

New York City Center names Jenny Gersten VP & Artistic Director, Musical Theater

New position responsible for artistic direction of Encores! series and Annual Gala Presentations

January 30, 2025—NEW YORK CITY CENTER President & CEO **Michael S. Rosenberg** today announced that **Jenny Gersten** has been promoted from VP & Producer to the new position of **VP & Artistic Director, Musical Theater**.

In this newly created position, Gersten will serve as artistic director of the Tony-honored Encores! series and Annual Gala Productions. Responsible for programming and producing all musical theater titles at the historic institution, she will continue to build on the innovation and diverse artistic voices that have brought extraordinary success to City Center’s productions including *Jelly’s Last Jam*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Ragtime*, and *Titanic*. Over the last season, musical theater attendance has reached an all-time high with nearly 30% of those tickets purchased for \$40 or less.

As City Center continues its mission to make extraordinary performances like these accessible to all, Gersten will also work with **Stanford Makishi**, VP & Artistic Director, Dance, and **Tia Powell-Harris**, VP, Education & Community Engagement, to expand the intersection between musical theater programming with dance, education, and community programs. A key member since joining the City Center team in 2020, Gersten will lead the Encores! artistic team—Music Director **Mary-Mitchell Campbell** and Producing Creative Director **Clint Ramos**—following Artistic Director **Lear deBessonnet**’s previously announced departure at the end of the season.

Michael S. Rosenberg said, “Jenny has been instrumental in the success of our musical theater programs. Her artistic sensibilities and deep ties to the community brought new voices to our productions, and her deft producing skills provide the crucial space for an artist’s vision to take shape. She has a keen understanding of City Center’s legacy, and her long-standing experience in the industry makes her the natural choice. We are truly fortunate to have such a thoughtful and engaged leader to build upon our artistic success and mission of accessibility.”

Jenny Gersten said, "I'm a New Yorker first and a musical theater fan second. Making musicals happen at City Center is the greatest privilege—to be of service not just to musical theater lovers, but also to our many communities. What I enjoy most is giving audiences what they want and presenting them with something they didn't know they wanted. We have brought a diversity of artists to Encores! and the Annual Gala Productions in the last few seasons, and I look forward to building on these efforts with Clint and Mary-Mitchell and collaborating with Stanford and Tia on the crossover between musical theater, dance, and our education and community engagement programming. City Center holds a special place for me and so many artists, and I feel so fortunate to be continuing this journey with the talented staff and dedicated audience."

Lear deBessonnet said, "Jenny is a brilliant leader and deeply beloved for good reason. During my time as Artistic Director of Encores!, she, along with Clint and Mary-Mitchell, have been the most extraordinary partners I could have asked for and I am ecstatic for the next beautiful chapter of Encores! under their care."

An award-winning producer, Gersten's work spans non-profit institutions and commercial theater. She began her career as associate producer and subsequently as artistic director of Williamstown Theatre Festival. Gersten served as associate producer at The Public Theater, executive director of Friends of the High Line, and producer at PAC NYC during design and planning. Recent credits include *Just for Us* (Broadway), *Beetlejuice* (Broadway), *Sweeney Todd* (Off-Broadway), Gavin Creel's *Walk On Through* (with MCC), and the Broadway transfers of City Center productions of *Parade* and *Once Upon a Mattress*. In addition to producing City Center's three annual Encores! revivals and programming and producing the Annual Gala Presentation since 2020, Gersten produced digital concerts by Audra McDonald and Sutton Foster when City Center was closed to public performances due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER (Michael S. Rosenberg, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city for more than 80 years. The distinctive Neo-Moorish building was founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia in 1943 as Manhattan's first performing arts center with the mission of making the best in theater, dance, and music accessible to all audiences. This commitment continues today through celebrated dance and musical theater series like the Fall for Dance Festival, Artists at the Center, the Tony-honored Encores! series, and the annual season by Principal Dance Company Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. City Center welcomes audiences to experience internationally acclaimed artists including Kyle Abraham, Matthew Bourne, Ayodele Casel, Manhattan Theatre Club, Nederlands



Dans Theater, and Twyla Tharp, on the same stage where legends made their mark. Dedicated to a culture built on the values of curiosity, collaboration, accessibility, and inclusivity, City Center's dynamic programming, art exhibitions, and studio events are complemented by a full slate of education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to thousands of New York City students, teachers, and families every year. NYCityCenter.org

PRESS CONTACT:

Sara García, Communications Manager

SGarcia@NYCityCenter.org

212.763.1288

Joe Guttridge, Communications & Editorial Director

JGuttridge@NYCityCenter.org

212.763.1279

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