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

Portland Center Stage Announces the 2012-2013 Anniversary Season

Celebrating 25 Years as Portland's Flagship Theater Company

February 28, 2012 – PORTLAND, ORE. Get lost in the magical forest of one Shakespeare's most beloved tales, take a harrowing journey alongside an award-winning war photographer, converse with the original Portland foodie and get a glimpse of Portland through the eyes of a comedy whiz in the Portland Center Stage 2012-2013, 25th Anniversary season. And it all begins with a dark masterpiece of American musical theater.

Portland Center Stage is pleased to announce the 2012-2013 25th Anniversary Season

On the Main Stage

Sweeney Todd

Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Libretto by Hugh Wheeler

Directed by Chris Coleman

"A whopping good, grisly yarn of obsession and destruction." – The New York Times

"A work of such scope and such daring that it dwarfs every other Broadway musical that even attempts to invite comparison." - New York Daily News

Widely acknowledged as Stephen Sondheim's musical masterpiece, *Sweeney Todd* is set amongst London's seedy side streets and laced with Sondheim's characteristically brilliant wit and dark humor. This landmark musical depicts the barber Sweeney Todd's savage quest for justice and retribution after years of false imprisonment. Aided by harridan pie shop owner Mrs. Lovett, who is secretly in love with him, he sets out to avenge the wrongs done to him and his family. Combining comic turns and chilling drama, music hall-style numbers and hauntingly beautiful romantic songs, *Sweeney Todd* offers a fascinating portrait of a man driven to madness by injustice.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Penny Metropulos

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;

Four nights will quickly dream away the time

As the royals Theseus and Hippolyta prepare to marry, four young lovers from their Athenian kingdom flee to the forest in the wake of parental disapproval. But in the woodland, these lovers' lives are complicated when they cross paths with feuding faerie royalty. As Oberon and Titania bicker over a changeling child, the mischievous Puck and his sprightly accomplices use herbal spells to hilariously complicate the love-mad quartet's forest idyll. When a group of local rustics rehearsing a play for the Athens wedding also seek the quiet of the forest, the spells and confusions wrought seem unlikely to ever sort themselves out. But this is William Shakespeare at his most magical and most imaginative, and with a little enchantment, as Puck says "all is mended."

I Love to Eat

By James Still

Directed by Jessica Kubzansky

"Beautifully captures Beard's zest for life." - Indianapolis Star

This new play celebrates the life and talent of a Portland, Oregon original – James Beard.

Before Julia Child, before today's proliferation of cooking shows and networks, there was James Beard, the first TV chef. He brought fine cooking to the small screen in 1946 and helped establish an American cuisine, but as is often the case with pioneers his early efforts on screen have been lost. He went on to become America's first "foodie," and the award bearing his name is still the prize most coveted by chefs. Playwright James Still invites you meet the man described as "the face and belly of American gastronomy" in this play that recreates an evening at Beard's New York home. PCS will join with Portland's nationally-recognized food community to honor our homegrown culinary star.

The Whipping Man

By Matthew Lopez

Directed by Rose Riordan

"A compelling Civil War-era drama, filled with fine characterization and unexpected moments of humor." - The New York Times

In the post-Civil War South, three men are tied to each other by history and faith, but are also bound by secrets. A badly-wounded Jewish Confederate soldier returns home at war's end to find that his family has fled to the countryside. Remaining in the city mansion are two former slaves, also raised by his family as Jews. With Passover upon them, the three men unite to celebrate the holiday, even as they struggle to comprehend their new relationships at a crossroads of personal and national history. *The Whipping Man*, which premiered in New York earlier this year to great acclaim, is an extraordinary tale of loyalty, deceit and deliverance.

Clybourne Park

By Bruce Norris

Directed by Chris Coleman

"A buzz-saw sharp new comedy." - The Washington Post

"A spiky and damningly insightful new comedy." - The New York Times

Winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize

Winner of the Olivier Award for Best New Play 2011

A white community in 1950s Chicago splinters over the black family about to move in. Fast forward to our present day and the same house represents very different demographics, and neighborhood values and tensions. Decades apart, hilarious and horrifying neighbors pitch a battle over territory and legacy that forces us to consider how far our ideas about race have evolved – or not. When our houses become our homes, and our neighborhoods become our identities, what will we do to protect them? And from what?

Ella: The Musical

Conceived by Rob Ruggiero

Book by Jeffrey Hatcher

Directed by Rob Ruggiero

"Ella is a musical with scattitude." - Sarasota Herald Tribune

"The evening sings with the joy, deep feeling and eloquence of a truly original America idiom at the peak of its powers..." - Hartford Courant

Weaving myth, memory and music, *Ella* tells the uplifting and poignant story of one of the greatest jazz/pop vocalists of 20th century music. It's 1966 and the fabled songstress is preparing for one of the most important concerts of her career. As she jams with the musicians (including famed trumpeter Louis Armstrong) and gets ready to meet the audience, Ella reflects on her life, her secrets and the love of music that made her soar.

Featuring more than a dozen of her most famous hits, including "A Tisket, A Tasket," "How High the Moon," "That Old Black Magic" and "They Can't Take that Away from Me."

In the Ellyn Bye Studio

The Body of an American

By Dan O'Brien

World Premiere

Directed by Bill Rauch

War reporter Paul Watson has witnessed some of the most devastating scenes in modern history. As the ghosts of the tragedies he's recorded bear down on him, he crosses paths with playwright Dan O'Brien, who's battling ghosts of his own. In locations as varied as Kabul, Los Angeles and the Canadian High Arctic, the two men form a tentative friendship in a quest for absolution. *The Body of an American* was a highlight at JAW in 2011.

Lungs

By Duncan Macmillan

Directed by Nancy Keystone

"Smart and stimulating...a bracingly dramatic walk through the thicket of couples communication." -

Washington Post

A young couple wants to have a child, but for the “right” reasons. Except, what exactly are the right reasons? We live in a time of global anxiety, terrorism, erratic weather and political unrest. If they over think it, they'll never do it. But if they rush, it could be a disaster. And what will be the first to destruct - the planet or the relationship? Described as “a kind of word-cloud portrait of that contemporary romantic malady: ambivalence,” *Lungs* is a high-wire act for both the actors and the audience.

The People's Republic of Portland

By Lauren Weedman

World Premiere

Directed by Rose Riordan

Portland is gathering lots of attention lately – for our sustainability leadership; for our food scene; for being, well, weird. And now we've caught the attention of Lauren Weedman, actor/writer of last season's *BUST*. In the few months she spent here in the spring of 2011, Lauren's imagination was also captured by all things Portland, and so we've asked her to write a play. About Portland. How will this former *Daily Show* faux-spondent treat us? What does Portland look like through Weedman's unique lens? Are we brave enough to find out?

A special holiday offering:

The Santaland Diaries

By David Sedaris

Adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello

Directed by Wendy Knox

Based on the true chronicles of David Sedaris' experience as Crumpet the Elf in Macy's Santaland display, this 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, and this production has become a Portland holiday tradition.

[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.

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