



PRESS CONTACT: Claudie Fisher
503.445.3765
claudief@pcs.org

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

Ambition, Loyalty and the Glitter of Motown

Six-Time Tony Winning Musical *Dreamgirls* Takes the Stage at PCS

Opening September 26, Previews Begin September 20



September 5, 2014 – PORTLAND, OR. The beloved Motown-inspired hit *Dreamgirls* will open on September 26, continuing Portland Center Stage’s popular tradition of opening the new season with a musical. Previews for *Dreamgirls* begin September 20 and performances run through November 2 on the Main Stage at the Gerding Theater at the Armory. PCS’s Artistic Director Chris Coleman will direct the action.

“*Dreamgirls* deals with the tension between ambition and loyalty,” says Coleman. “It’s a story about growing up. A brilliantly talented young woman fights to make a name for herself, but has to learn to navigate in waters infested with sharks. The music is astounding. It’s almost a pop opera because so much of it is sung.” Musical Director Rick Lewis will take the podium to bring the score’s mix of R&B, soul, pop and disco to life. *Dreamgirls* will star Nattalyee Randall, Mary Patton, Lexi Rhoades and Antoinette Comer as The Dreamettes; joined by a talented lineup that includes Rodney Hicks, David Jennings, Calvin Scott Roberts and Tyrone Roberson.

Regular tickets for *Dreamgirls* start at \$41. Preview tickets start at \$34. Rush tickets are \$20. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (excluding October 5, 19, 21, 28 and November 2); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; and matinees at noon on select Thursdays. Tickets can be purchased at pcs.org or 503.445.3700. A complete schedule can be found online: <http://www.pcs.org/dreamgirls/>.

This groundbreaking musical, loosely based on the career of The Supremes, takes you to a revolutionary time in

American music history where three friends form The Dreamettes and learn hard lessons about love, trust and the changing tastes of the American public. *Dreamgirls* features music by Henry Krieger and book and lyrics by Tom Eyrn. The original Broadway production was directed and choreographed by Michael Bennett, with orchestrations by Harold Wheeler. It opened on Broadway in 1981 at the Imperial Theatre, produced by Michael Bennett, Robert Avian, Geffen Records and The Shubert Organization.

“When Broadway history is being made, you can feel it,” declared *The New York Times* of the original Broadway production that earned six Tony Awards, two Grammys, and propelled the careers of its stars. The Broadway cast recording was also a massive hit. The single for the song “(And I’m Telling You) I’m Not Going” reached number one on the Billboard R&B charts in 1982. The same song earned Jennifer Holliday, who played Effie Melody White in the original production, a Grammy Award for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance in 1983.

Dreamgirls was discovered by a new generation when the hit film adaptation was released in 2006 by Dreamworks and Paramount Pictures, coinciding with the 25th Anniversary of the Broadway debut. The film boasted an all-star cast including Jennifer Hudson, Beyoncé Knowles, Eddie Murphy, Jamie Foxx and Danny Glover. Loretta Devine, who originated the role of Lorrell on Broadway, also had a cameo. Four new songs were added to the film, and both the score and plot were slightly restructured. The film also made a more direct link to The Supremes and Motown Records. The film won three Golden Globe Awards, two Oscars and a Grammy for one of the new songs in the film, "Love You I Do," written by Henry Krieger.

The creators of *Dreamgirls* denied a direct correlation to the real life story of The Supremes, but comparisons easily suggest that the characters in *Dreamgirls* are loosely based on the beloved legends from Motown’s glory days. Effie White and Deena Jones are inspired by Florence Ballard and Diana Ross from The Supremes; Curtis Taylor, Jr. represents Motown Records founder Berry Gordy, Jr.; Jimmy "Thunder" Early is inspired by popular singers such as James Brown, Jackie Wilson and Marvin Gaye; and songwriter C.C. White suggests artist and Motown Records Vice President Smokey Robinson.

The Supremes are one of America’s all-time most popular vocal groups, with 12 number one hit singles including “Baby Love,” “Come See About Me,” “Stop, in the Name of Love” and “Back in My Arms Again.” Formed by classmates who were still in high school (Florence Ballard was 15 and Diana Ross was 14), The Supremes signed to Motown Records in 1961. Initially, the members took turns singing lead, with Ross preferring a pop sound compared to Ballard’s soulful numbers. In 1963, Gordy made Ross the official lead singer and eventually he led

the group to become the first African American musical act to achieve massive mainstream success. The Supremes rivaled The Beatles at their peak. In 1966, their album *The Supremes A' Go-Go* knocked *Revolver* out of the number one spot on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart. It was the first time an all-female vocal group reached number one.

Starring as The Dreamettes are four exciting singers who will make their PCS debuts: **Nattalyee Randall**, a classically trained singer who was named Broadway's Next Big Star (Ken Davenport on BroadwaySpace.com), will play Effie Melody White. Randall's recent roles include Effie in *Dreamgirls*, Church Lady Jarene in *The Color Purple* and Motormouth in *Hairspray*. **Mary Patton** (who played the role of Lorrell Robinson in the National Broadway Tour of *Dreamgirls* and also appeared in the First National Tour of *Sister Act*) will play Deena Jones and **Lexi Rhoades** (*Sistas* original cast, Off-Broadway, among others) will play Lorrell Robinson. **Antoinette Comer** (recently Lisa in the National Broadway Tour of *Mamma Mia!*) will play Michelle Morris, the singer who joins the vocal group after they've reached stardom as The Dreams.

