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## M E D I A   R E L E A S E

*Portland Center Stage, the YWCA of Greater Portland and The August Wilson Red Door Project present*

*Women and Race: A Series of Discussions around Black Pearl Sings!*

**May 15, 2012 – PORTLAND, ORE.** In support of the current production of [\*Black Pearl Sings!\*](#), Portland Center Stage, the YWCA of Greater Portland and The August Wilson Red Door Project present a series of discussions on women and race, which will explore some of the complex underlying themes of the play. Facilitated by local writers, academics and social justice advocates, this exciting opportunity is open to audience members and the general public. Each discussion will take place in the Elyn Bye Studio immediately following the 2pm performances of *Black Pearl Sings!* on **three consecutive Sundays: June 3, 10 and 17**. Admission to the discussions is **free**. No RSVP is required.

“The strength of the two female characters in [\*Black Pearl Sings!\*](#), and the complexity of the relationship they form is fascinating. I knew this play could be a springboard and opportunity for a deeper conversation about women and race in our community,” said Kelsey Tyler, Director of Education and Community Programs Portland Center Stage. Commenting on the collaboration, Leslie Bevan, Executive Director of the YWCA of Greater Portland said “This partnership provides Portlanders the opportunity to have a robust discussion about racism and sexism, and reflect on how far we have come, as a nation and

a community, in addressing these forms of oppression. As an organization committed to eliminating racism and empowering women, we commend Portland Center Stage and The August Wilson Red Door Project for their commitment to social change.”

*Black Pearl Sings!* runs through June 17, 2012 in the Ellyn Bye Studio in the Gerding Theater at the Armory. See the show calendar at [www.pcs.org/black-pearl](http://www.pcs.org/black-pearl) for the complete performance schedule. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org), by phone at 503.445.3700 or by visiting the box office located at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue.

[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 YWCA OF GREATER PORTLAND](#) is the local chapter of one of the oldest and largest women’s organization in the world. Our mission is to eliminate racism and empower women. The YWCA of Greater Portland has been serving our community for over 110 years. In 2011, we provided safety, opportunity, and independence to more than 10,000 women and families.

[THE AUGUST WILSON RED DOOR PROJECT](#) is a social change agent, using the arts as a catalyst to create a lasting, positive change in the racial ecology of Portland.

**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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