



Artists Repertory Theatre

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ARTISTS REP ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLAN: KISHA JARRETT NAMED MANAGING DIRECTOR

J.S. MAY, WHO PREVIOUSLY HELD THE TITLE OF MANAGING DIRECTOR, ASSUMES NEW TITLE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; DÁMASO RODRÍGUEZ, NAMED EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PORTLAND, OREGON – January 11, 2021 The Board of Directors of Artists Repertory Theatre announced Kisha Jarrett as Managing Director, as part of a succession plan to ensure a smooth leadership transition following the planned retirement of Managing Director J.S. May as early as 2023. This structured succession plan is modeled after similar processes at academic institutions, sometimes known as *Targets of Opportunity*, where internal candidates are identified for positions anticipated to be opening in the future. The intention is to select a candidate from within the organization, developing them for the leadership role and, following an evaluation by the board of directors, filling the position without an external search. J.S. May, ART's current Managing Director since 2018 announced that he will be stepping down in 2023 following the completion of ART's capital campaign to revitalize its existing facility at 1515 SW Morrison Street.

Jarrett, previously the Director of Development and Marketing, began her tenure at ART in 2016 as the Annual Fund and Events Manager in the Development department before shifting to the senior management role of Marketing Director. Restructuring in response to the COVID-19 pandemic saw Jarrett's role expand to include management of a merged Marketing and Development department. As Managing Director, she will assume further expanded oversight of the company's audience development, communications, fundraising, and administrative operations while May steers the capital campaign, long-term organizational advancement, and the transition to its new facility while supporting Jarrett in her expanded leadership position. To clearly define roles, May assumes the new title of Executive Director, continuing to report to ART's board of directors alongside artistic director Dámaso Rodríguez,

whose new title is Executive Artistic Director. Jarrett will co-report to May and Rodríguez, while maintaining a direct relationship to the Board of Directors. ART's Board of Directors created a Succession Planning Committee to interview Jarrett and provide ongoing oversight, evaluation, and support during the succession process. The committee is currently composed of Board Chair Jeff Condit, Vice Chair/Incoming Board Chair Pancho Savery, and board members Erik Opsahl and Norma Dulin. Jarrett assumed her new title and responsibilities on January 4, 2021.

*"I always envisioned my time at ART as a 4-5 year project to help fund and build the theatre's new home venue while cultivating support and visibility worthy of the art on its stages," said **Executive Director, J.S. May**. "While working hand in hand with Kisha Jarrett on everything from creating the new ART brand, to launching a new website and implementing new fundraising systems, I've watched her innovate and problem-solve while facing ever more complex challenges. I believe Kisha is poised to be an inspiring leader for ART and I wanted to recommend that the board begin now to plan for my departure, with Kisha in mind as my successor."*

*"I'm thrilled by the transparency, foresight, and innovation exhibited by J.S. and our Board of Directors, as well as their wisdom in recognizing Kisha's extraordinary management and leadership skills," said **Executive Artistic Director, Dámaso Rodríguez**. "This is the kind of stability and forward thinking needed to face the dual challenges and opportunities of devising the post-pandemic ART while simultaneously completing our capital campaign to build our new theatre home."*

*"ART is committed to making significant, measurable strides on its journey to becoming an anti-racist, anti-biased organization. This includes the continued examination of our policies and practices, and it requires new ways of working" said **Board Chair, Jeff Condit**. "By promoting Kisha Jarrett to the leadership role of Managing Director and positioning her to succeed J.S. May, and with Pancho Savery taking over the role of ART's Board Chair in June 2021, ART will be led (along with Executive Artistic Director Dámaso Rodríguez) at the senior staff and board level by a predominantly Black or POC team. I am excited to support this extraordinary team as they guide ART forward on our path to becoming an anti-racist, multi-cultural theatre that meets the needs of our community."*