Record producer Curtis Taylor, Jr. will be played by local Broadway star **Rodney Hicks**, who recently portrayed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in PCS's *The Mountaintop*. Making their PCS debuts are **David Jennings** (Curtis Taylor, Jr. in *Dreamgirls* with Frenchie Davis and opposite Jennifer Holliday at Atlanta's Fox Theater; Broadway credits include *After Midnight*, *Hands on a Hardbody* and *Brooklyn the Musical*), who will play the R&B superstar Jimmy (James Thunder) Early and **Calvin Scott Roberts** (recently *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark*, *Spunk* and *Honky*) who will play songwriting genius C.C. (Claridge Conrad) White. **Tyrone Roberson**, playing the role of Jimmy Early's agent Marty, returns to PCS after performing the role of Cord Elam in PCS's *Oklahoma!*.

Chris Coleman and **Rick Lewis** are joined by Choreographer **Kent Zimmerman** (PCS's *Fiddler on the Roof*), Scenic Designer **G.W. Mercier** (most recently *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Anna Karenina* at PCS), Costume Designer **Sydney Roberts** (Drammy for *The Devils* at PCS, among others), Lighting Designer **Robert Wierzel** (currently on Broadway with *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*), Sound and Video Designer **Casi Pacilio** (most recently *The Last Five Years* and *Othello* at PCS) and **Emily N. Wells** (PCS's Production Stage Manager).

➤ **Next Page: Related Events**

RELATED EVENTS – Calendar Editors Kindly Note:

PORTLAND YOUTH MUSIC PERFORMANCES

Monday, September 29 | 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Gerding Theater at the Armory, Main Stage

Free and open to the public. No ticket required.

An evening celebrating Portland’s young musicians, the gospel roots of R&B, and music’s ability to change lives with performances by **Bravo Youth Orchestra** and **Highland Christian Center’s Young Gospel Ensemble**.

Donations to these partnering groups gladly accepted at the door.

SHOP TALK: *Dreamgirls*

Tuesday, September 30 | 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Gerding Theater at the Armory, Mezzanine Lobby

Free and open to the public. No ticket required.

Special guests from our production department will be on hand to give away secrets of the stage magic used in this production. Shop Talk is held in the lobby before the first Tuesday evening performance of every Main Stage production.

Prologues and Q&As:

Prologues are free, pre-performance introductions to most Main Stage plays offered on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings during the regular run of each production. Led by PCS staff members in the Main Stage auditorium. 6:55 - 7:10 p.m.

Q&As are informal conversations with the cast and PCS staff about the production, following every Thursday noon matinee performance during the regular run of each production.

➤ Next Page: **Ticket and Performance Information**

***Dreamgirls* | Ticket and Performance Information**

When: September 20* – November 2, 2014

***Opening Night is Friday, September 26, 7:30 p.m.**

Preview Performances: September 20, 21, 23, 24 and 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sundays*; 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; matinees at noon on select Thursdays. *Excluding October 5, 19, 21, 28 and November 2.

Where: On the Main Stage at the [Gerding Theater at the Armory](#), 128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland.

More Info: <http://www.pcs.org/dreamgirls/>

To Purchase: Regular tickets range from \$41-74. Preview tickets start at \$34. Rush tickets are \$20. Tickets for students and those under 25 are \$30. Discounts for military and groups of 10+. Season ticket packages are available, starting at \$72.90 for three plays. All prices subject to change.

Online: <http://www.pcs.org/>

By Phone: 503.445.3700, 12–6 p.m.

In Person: PCS's box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue
12 p.m.–curtain on performance days
12–6 p.m. on non-performance days

Groups: Discounts available for groups of 10 or more.

Group tickets can purchased at 503.445.3794.

Please Note: *Dreamgirls* is recommended for ages 13+; contains some mature content and language. Children under 6 are not permitted at any PCS production.

Accessibility: PCS is committed to making our performances and facilities accessible to all of our patrons. More information is available at www.pcs.org/access/. For specific questions and ticket information, or if you need assistance, please contact the box office at 503-445- 3700 or.

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

#pcs_Dreamgirls

[Portland Center Stage](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Founded in 1988, PCS is the city's leading professional theater and one of the top 20 largest regional theater companies in the U.S. PCS attracts more than 150,000 theatergoers annually with its blend of classical, contemporary and premiere works, along with its summer playwrights festival, JAW. PCS also offers a variety of education and community programs tailored for patrons of all ages.

[The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#) houses the 590-seat Main Stage and the 190-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.

Additional support for *Dreamgirls* is provided by production sponsors Benson Industries, Inc., Curtis Thompson MD and Associates, and NW Natural. Portland Center Stage's 2014-2015 season is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts and Culture Council, Work for Art, and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK FM. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage. Portland Center Stage is a participant in 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 American theater.

###