

**M E D I A   R E L E A S E**

**CHRIS COLEMAN NAMED ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AT DENVER  
CENTER THEATRE; WILL LEAVE PORTLAND CENTER STAGE  
AT THE END OF THE 2017 - 2018 SEASON**

**November 14, 2017 – PORTLAND, OR.** Ted Austin, board chair for Portland Center Stage at The Armory, announced today that Artistic Director Chris Coleman will depart The Armory at the end of the current 2017 - 2018 season to become artistic director of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA) Theatre Company. The official announcement from the DCPA is attached.

“Chris Coleman’s impact on Portland Center Stage at The Armory for the past 17 years has been transformational,” said Board Chair Ted Austin. “Under his leadership, the theater has grown from a locally respected company producing six plays a year in a rented facility, to a nationally recognized leader in the field, producing eleven plays annually in two theaters in our beautiful home, The Armory. Audiences have more than doubled in size, and our budget has grown from \$3 million to more than \$10 million. It is no surprise that other theaters would see him as a strong candidate to bring new strength to their company, but it is still with a heavy heart that we wish him the best in his new adventure.”

“It has been the honor of my life to lead Portland Center Stage at The Armory for the past 17 (and a half) years, and one of the hardest parts of this decision was knowing that I would be leaving a city, a company, colleagues and friends that I have come to cherish deeply,” said Coleman.

Mary Boyle, immediate past board chair of the theater, noted that “the national reputation of Portland Center Stage at The Armory can be directly linked to the great work and advocacy of Chris Coleman in his 17 years as artistic director at this great Oregon institution.”

Coleman was the second artistic director at Portland Center Stage, following the company's evolution to a theater independent from its founding organization, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He came to Portland from Atlanta, where he was the founding artistic director of Actors' Express Theater. At the time he moved to Portland, Portland Center Stage produced primarily a mix of classic plays and established contemporary pieces. In the years since, Portland Center Stage at The Armory has expanded its repertoire to include both classic and new musicals; numerous world premieres; adaptations of classic and contemporary novels; and experimental fare. In addition, since the move to its new home at The Armory, Portland Center Stage has gained a national reputation in the field for its work in community engagement, serving more than 30,000 people through community programs on top of the more than 125,000 annually who attend the plays.

"We are fortunate that Chris will be with us through the rest of the season, as the board and staff craft a vision and carry out a search for our next artistic leader. He has two more projects to direct this season (*Astoria: Part One and Part Two* and *Major Barbara*), several more to produce, and will lead the company through the rest of this season," noted Austin. "We look forward to spending time with him over the next few months and celebrating with him the continued success of Portland Center Stage at The Armory."

#### **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 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.

### **2017-2018 SEASON SPONSORS**

The [2017-2018 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank. Further support comes from Season Sponsors the 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. Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for the company. Portland Center Stage at The Armory is 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, and the Audience (R)Evolution Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit theater.

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