*"Artists Rep is offering me such an extraordinary opportunity to help lead the organization into the future," said **Managing Director, Kisha Jarrett**. "To work alongside an Artistic Director like Dámaso and have the creative input into steering this ship is a working relationship not usually found with Managing Director positions. I lean into my role as an innovator and while I celebrate being a black woman in this position at Artists Rep, our evolution is not finished. We have only just begun to make moves that challenge the traditional regional theatre model and we will continue to do work that challenges and inspires while we have ongoing analysis of our operating model to ensure we truly and organically offer a shared space that reflects the diversity of Portland and the Pacific Northwest."*

Kisha Jarrett (Managing Director) is a creative change-maker with a background in marketing and development throughout her ten-year career in Arts Management. She has helped fundraise over \$50 million dollars for various organizations and has a cumulative ticket sales revenue of over \$5 million. A Virginia native, she has lived all over the country but now calls Portland, Oregon home. Kisha is also a writer, director, producer, actor, musician, and storyteller. She has performed for both stage and screen, been a musician at SXSW, and has been a costume designer for the stage and television, and an independent bakery owner. Through storytelling, she has performed for the Moth (2017 and 2018 GrandSLAM winner), Back Fence PDX, Seven Deadly Sins, Wildfang, and more. Most recently, Kisha was seen onstage at Portland Center Stage @ The Armory as the Headmistress in *School Girls; or The African Mean Girls Play*, a co-production with Artists Rep. Currently, she is working on her second feature-length screenplay, pre-production for a feature-length documentary (*Black Girl in the Woods*, documenting a hike-thru of the Pacific Northwest Trail) and an educational piece for the Oregon Bar Association (about the four black suffragettes in Oregon who deserve to have their stories told), post-production on the first devised DNA:Oxygen short film (*See Me*), and writing her first novel. Kisha is proud to be a co-founder of the DNA: Oxygen program at ART. She is in the inaugural cohort of the LORT EDI Mentor/Mentee program and serves on the LORT EDI committee. Kisha is on the Literary Arts Festival of the Book Committee and has served as an Event Producer for Oregon Media Production Association (OMPA), Children's Book Bank, Boys and Girls Club, Artists Rep, Live Arts, MTV Woodie Awards, Invisible Children, World Monuments Fund, and School of Visual Arts.

J.S. (John Stuart) May is a seasoned fundraising, communications and nonprofit management professional and has worked with a wide range of local, regional, national and international nonprofit organizations. He has helped raise more than \$500 million. Since 2018 J.S. has been the Managing Director, now Executive Director, for Artist Repertory Theatre, Portland's oldest professional theatre. For eleven years prior, he was the chief fundraising, marketing and communications officer, and strategist for the Portland Art Museum - Oregon's premier visual arts institution. Before the Art Museum, for seven years J.S. led the fundraising practice for Metropolitan Group, a Portland-based social marketing firm that works to create a more just and sustainable world. For the six years prior to MG, he supported the growth of the region's leading pediatric teaching and research hospital as executive director for the Doernbecher Children's Hospital Foundation at OHSU. Before Doernbecher, J.S. spent six years supporting the expansion and growth of the region's most trusted media source as the director of corporate support for Oregon Public Broadcasting. A graduate of the University of Oregon and a Navy veteran, J.S. has volunteered for numerous nonprofit organizations and has served multiple terms as president of the board for both the Portland Schools Foundation and the Portland Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. He currently serves as president of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition and a board member of Cycle Oregon.

