



NEWS RELEASE

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ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY NAMES SEAN DANIELS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sean Daniels, who in his youth was inspired toward a career in theatre after attending Arizona Theatre Company productions with his Mesa-based family, has come full circle by being named ATC's new Artistic Director.

Daniels spent the last five years as Artistic Director at Merrimack Repertory Theatre in Lowell, MA. Previously, he served as Associate Artistic Director at Actors Theatre of Louisville, home of the Humana Festival of New American Plays. Both theatres are members of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT).

"One of the first shows I ever saw, *Our Town*, was at Arizona Theatre Company. I remember it like it was yesterday. It changed me forever, and decades later I'm making theatre around the world because of it," Daniels said. "It's an honor to give back to a place that has given me so much, and for every kid who walks into this building to know that they can someday be the Artistic Director."

Daniels' family tree includes the Udall family, who have long been part of Arizona's history "and I'm excited to add to that," he said. "My Great Grandfather, Jesse Udall, was Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, my Great Uncle, John, and his son, Nick, were Phoenix mayors. I want to continue my family's dedication to making Arizona a leader in our country.

And, I'm excited to get back to owning a house with a pool!" Daniels also is related to Mo Udall, a popular Arizona Congressman who ran for president and was known for his wry humor.

Daniels and his family, who were ATC subscribers, lived in Mesa, where he attended elementary and junior high school, before the family moved to Florida.

"We are thrilled to bring Sean Daniels back to Arizona and to Arizona audiences," said Susan Segal, chair of the ATC Board of Trustees. "His deep connections to Arizona and his impressive successes as a director and leader for leading American theatre companies blend perfectly to continue ATC's legacy of presenting great theatre."

American Theatre magazine named him one of the "top 15 up-and-coming artists in the U.S. whose work will be transforming America's stages for decades to come" and "one of 7 people reshaping and revitalizing the American musical."

Daniels' professional experience also includes responsibilities as Artist-At-Large/Director of Artistic Engagement at the Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, N.Y. and as Associate Artistic Director and Resident Director at California Shakespeare Theater in Berkeley, CA. From 1995 to 2004 he was Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Dad's Garage Theatre Company in Atlanta.

During his career, Daniels has created and implemented many nationally recognized programs connecting audiences and artists. As a playwright, conceiver and director, his work has been seen around the country in a number of highly regarded productions.

Daniels directed the musical play, ***The Lion***, which premiered Off-Broadway in New York City, winning a Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance by Benjamin Scheuer. The show also played in London, at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles and the Old Globe in San Diego. In December, the show will be streamed as part of the BROADWAYHD series.

He has developed new work with two-time Tony Award winners Greg Kotis and Mark Hollmann (creators of ***Urinetown***), Trey Parker and Matt Stone (***Book of Mormon***), Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (***Riverdale***, ***Glee***) and Jordan Harrison (***Orange is the New Black***), among others.

Daniels' play, ***The White Chip***, will be produced Off-Broadway this October by five-time Tony nominee Tom Kirdahy. His newest play, ***The Haunted Life***, the first stage adaptation of a Jack Kerouac novel approved by the Kerouac estate, opens at Merrimack Repertory Theatre this month.

"I am very excited to partner with Sean Daniels to continue Arizona Theatre Company's mission of producing world-class quality theatre," said ATC Managing Director Billy Russo. "Sean's artistic vision and his commitment to bringing the audiences closer to the art and the

artists creating the work here is perfectly aligned to build on ATC's rich history and recent successes. The synergy between Sean and ATC is palpable on many levels. For example, Lauren Gunderson, America's most-produced playwright whose play, ***Silent Sky***, is part of next season's lineup, is a frequent collaborator of Sean's and the officiant at his wedding!"

Daniels will select the final two shows of the six-show 2019/20 season with an announcement expected in the next several weeks. Daniels and Russo have begun work on additions to the Artistic Department which will include Kennedy Center National Latino Playwriting Award recipient, Golden Globe-nominated writer of ***Jane the Virgin*** and a writer for ***Insecure***, christopher oscar peña (Editors: lower-case spelling is correct).

Shows already announced for next season include Gunderson's ***Silent Sky***; the powerful musical love story ***Cabaret***; Athol Fugard's story of South Africa in the early years of apartheid, ***Master Harold...and The Boys***; and ***The Legend of Georgia McBride***, a hilarious and heartwarming story of Casey, a broke Elvis impersonator with a baby on the way, a co-production with Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

For more information, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

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About Arizona Theatre Company:

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 52nd season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ivers, Managing Director Billy Russo and a dedicated Board of Trustees.