



## Artistic Director John Langs to Depart ACT Contemporary Theatre After 10 Transformative Years of Leadership

*John Langs will join University of North Carolina School of Arts as  
Dean of the School of Drama*



**SEATTLE, WA (April 25, 2024)** – After 20 years in Seattle and 10 seasons at ACT Contemporary Theatre including eight years as Artistic Director, **John Langs** will depart the region to join the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) as Dean of the School of Drama.

“After 10 extraordinary years at ACT, I have been offered perhaps the single opportunity that would take me away from this beautiful theatre company,” said John. “I’m so proud of what we achieved in my time at ACT Contemporary Theatre, and am confident I am leaving it in a place of strength and growth. This current season was successful in so many ways - sellout houses, critically acclaimed productions, and the launch of our heavily-lauded New Works Northwest festival. The recently announced 2024/25 Season, touting more productions, longer show runs, and a continued commitment to new work, is already highly anticipated by our community. My final curated season at ACT includes two world premieres from local playwrights alongside three more plays that have that inspired, reckless, culture-shifting spirit we love and cherish.”

**Board of Trustees Chair Cynthia Huffman said**, “John’s vision, leadership, and unwavering dedication to Seattle has elevated ACT Contemporary Theatre to new heights. ACT’s future is bright thanks to John, and the Board of Trustees extends our gratitude.”

Members from ACT’s Board, staff, and the Core Company will work on a leadership plan going forward. Updates will be shared throughout the process. John Langs will continue to serve as Artistic Director with ACT through the summer and support the organization in their leadership planning and through the upcoming 2024/25 Season.

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As ACT's leadership team evolves, the company is thrilled to announce the promotion of **Alyssa Montgomery** to General Manager, tapping her 16 years of institutional knowledge. Alyssa's direction will be instrumental during this time of growth and transition.

Beginning his Seattle career in 2004 and joining ACT Contemporary Theatre in 2013 as Associate Artistic Director, John Langs quickly ascended to the role of Artistic Director three years later. John directed 21 ACT productions including *Sweat*, *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*, a bilingual *Romeo & Juliet*, and the upcoming [The Lehman Trilogy](#), which starts this Saturday, April 27, and has already been extended due to popular demand. John directed new works such as *Daisy*, *Alex and Aris*, and *Hotter Than Egypt*, all of which have gone on to be produced at theatres around the country. Yussef El Guindi's *People of the Book*, which made its world premiere at ACT in 2019, will be presented at New York City's Urban Stages this fall, directed by Langs. He has presided over 60 productions as Artistic Director, and led collaborations across the community including with Seattle Opera, Seattle Symphony, The Hansberry Project, and many others. He was deeply involved as a director and creative force with The Seagull Project, New Century Theater Company, and Seattle Shakespeare Company.

Under his leadership, Langs has been instrumental in guiding ACT Contemporary Theatre through monumental growth and change within the organization. After the COVID-19 lockdown, Langs and the Core Company worked to re-establish the values and mission of ACT. During his tenure, the governance structure of ACT's Board of Trustees was reimaged through an equitable lens and a curation committee was created to ensure diversity and accessibility of programming. With guidance from staff, trustees, and the local community, ACT continues the endless work towards becoming an anti-racist, fully accessible, multicultural theatre that is truly welcoming to all.

Langs' commitment to the growth of new and emerging artists defined ACT's most significant programs. [The Core Company](#) project, launched in 2016, started as an ensemble of artists and developed into a group that contributed beyond the stage as an artistic advisory council. The Kenan Fellowship in Directing was created to provide artists practical, onsite knowledge in the professional arts field. Original plays were supported through programs such as the aforementioned New Works Northwest Festival, ACTlocal initiative, and mainstage commissions of new plays from local

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playwrights including Youssef El Guindi, Keiko Green, Reginald André Jackson, and currently Andrew Lee Creech.

For available photos of John Langs, please visit our [online press room](#).

### **ABOUT ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE**

Steadfast in its dedication to producing work that sparks an authentic curiosity about the human condition, ACT produces bold, audacious works of contemporary theatre from its home in Seattle. Over the last 59 years, ACT remains the voice of contemporary theatre in the Pacific Northwest, presenting necessary and relevant works on current themes and producing more than 300 plays and musicals, including 49 world premieres. Led by Artistic Director John Langs, ACT nurtures theatre-makers of the next generation, with a mission to be a contemporary theatre where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite.

ACT is here to challenge how stories are told. For more information on ACT Contemporary Theatre please visit [ACTTheatre.org](http://ACTTheatre.org).

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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