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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Managing Director Michael Ross to Retire from Baltimore Center Stage

Baltimore, MD, April 13, 2021---- **Michael Ross** will retire from his role as Managing Director of Baltimore Center Stage at the end of June, the theater's Board of Trustees announced today. **Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra** will continue to lead the theater while the Board and staff explore long-term leadership models. BCS expects to announce these plans in the fall. The Board of Trustees and staff of Baltimore Center Stage, and many in the Baltimore and national arts and culture community, have expressed gratitude for Michael's significant contributions over a combined 11 years of leadership of the theater.

"Michael's impact on Baltimore Center Stage is far-reaching and exemplary. His congeniality while mentoring me and so many others is only exceeded by his caring for colleagues and the theater," said Board of Trustees President, **Sandy Liotta**. "I'm grateful for his spirited leadership and he will be hugely missed. Happily, we have the great good fortune of another dynamic leader in Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra guiding us to a brightly lit and compelling future."

Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra joined Baltimore Center Stage in 2018. Over the last few years, and through the challenges of the pandemic, Stephanie and Michael have led Baltimore Center Stage with a steadfast commitment to the Baltimore community, to supporting artists, and to working with integrity and joy. They have continued to ensure BCS' fiscal stability, with record-breaking levels of annual operating support. Together, they leveraged their relationships to increase BCS' national profile. And they have reimagined Baltimore Center Stage's programming, including the Bridge Series and Baltimore Butterfly Sessions, virtual delivery of the Mainstage Series, as well as youth and civic programming. Stephanie, in partnership with Baltimore Center Stage's exceptional team, will continue to lead through the next phase of transition and beyond to position Baltimore Center Stage for future success.

"I have often referred to myself as the luckiest Artistic Director to have been able to share so much laughter and thought-partnership with Michael during our joint tenure," said Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra. "He has been an unyielding advocate for Baltimore Center Stage and for me; it's been a privilege to march through the challenges and triumphs of leading this organization together. I'm grateful for the years of collaboration and the many years of friendship to come."

Michael Ross first joined Baltimore Center Stage as Managing Director in 2002. He left the theater in 2008, and served as Managing Director at Westport Country Playhouse. He rejoined Baltimore Center Stage as Managing Director in 2016. "Having been fortunate enough to make a career out of my love of theater, I am deeply grateful for the role Baltimore Center Stage has played in my life, and deeply humbled to have worked alongside visionary artistic directors Irene Lewis, Kwame Kwei-Armah and now Stephanie Ybarra," said Michael Ross. "I have been in a dream job---twice! ---in a city with a theater I love. I am overwhelmed with gratitude and respect for all the people who make up Baltimore Center Stage: the industrious and ever-impressive staff, the incredibly committed and generous Board of Trustees, and our loyal and always thoughtfully engaging audience."

Although Michael will be missed, Baltimore Center Stage is looking to its exciting future, including plans to celebrate BCS' 60th anniversary during the 2022/23 season, and to its next 60 years serving as a cultural catalyst in the community, using theater in all its forms to engage in compelling conversations. Those interested in celebrating with Michael and BCS at *Improvise*, the Baltimore Center Stage Gala Experience on June 5, 2021 can find more information on the BCS website: <https://www.centerstage.org/support/gala/>.

For interview requests, and other media related inquiries please contact the Communications office. For general information, visit www.centerstage.org or call the box office at 410.332.0033.

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 Managing 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.

