

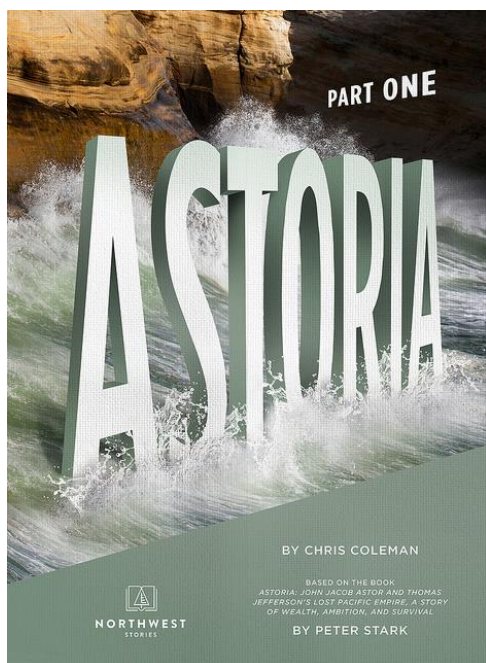
Portland Center Stage at

THE **ARMORY**

PRESS CONTACT: **Claudie Fisher**
503.445.3765
claudief@pcs.org

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

The World Premiere of *Astoria: Part One* Opens at The Armory
Adapted and directed by Chris Coleman; Based on *The New York Times'* best-selling book by Peter Stark, *ASTORIA: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire; A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival*
Previews Begin Jan. 14 | Opening Night is Jan. 20 | Closes Feb. 12
TICKETS STARTING AT \$25



December 27, 2016 – PORTLAND, OR. Peter Stark's best-selling book *ASTORIA: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire; A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival* comes to life on stage at The Armory in a world premiere production directed and adapted by Chris Coleman. *Astoria: Part One* is the first world premiere to debut as part of the company's new *Northwest Stories* series. This monumental piece of American history will be told in two parts over the course of two seasons. *Astoria: Part One* opens on the U.S. Bank Main Stage on January 20, with preview performances beginning January 14, and regular performances running through February 12. Select

dates will be presented as part of Fertile Ground, a city-wide festival of new works held every January in Portland. *Astoria: Part Two* will be presented during the 2017-2018 season.

"Every once in a blue moon you run across a story that catches your imagination and won't let go," said Chris Coleman. "*Astoria* was that for me: riveting, shocking, surprising, transforming. I became obsessed with it, and knew that we had to find a way to do it. The will to survive against

impossible odds is a major thread in the story, as is the question of what makes a worthy leader. The current economic landscape of the American theater presses us to produce smaller and smaller work, so it's a thrill to have found the support to bring a work of this scope and moment to Portland."

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for *Astoria: Part One* are on sale now and prices start at \$25. Tickets may be purchased at www.pcs.org, 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office (128 NW Eleventh Avenue, Portland, OR). Rush tickets are \$20. Students and patrons who are 30 or younger can purchase \$30 tickets in premium seating areas. Showtimes are Tuesday through Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. (excluding January 29, and February 7 and 12); Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. (excluding January 14, 15, and 21, and February 4); and Thursday matinees at noon (excluding January 19). *Astoria: Part One* contains mature content and language and is recommended for ages 14 and up. More information at <https://www.pcs.org/astoria>. **Tickets for *Astoria: Part Two* will go on sale in January as part of the 2017-2018 season.**

THE STORY

At a time when the edge of American settlement barely reached beyond the Appalachian Mountains, two visionaries — President Thomas Jefferson and millionaire John Jacob Astor — foresaw that one day the Pacific would dominate world trade as much as the Atlantic did in their day. Just two years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition concluded in 1806, Jefferson and Astor turned their sights westward once again. Thus began one of history's most dramatic but largely forgotten turning points in the conquest of the North American continent. *Astoria: Part One* covers the journey to Astoria; *Astoria: Part Two* is about the establishment of Astoria, the first permanent United States settlement on the West Coast. ***Astoria* photos are available for download on [Flickr](#).**

THE CAST

The harrowing dual journey — one over land, one by sea — will be told with a cast of sixteen actors playing roughly five roles apiece. Making their company debuts are Jeremy Aggers (*Edward Foote*, Alliance Theatre); F. Tyler Burnet (national tours of *Sister Act* and *West Side Story*); Brandon Contreras (*Cuba Libre*, Artists Repertory Theatre); Nick Ferrucci (*A View from the Bridge*, Oregon

Shakespeare Festival); Michael Morrow Hammack (*Adrift in Macao*, Broadway Rose Theatre Company); Christopher Hirsh (*God of Love*, Oscar-winning short film); Ben Rosenblatt (*Waiting for Godot*, Commencez! International Beckett Festival); Christopher Salazar (*Thieves*, The Public Theater); DeLanna Studi (*August: Osage County*, First National Tour); Shaun Taylor-Corbett (*In the Heights* and *Sonny* on Broadway); and Benjamin Tissell (*Fly By Night*, Broadway Rose Theatre Company). Returning to The Armory are Shawn Fagan (*Our Town*); Gavin Hoffman (last seen in *Great Expectations*); Chris Murray and Leif Norby (last seen in *The Oregon Trail*); and Ben Newman (JAW: A Playwrights Festival, 2014-2016).

