

Ragtime

Book by Terrence McNally, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, and music by Stephen Flaherty

Directed by Chris Coleman

(Main Stage)

September 22 to November 1, 2009

(Please note: This is pushed back a week from the original opening)

E.L. Doctorow's sweeping novel comes vividly to life in this Tony Award-winning musical, set against the backdrop of the ragtime craze in New York City. In it, three disparate families intertwine: a wealthy white couple; a Jewish immigrant father and his motherless daughter; and an African American ragtime musician who teaches them all about the surprising interconnections of the human heart, the limitations of justice and the unsettling consequences of dreams permanently deferred. Historical figures like Harry Houdini, J.P. Morgan and Emma Goldman also inhabit this stirring epic, but it is American popular music that carries the story, including marches, cakewalks and -- of course -- ragtime.

New! Ben Franklin: Unplugged

Written and performed by Josh Kornbluth

(Ellyn Bye Studio)

Sept. 29 – Nov. 22, 2009

“This “Ben” is healthy, hilarious and wise...a hilariously disarming, enchanting, and ingenious tale.” Rob Hurwitt, San Francisco Chronicle

Gazing into the bathroom mirror one morning while shaving, Josh Kornbluth realizes that he looks remarkably like the guy on the \$100 bill. Like any good Jewish son, he immediately calls his mother. From there he becomes obsessed with what it means to be a founding father, especially when your own father/son relationship (Ben had an illegitimate son named William who was a British loyalist during the Revolutionary War) is more than a bit strained. Part “History Detectives” and part embarrassingly hilarious autobiography, Kornbluth's resulting investigation of the man behind the famous spectacles will take you from the hallowed halls of academia to Kornbluth's richly comic interactions with his mother Bunny and Aunt Birdie, sharing along the way his discoveries about America's history, family foibles, and the surprises beneath the surface of even our most familiar American tall tales.

*[Originally set for this position in the season was **Thurgood**, by George Stevens, Jr. With a national tour still in planning stages, we have been unable to secure the rights to produce this piece with enough advance timing to be able to ensure opening it in the 09/10 season.]*

Special Holiday Offerings!!!

This year the holidays will feature TWO PCS favorite productions, both presented outside of the regular subscription packages.

A Christmas Carol

Adapted by Mead Hunter from the novella by Charles Dickens

Directed by Rose Riordan

(Main Stage)

November 24 to December 27, 2009

Already a Portland holiday tradition, this year Associate Artistic Director Rose Riordan will add her own unique

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stamp to Mead Hunter's original adaptation, starting by casting of Portland's favorite weird and wise old man, Ebbe Roe Smith, as Scrooge. This timeless tale of the gifts that become available when you cross the divide that separates neighbor from neighbor will retain all the sparkle and spookiness Portland has come to expect... but look for the director of *The Receptionist* and *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found* to add a few intriguing new low lights to the rich texture of the production.

The Santaland Diaries

By David Sedaris

Adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello

(Ellyn Bye Studio)

December 3 to December 27, 2009

Based on the outlandish true chronicles of David Sedaris' experience as Crumpet the Elf in Macy's Santaland display, this hilarious cult classic riffs on a few of Sedaris' truly odd encounters with his fellow man during the height of the holiday crunch. NPR humorist and best-selling author of *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, *Me Talk Pretty One Day* and *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*, David Sedaris has become one of America's pre-eminent humor writers. This production will include two **late night 10:00 pm performances** on December 10th and 17th.

Snow Falling on Cedars

adapted for the stage by Kevin McKeon

from the book by David Guterson

(Main Stage)

January 12 to February 7, 2010

Adapted for the stage by Seattle's Book-it Repertory Theatre (the people who brought us *Pride and Prejudice*), Northwestern author David Guterson's haunting story takes place in 1954, on a Puget Sound island so isolated that no one who lives there can afford to make enemies. The island's white and Japanese-American communities have lived in quiet but uneasy peace, even through the dark days of WWII internment camps and widespread anti-Japanese war hysteria. But when Kabuo Miyamoto is charged with murder and it turns out that his wife's spurned white lover Ishmael holds the information that could set him free, the island's secret prejudices, jealousies and ancient grievances threaten to boil over into an act of injustice from which there can be no return.

New! The Receptionist

By Adam Bock

(Ellyn Bye Studio)

Jan. 26 – Mar. 21, 2010

(Note: This production starts one week earlier than the originally scheduled production in this slot.)

“Not only is this play the beneficiary of stellar acting and direction, it’s also another deceptively mordant comedy. You might nickname this one “Torturously funny.”

