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Baltimore Center Stage Announces Stephanie Ybarra to become Artistic Director

Ybarra comes to the State Theater of Maryland from New York's Public Theater

Baltimore, MD August 9, 2018-----After a nationwide search, Baltimore Center Stage is excited to announce Stephanie Ybarra has been tapped to become the theater's next Artistic Director. Ybarra comes to Baltimore Center Stage from The Public Theater in New York, where she currently serves as Director of Special Artistic Projects. She will transition to Center Stage beginning in October, and join the staff full-time in December.

Having a reputation for choosing leaders on the forefront of creative thought and innovative programming, the theater's Board of Trustees were impressed that Ybarra's creative vision embraced the mission, values, and special character of Baltimore Center Stage. "Stephanie Ybarra is the future of the American Theater. Her vision is broad and inclusive," said Baltimore Center Stage Board of Trustees President Terry Morgenthaler. "She will find and develop exciting and provocative work for our next generation of theatergoers and her commitment and experience with community engagement is extraordinary. We are extremely proud and excited to bring her to Baltimore and the state of Maryland."

After a yearlong national search, the Baltimore Center Stage Board of Trustees, working with consultant Barbara Janowitz, endorsed Ybarra's appointment. "Our committee recommended Stephanie to the board from a highly competitive field of candidates. Her vision for innovative productions will not only delight our current subscribers but will also attract new audiences, as well," said Search Committee Chair Beth Falcone.

"Baltimore Center Stage is a foundational institution for the American Theater. It is an honor to help carry its legacy forward as Artistic Director alongside the Board of Trustees, incredible staff and Executive Director Michael Ross," said Ybarra. "Serving the Baltimore community and the beautiful state of Maryland with dynamic arts programming is a singular opportunity. And, to say I'm 'thrilled' doesn't do justice to the wellspring of excitement and anticipation I'm feeling right now – I'm standing on some formidable shoulders, and in awe of the view."

Ybarra spent six years at The Public Theater of New York, where she rose from her role as an Artistic Associate to Director of Special Artistic Projects, where she oversees the theater's Mobile Unit and Public Forum programs. She has spearheaded The Public Mobile Unit's national program, in a first-of-its-kind tour. Ybarra is the recipient of multiple awards and honors and serves on numerous arts boards.



“Stephanie Ybarra is one of the rising stars of the American non-profit theater, a leader and a producer who is equally grounded in artistic excellence and a passion for social justice,” said Public Theater Artistic Director Oskar Eustis. “She is a superb choice for Center Stage; Baltimore is lucky to have her. I will miss her terribly here at The Public but am consoled by knowing there’s much work our two theaters can engage in together.”

“I am in awe of and inspired by Stephanie’s vision for the theater,” said Executive Director Michael Ross. “She has her fingertips on the pulse, and I’m thrilled and excited to partner with her in leading Baltimore Center Stage to its very bright and impactful future.”

Ybarra replaces former Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah, who served at the theater for seven seasons and became the Artistic Director of London’s Young Vic Theater in January. Ybarra’s full biographical sketch is attached, and interviews may be arranged by reaching out to the Baltimore Center Stage public relations office.

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About Baltimore Center Stage

Baltimore Center Stage is a theater committed to artistic excellence. We engage, enrich, and broaden the perspectives of diverse audiences through entertaining and thought-provoking work and educational programs. Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works. Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to Mainstage and intimate, affordable Bernard Black Box productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations across Baltimore and beyond through the Mobile Unit, which brings high-quality theater to economically, culturally, and geographically diverse communities. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theatergoers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series, and many other educational programs for students, families, and educators.

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STEPHANIE YBARRA is an artistic producer with almost twenty years of experience at theaters of all sizes across the United States. She is currently putting her skills to work as Director of Special Artistic Projects at The Public Theater, where she leads the Mobile Unit and Public Forum programs. Additionally, Stephanie is in her fourth year as Producer's Lab Liaison for Women's Project Theater, of which she is an alum; and she's both Curator and Casting Director for Two River Theater's Crossing Borders Festival of Latinx plays. Her career started in her home state of Texas, working with Dallas Theater Center and Dallas Children's Theater. She then spent time as the Deputy Director of Program Operations for Citizen Schools, a national after school program based in Boston. Stephanie next served as Interim General Manager of Two River Theater Company and Associate Managing Director of New Play Development for Yale Repertory Theater and Yale School of Drama. Ultimately, Stephanie landed in NYC, where she made her artistic producing debut with the original production of Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brothers*

Size, for which she received the inaugural Producer's Chair Award from the Foundry Theater. She went on to serve as the first Producing Director for Playwrights Realm and Producing Artistic Director for the Cherry Lane Theater's Mentor Project, collaborating with artists such as Jen Silverman, Snehal Desai, Greg Moss and Awoye Timpo. Stephanie is a frequent guest lecturer for artists and producing students at Julliard, NYU, and Yale School of Drama. She co-founded the Artists' Anti-Racism Coalition, a grassroots effort to help the Off-Broadway community dismantle systems of exclusion and oppression. In 2012, she was awarded the Josephine Abady Award for producing from New York's League of Professional Theatre Women. In 2015, she was the recipient of TCG's Continuing Education Grant, which took her to Peru to explore socio-political theater, and in 2016 she received the Congressional Award for Achievement in Excellence from Zara Aina, an international nonprofit dedicated to community-engaged artmaking. Stephanie holds an MFA from Yale School of Drama. She begins work as the Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage in October 2018.