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## **BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR STEPHANIE YBARRA APPOINTS TWO TO SENIOR ARTISTIC STAFF**

Baltimore, MD—Baltimore Center Stage is excited to announce two additions to its leadership team and artistic staff. Chiara Klein has been appointed Director of Artistic Producing and will join Center Stage from New York's Public Theater. Adena Varner has been promoted to Director of Learning and Social Accountability.

In her role as the Director of Artistic Producing, Klein will oversee the facilitation of artistic processes connected to all Baltimore Center Stage productions. She will work closely with Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra throughout the season to ensure the alignment of values and resources within Center Stage producing structures. Klein joins Baltimore Center Stage following a stellar run at the Public Theater where she led the Mobile Unit program's national expansion. The initiative included a five-state tour of Lynne Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *SWEAT*, as well as customized artistic activities designed to center conversations most alive in each community.

Complementing Klein's appointment, Baltimore Center Stage has promoted Baltimore native Adena Varner to Director of Learning and Social Accountability. In addition to overseeing all education, family and civic programming, Varner will drive the organization's social accountability practices, through which Center Stage will build on its commitment to respectfully and responsibly facilitate storytelling of, by and for all communities. Varner's previous role at the theater was Education Director, where she spearheaded the expansion of the student camp program, Teaching Artist residences and the Young Playwrights Festival.

"Adena and Chiara each bring their own unique vision for the American Theater and for Baltimore Center Stage," said Baltimore Center Stage Artistic Director, Stephanie Ybarra. "Within minutes of arriving in Baltimore, it was clear to me Adena Varner would be key to the future success of this organization – she wears her love of this city readily on her sleeve. Chiara Klein is a tremendous addition to the Baltimore community, having witnessed firsthand her ability to facilitate an artistic process with integrity, rigor and an over-abundance of laughter, I think she's going to fit in juuuuust fine. I feel like the luckiest artistic leader in the land to have these women working alongside me. Individually, they are formidable in their talent, intellect and creativity, but together they are utterly unstoppable."

Klein and Varner will assume their duties this summer. Detailed biographies of each are included herein. For interview requests, please reach out to the Baltimore Center Stage public relations office



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**CHIARA KLEIN** is an artistic producer, most recently at The Public Theater where she led the creation of the first national Mobile Unit initiative which launched in the fall of 2018 with a five-state tour of *SWEAT* by Lynn Nottage. In partnership with local leaders, Mobile Unit National included both a tour of a play and a customized program of artistic activities designed to center issues and conversations most alive in each community. A native New Yorker, Chiara began her professional theatrical career at the age of 14 by producing/directing/designing/conducting musicals at her synagogue. After earning a BA in Theater and Psychology from Dartmouth College, she founded MaineStage Shakespeare, an outdoor repertory company and youth theater camp in Southern Maine, which she ran for seven years as Artistic Director.

Her other professional experiences include roles at Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Marvell Rep, and the New York Musical Festival. She is the producer and emcee of the annual Ms. New York Senior America Pageant for women over 60. Chiara holds an MFA from Yale School of Drama and an MBA from Yale School of Management where she was the recipient of the George C. White Prize.



**ADENA VARNER** is the new Director of Learning and Social Accountability at Baltimore Center Stage. She has accepted this new role after serving as Director of Education for the 2018/19 Season. Adena is a Baltimore native who graduated from the Baltimore School for the Arts' Theater Department and earned her BA in Theater at The University of Maryland. She is a graduate of The Catholic University where she earned an MA in Theater Education. Adena is expanding her role at BCS in order to curate learning spaces in which meaningful civic and educational programming can take place in the community, schools and arts institutions. She is committed to programming that is both instructional and experiential and is excited to strategically serve the community of Baltimore and give greater access to artistic expression and

communal learning through the medium of drama and storytelling. Her stage credits include *The Colored Museum*, *The Amen Corner*, *Filthy Rich* and *The Girls Inside* which debuted in the Capital Fringe Festival. Along with her position at Center Stage, she serves the community as a teaching artist, playwright, director and continues to advocate for arts integration into the public schools' systems of Maryland.

## ABOUT BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Executive Director Michael Ross. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access for All. Our mission is heavily rooted in providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.