Marty Hughley, the Oregonian

Beverly the receptionist is definitely a woman in charge—she's the first in the door, she makes the coffee, she has all the pens. Her co-workers ... not so much. Beverly holds their lives and schedules together. Mr. Dart from the central office arrives unexpectedly and Beverly is left wondering just what sort of company she works for and what her role really is. This darkly comic exploration of a seemingly mundane environment, the office, reunites director Rose Riordan and playwright Adam Bock, author of *The Thugs*, produced at PCS in 2007. *The Receptionist* was the hit of Portland's fringe scene at CoHo Theater in the fall of 2008, and PCS is thrilled to

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present this stellar work to an even larger audience.

*[The Receptionist replaces **The Chosen**, which was moved up to the Main Stage due to stellar advance sales and a need to accommodate student groups.]*

Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps

adapted by Patrick Barlow

from the book by John Buchan

(Main Stage)

February 23 to March 21, 2010

Whodunit meets hilarious in this recklessly theatrical riff on Alfred Hitchcock's cinematic 1935 masterpiece which in turn was based on John Buchan's spy genre classic. In it a handsome hero (complete with stiff-upper-lip, pencil moustache and British gung-ho attitude) encounters dastardly murders, double-crossing secret agents, and, of course, devastatingly beautiful women, all while trying to escape from an accidental entanglement with a deadly group of spies called the 39 Steps. A quick witted and acrobatic troupe of four actors will create dozens of locations and over 130 roles in this rollicking evening of winking wisecracks and wow-inducing stage wizardry.

New! *The Chosen*

by Aaron Posner

(Main Stage)

April 6 to May 2, 2010

This award-winning adaptation from the award-winning novel is the coming-of-age story of two boys growing up in two very different Jewish communities—"five blocks and a world apart"—in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in the 1940s. In it, Danny, the brilliant and curious son of a Hasidic rabbi, struggles with his longing to know more of the world and his father's unwillingness to speak to him when they are not studying the Torah. After a heated fight at a baseball game, Danny befriends Reuven, an Orthodox Jew from a nearby neighborhood who becomes a friend and a partner in investigating both their shared Jewish heritage and their wildly divergent family environments and hopes for the future. When Danny's father prohibits him from speaking to Reuven because of a political disagreement about the nascent Israeli state, both boys learn that the bonds of religion, friendship and community are both more brittle and more binding than they could have possibly imagined.

*[Note: originally scheduled for the Ellyn Bye Studio, we have moved **The Chosen** to the Main Stage due to ticket demand. It replaces **Joe Turner's Come and Gone**, a play we plan to produce in the near future.]*

New! *Mike's Incredible Indian Adventure*

Written and performed by Mike Schlitt

(Ellyn Bye Studio)

Apr. 20 – May 30, 2010

(Note: This starts 2 weeks earlier than the originally scheduled production in this slot)

"Bollywood meets 'Waiting For Guffman'" Backstage West

"A feat of brilliance" LA Weekly

Mike directs a Neil Simon play in India. Life crisis ensues. In 1999 Mike Schlitt accepted an offer to direct Neil Simon's *They're Playing Our Song* on a four-city tour across India. The sheer incongruity of it all - Mahatma Gandhi and "Doc" Simon singing and dancing their way through the Great Sub-Continent - was just too

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tantalizing to resist. Mike took the job, brought along a filmmaker to document the experience, and soon found himself in the throws of a devastating life crisis the likes of which he is still struggling to claw his way out of. *Mike's Incredible Indian Adventure* is an epic tale of clashing cultures and gastric distress. It's a play about a film about a play, chronicling an artist's wrong turn "off" the road to success and the strange, surreal and terrifying journey to find his way back.

*[Originally set for this position in the season was **The Best So Far**, a world premiere musical by Marcy Heisler & Zina Goldrich. Developing this cool new musical will require more resources than we can anticipate gathering in the current environment.]*

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

lyrics and music by William Finn

book by Rachel Sheinkin

(Main Stage)

May 25 to June 27, 2010

Rounding out the season is a hilarious tale of overachiever's angst from the author of *Falsettos* and *A New Brain*. This unlikeliest of hit musicals draws the audience directly into the action, bringing 4 nerdtastic audience members onto the stage each night to compete alongside some of America's unlikeliest kid heroes: a quirky yet charming mix of awkward outsiders, divided by their stereotypes (the hyper-achieving Asian kid, the over-precious daughter of gay dads, the goober snorting nerd, the underachieving hippie kid) and united by the discovery that a spelling bee may be the only place on the planet where they can both stand out and fit in.

Season subscriptions are now on sale. Single tickets start at \$24 with student and senior rates available. **The night of show Rush discount returns this year**, with a slightly higher \$15 ticket price. 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 off shoot 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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2008 – 2009 REVISED SEASON FACT SHEET

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music by Stephen Flaherty

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Studio

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