Dámaso Rodríguez is in his eighth season as Executive Artistic Director of Artists Repertory Theatre, Portland's longest-running professional theatre company, which became a member of

the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) under his leadership. Plays developed during his tenure have been produced in New York, Chicago, London, and throughout the U.S. Acclaim for Artists Rep developed projects includes the Dramatists Guild Foundation Award, the Edgerton New Play Award, NEA Funding, American Theatre Magazine's Most Produced Plays list, and coverage in the New Yorker and the New York Times. He is a Co-Founder of L.A.'s Furious Theatre, where he served as Co-Artistic Director from 2001-2012 (named to LA Weekly's "Best Theatres of the Decade" list). From 2007-2010 he served as Associate Artistic Director of the Pasadena Playhouse, where he directed main stage productions and oversaw programming for the Playhouse's second stage, including its Hothouse New Play Development Program. He has directed a broad range of new and classic plays including over 20 Artists Rep productions, along with work at South Coast Repertory, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Conservatory Theater, Seattle Rep, Intiman Theatre, A Noise Within, The Playwrights' Center, New Dramatists, The New Harmony Project, The Theatre@Boston Court, Pasadena Playhouse, and Furious Theatre. Dámaso is a recipient of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, the Back Stage Garland Award, the NAACP Theatre Award, and the Pasadena Arts Council's Gold Crown Award. He was honored as a Finalist for the Zelda Fichandler Award by the Stage Directors & Choreographers Foundation and was named a Knowledge Universe Rising Star by Portland Monthly. His productions have received or been nominated for dozens of awards including the L.A. Stage Alliance Ovation Award, LA StageScene Award, and the LA Weekly Theatre Award, among others. He is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and serves on the faculty of The Actors Conservatory at Artists Rep.

RISE: The Campaign for Artists Repertory Theatre is the \$32mil capital funding drive that will make possible the reinvention of ART's building at 1515 SW Morrison. Originally an Elks Lodge health club, the Artists Rep building has reached the end of its useful life. A major gift in 2018 paid off the outstanding mortgage on the entire downtown block catalyzing the 2019 sale of the north half of the building. ART received \$9 million in the sale, which became the lead investment for the reimagining of the remaining building. With 65% of funds secured and permits recently approved by the City of Portland, the company is poised to break ground on the next phase of construction. Designed by Lever Architecture, the roof and a massive wood beam will rise to create a modern multiuse performing arts center with two theatres, four rehearsal halls, and collaborative spaces that will give space to the many new stories waiting to be shared.

ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

[ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE'S \(ART\)](#) mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for a diverse community of artists and audiences to take creative risks.

Artists Repertory Theatre recognizes that we are a predominately white organization and operate within systemic racism and oppression, and that silence and neutrality are actions of complicity. We recognize the critical role the arts play in our culture and national conversation, and accept our responsibility to

make positive change through our work, our practices, and our policies. We commit ourselves to the work of becoming an anti-racism and anti-oppression organization, and will work with urgency to end racial inequities in our industry and our culture.

ART gratefully acknowledges our theatre rests on the traditional lands of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River.

Led by Executive Artistic Director Dámaso Rodríguez and Executive Director J.S. May, ART (est. 1982) is Portland's oldest professional theatre company and has become a significant presence in the U.S. regional theatre with a legacy of world, national, and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. In 2016, ART became the 72nd member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN). Plays developed by ART have subsequently been produced in New York, Chicago, London, and throughout the country. Recognition for ART commissioned plays includes the Dramatists Guild Foundation Award, the Edgerton New Play Award, NEA Funding, the Mellon Foundation National Playwright Residency Program, American Theatre Magazine's Most-Produced Plays, and coverage in the New Yorker and the New York Times.

[TABLE|ROOM|STAGE \(T|R|S\)](#), established in 2015, is Artists Rep's new play program. The T|R|S mission is to develop and produce new work that vividly expresses Artists Rep's [aesthetic values](#). Focused on work by BIPOC writers, women, LGBTQIA+ and gender nonconforming writers, and offer an environment where these playwrights can create provocative, intimate new theatre pieces that challenge, illuminate, and inspire.

T|R|S has produced the following commissions: *The Talented Ones* by Yussef El Guindi (April 2017), *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota) (April 2018), the NNPN Rolling World Premiere *Wolf Play* by Hansol Jung (March 2019), and the upcoming *Looking for Tiger Lily* by Anthony Hudson (Spring 2021).

