



**SEATTLE
SHAKESPEARE**

ACT Contemporary Theatre and Seattle Shakespeare Company Announce Exploration of Merger

*Two beloved Seattle theatre organizations begin plans to forge a
future together at 700 Union Street*

SEATTLE, WA (June 5, 2024) – ACT Contemporary Theatre and Seattle Shakespeare Company (SSC) announced today their intention to explore the merging of their two iconic Seattle arts organizations. The proposed partnership would produce a dynamic new entity that serves the mission of both theatres under one roof in ACT's current home at 700 Union Street, located in the city's historic theatre district. The combining of resources would serve as a rejuvenating force to downtown Seattle, create new opportunities for artists within the community to work and grow, and consistently utilize all performance spaces within the landmark Eagles Auditorium Building, leading to more groundbreaking contemporary and classic programming from both organizations.

Both ACT and SSC are known for their bold, innovative programming and dedication to fostering a thriving cultural landscape in the Pacific Northwest. Coming off successful 2023-24 seasons full of packed houses and critical acclaim, a merger provides an opportunity to combine their strengths, amplify their community impact, and place greater focus toward their organizational missions for the long term.

Following an extensive development process led by **ACT Artistic Director John Langs** and **Seattle Shakespeare Company Executive Director John Bradshaw**, the ACT and SSC Boards unanimously approved the exploration and will be the stewards of the transition moving forward.

"This is not only about ACT and Seattle Shakespeare, but also about the city of Seattle," **said ACT's John Langs**. "What better way to assist in the revitalization of downtown than to join together the forces of two storied arts organizations into our historic Seattle landmark building. We see this as a first step to becoming an arts center in the heart of the city. We feel this is out of the box, collaborative thinking where all parties benefit, and that the real winner will be this great city."

SSC's John Bradshaw adds: "What has made Seattle theatre incredibly special over the years is the sense of collaboration and collegiality among the different theatre organizations. This is what makes Seattle one of the most important cities for theatre in the country, and the heart of this powerful community began with the leadership of Greg Falls, founder of ACT. It is especially exciting to explore a merger of these two companies, with nearly 100 years of combined theatrical service in Seattle, to create something stronger, more vibrant, more impactful than either alone."

Michael Greer, President and CEO of ArtsFund, a Washington foundation that has distributed more than \$100 million to more than 650 arts organizations grantees including both SSC and ACT, says "ArtsFund is excited to see these important Seattle institutions exploring creative solutions to secure the future of the arts in this city. As our sector continues to support the revitalization of our city centers, this partnership is an example of the creative thinking that has the potential to create stronger connections and new opportunities for everyone involved."

As the exploration process unfolds, leaders from ACT Contemporary Theatre and Seattle Shakespeare Company are eager to engage with the community, stakeholders, patrons, and supporters to gather input on this exciting initiative. They invite feedback at feedback@acttheatre.org or feedback@seattleshakespeare.org.

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.

ABOUT SEATTLE SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

With the plays of William Shakespeare at our core, Seattle Shakespeare Company engages our audiences, our artists, and our community in the universal human experience inherent in classic drama. SSC is committed to "Shakespeare for everybody." As the Puget Sound region's year-round, professional, classical theatre, the

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company's growing success stems from a deep belief in the power and vibrancy of the time-tested words and ideas of Shakespeare and other classical playwrights. SSC is committed to artistic excellence on stage, and accessibility through education outreach programs, state-wide touring, and free Wooden O performances in regional parks. The results have been provocative performances that both challenge and delight audiences while fostering an appreciation for great stage works. For more information on Seattle Shakespeare Company, please visit seattleshakespeare.org.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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