DIALECTS AND LANGUAGES

The 80+ characters depicted in the play pose an exciting challenge for dialect coach Mary McDonald-Lewis, who has been tasked with helping the actors tackle the many dialects and languages needed to properly tell this story. There are four languages and 11 dialects and accents in total. Dialects include rustic American, Canadian Scottish, German, French Canadian, Irish and British English. Languages include French, as well as Arikara, Iowa and Shoshone. To properly represent the Arikara language, McDonald-Lewis has been working with a direct descendant of one of the people featured in the story: the Arikara Chief that helped the Overland Party during their journey in 1810. McDonald-Lewis also happens to be a descendant of two characters central to this story: Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis.

THE CAST LIST

Leif Norby.....John Jacob Astor/Jacques/Aymes/Robinson/Ensemble
Jeremy Aggers.....Donald Mackenzie/Robert Stuart/John Coles/Ensemble
Ben Rosenblatt.....Jonathan Thorn/Joseph/Ensemble
Gavin Hoffman.....Duncan McDougall/Reznor/Ensemble
Christopher Hirsh.....Alexander McKay/John Colter/Ensemble
Nick Ferrucci.....Simon McTavish/Alexander Ross/John Day/Ensemble
Chris Murray.....Antoine Clappine/Fox/Ensemble
Ben Newman.....Gabriel Franchère/Alexander Mackenzie/Hoback/Ensemble
Benjamin Tissell.....Ramsay Crooks/Patrick Small/Ensemble
Michael Morrow Hammack....Frobisher/Thomas Jefferson/Winton/John Reed/Ensemble

F. Tyler Burnet.....David Stuart/Bradbury/Ensemble
Shawn Fagan.....Wilson Price Hunt/Ensemble
Brandon Contreras.....Pierre Dorion/Aiken/Ensemble
Shaun Taylor-Corbett.....Greene/Les Yeux Gris/2nd Mate/Peter/Ensemble
Christopher Salazar.....Angus/Le Gauche/Harry/Ensemble
DeLanna Studi.....Sarah Astor/Marie Dorion/Ensemble

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Chris Coleman.....Adaptor and Director
Tony Cisek.....Scenic Designer
Toni-Leslie James.....Costume Designer
Diane Ferry Williams.....Lighting Designer
Mary McDonald-Lewis.....Dialect Coach
Rick Lewis.....Music Director
Randy Tico.....Composer
Matthew Nielson.....Sound Designer
Brandon Woolley.....Assistant Director
John Armour.....Fight Director
Christopher Hirsch.....Movement Director
Benjamin Fainstein.....Production Dramaturg
Barbara Hort, Ph.D.....Consulting Dramaturg
Mark Tynan.....Stage Manager

TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

When: **January 14* – February 12, 2016**

*Opening Night/Press Night: Friday, January 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: January 14, 15, 17, 18 and 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: On the U.S. Bank Main Stage at [The Armory](#)
128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209

To Purchase: Regular tickets range from \$25 to \$70. Rush tickets are \$20. Students and patrons who are 30 or younger may purchase premium seating areas for \$30. Discounts for groups of 10+. *Prices vary by date, time and seating area, and are subject to change.*

Online: www.pcs.org

By Phone: 503.445.3700, 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

In Person: The box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue
12 p.m. to 8 p.m. on performance days
12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on non-performance days

Groups: Discounts available for groups of 10+ by calling 503.445.3794.

More Info: <https://www.pcs.org/astoria>

Showtimes: Tuesday through Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. (excluding January 29, February 7 and February 12); Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. (excluding January 14, 15, and 21, and February 4); and Thursday matinees at noon (excluding January 19).

Please Note: Recommended for ages 14 and up. Contains some mature content and language. Smoke will be used in this production.

Accessibility: Learn about our accessibility options at <http://www.pcs.org/access/>.

NORTHWEST STORIES SERIES

New for the 2016-2017 season, Portland Center Stage at The Armory's *Northwest Stories* series is a celebration of the essence of the region. From fresh looks at history to dynamic explorations of contemporary culture, *Northwest Stories* blends adventurous storytelling with local impact, all created with the immediacy and vibrancy that only live performance can bring. This season's *Northwest Stories* offerings include two world premieres, *Astoria: Part One* and *Wild and Reckless: A new musical event from Blitzen Trapper*, as well as *The Oregon Trail* and *Hold These Truths*. The company has also commissioned four new works by some of the most passionate and inventive

artists working today to lend their voices to the series: James Beaton, Mary Kathryn Nagle, Dan O'Brien and Lauren Yee. These artists are each crafting plays that examine our culture, to ignite dialogue about the events – and the places – that define our region.

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE AT THE ARMORY

[Portland Center Stage at The Armory](#) is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May, 2000. Around 160,000 visitors attend The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. 11 productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events created — in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 21 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

2016-2017 SPONSORS

The [2016-2017 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle, and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank. Further support comes from the Season Sponsors: Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Wallace Foundation and Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts. Support for *Astoria* is provided by Broughton and Mary Bishop, William and Karen Early, Brigid Flanigan, Fred W. Fields Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation, Dr. Barbara Hort, Dedre J. Marriott, Northwest Natural, The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation/Arlene Schnitzer and Jordan D. Schnitzer, The Standard, Mr. and Mrs. W.T.C. Stevens, and Dan Wieden and Priscilla Bernard Wieden. Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner. Portland Center Stage at The Armory was selected as a participant of the Wallace Foundation's [Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#), a four-year effort with a nationwide cohort of 26 performing arts organizations.

###