T|R|S is home to Mellon Playwright-In-Residence and Steinberg Award Winner, E.M. Lewis, and Lacroute Playwright-In-Residence, Andrea Stolowitz. Playwrights under commission presently include Linda Alper, Anthony Hudson, Steve Rathje, Andrea Stolowitz, and E.M. Lewis, whose play *The Great Divide* is co-commissioned with ART and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. New projects are also being developed with Susannah Mars and Vin Shambry.

T|R|S *At the Apex* has a hand in shaping World Premieres and vital second productions by some of the nation's most exciting playwrights. *At the Apex* productions are: *La Ruta* by Isaac Gomez (November 2019), *Teenage Dick* by Mike Lew (January 2019), *Magellanica* by E.M. Lewis (January 2018), and *Cuba Libre* by Carlos Lacámara (Book) and Jorge Gómez (Music & Lyrics).

Through T|R|S, Artists Rep is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN).

[RESIDENT ARTISTS](#) have an ongoing history of working on stage and behind-the-scenes of Artists Rep's mainstage productions. They collaborate with administrative staff on education, community engagement, new play development, and fundraising efforts. The Resident Artist title is offered by the Artistic Director in appreciation of each artist's achievements with ART and in the spirit of continued

collaboration. These multidisciplinary theatre makers are deeply committed to ART's success, share organizational values, and participate in decision-making processes that impact the theatre's mission and its future. Through the Resident Artists program, a diverse community of Portland-based artists are at the center of the day-to-day life of the theatre and play a vital part in creating the culture at ART.

[EDUCATION](#) is dedicated to developing life-long learners at every ability, interest, and level of expertise. Opportunities focus on engaging with our community by offering professional-level classes, coaching, and workshops with our teaching artists. Programs like these serve artists and others seeking professional development, students seeking to engage in the transformative power of the arts, and life-long learners who can take classes in subjects such as dramaturgy, script-writing, and communication for non-actors. With the Student Ambassador Program, students learn about the inner-workings of a major nonprofit professional theatre, meet once per month, see shows for free, and participate in discussions with leading theatre artists and professionals. Access and enrichment are available for educators who enjoy ticket discounts, school programming, and workshops. Enhanced viewing experiences include post-show discussions with the cast, panel discussions with experts, and a dedicated conversation with production designers.

[ARTSHUB](#) is Artists Rep's resource sharing and community-building initiative supporting Portland theatre makers, arts and education nonprofits, and community groups. The mission of the ArtsHub is to create a cultural center by supporting Portland's rich artistic ecosystem. Programs and services include below market rates for rehearsal, performance, and meeting space; shared administrative work space for individuals and organizations; and production services such as set construction, scenic painting, and professional technical support from design through performance. We prioritize artists and organizations that support ART's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and seek to provide a home for artists and audiences to take creative risks.

While the program's origin seven years ago was in response to an opportunity to share underutilized performance space, we have found that the most vital and lasting impact of the ArtsHub is the bustling community that has been formed, and the myriad ways it has led to the empowerment of local artists and the accelerated growth of participating organizations. Our new facility is being designed so that the ARTSHUB can include even more organizations than it currently serves.

Artists Repertory Theatre receives generous support from our community of patrons, including significant leadership gifts from: The Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation; The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation; Ronni Lacroute; The Oregon Legislature, The Oregon Cultural Trust and The Multnomah County Cultural Coalition; David & Christine Vernier; The Oregon Community Foundation; The Shubert Foundation; and the Regional Arts and Culture Council. Additional Corporate and Foundation support comes from The Kinsman Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; The Cowlitz Tribe Education and Arts Fund; Oregon Arts Commission; US Bank; The Jackson Foundation; PGE Foundation; Sheri and Les Biller Foundation; and Rafati's Catering.

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