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### **KWAME KWEI-ARMAH ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE FROM BALTIMORE CENTER STAGE AT END OF 2017/18 SEASON**

BALTIMORE, MD (June 20, 2017)—The Board of Directors of Baltimore Center Stage and Kwame Kwei-Armah jointly announced today that Kwei-Armah will leave his position as artistic director at the end of his contract on June 30, 2018. Kwei-Armah has served as artistic director of Baltimore Center Stage since 2011. While at Baltimore Center Stage, Kwei-Armah is credited with producing three of the top selling shows in Baltimore Center Stage's history: *The Mountaintop*, *Marley* and *One Night in Miami...* His production of *One Night in Miami...* at London's Donmar Warehouse garnered a Lawrence Olivier nomination for Best New Play 2016.

"I have had the most wonderful six years leading Baltimore Center Stage with Stephen Richard, and now with Michael Ross," said Kwei-Armah. "Together, we have achieved considerable success, including many great shows, an amazing new building and a deep reconnection with the community resulting in a substantial increase of new audiences. I have felt profoundly supported by the Board and the Baltimore community and have endeavored to reciprocate by seeking new and innovative ways to serve. I love Baltimore."

The Board of Directors will begin a search for a new artistic director in the coming months.

"Kwame brought a level of creativity and energy to Baltimore Center Stage that was fresh, inventive and filled with purpose," said Terry Morgenthaler, President of the Board of Directors. "He challenged everyone, from his actors and his production team, to his staff and board, to bring a higher level of artistry to our work. 'Access for All' became his signature mission and it is reflected in everything we do now. We look forward to his final Baltimore Center Stage season and future collaborations with this magnificent artist."

Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE is an award-winning British playwright, director, actor and broadcaster. At Baltimore Center State he directed *Jazz*, *Marley*, *One Night in Miami*, *Amadeus*, *Dance of the holy ghosts*, *The Mountaintop*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Whipping Man* and *Things of Dry Hours*. In 2012, Kwei-Armah was made an Officer of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for services to drama. In 2014, Kwame was named Best Director in *City Paper's* Best of Baltimore. In 2015, he was awarded the

National Black Theater's Visionary TEER spirit award and was a finalist for the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation's Zelda Fichandler Award for Best Regional Artistic Director. In 2016, he was awarded the Urban Visionary Award alongside House Representative Elijah Cummings for service to the Baltimore community.

Among his works as a playwright are *Elmina's Kitchen*, *Let There Be Love*, *A Bitter Herb*, *Statement of Regret*, *Seize the Day*, *Beneatha's Place* and *One Love: The Bob Marley Musical*. Other directorial credits include *One Night in Miami...* at Donmar Warehouse; *Twelfth Night*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and the world premiere of *Detroit '67* at the Public Theater New York; and *The Liquid Plain* at Oregon Shakespeare Company/Signature Theater New York. He has served on the boards of Theatre Communications Group, The National Theatre of Great Britain, The Tricycle Theatre and the Roundhouse theatre in London. He was a member of the Steinberg Playwright Awards committee. Kwei-Armah is an associate director at the Donmar Warehouse London and was previously Artistic Director for the World Festival of Black Arts and Culture, Senegal (2010) and Chancellor of the University of the Arts London (2010-2015).

### **About Baltimore Center Stage**

Baltimore Center Stage is a professional, nonprofit institution committed to entertaining, engaging and enriching audiences through bold, innovative and thought-provoking classical and contemporary theater. Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE and Managing Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works. In 2017, the theater completed a \$28 million building renovation that created more opportunities for art making and community building, with new public spaces to gather before and after shows and state-of-the-art performance spaces with the best in theater design and technology.

Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its theater doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to its Mainstage, Off Center and Family Series productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations among a global audience through digital initiatives, which explore how technology and the arts intersect. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theatergoers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series and many other educational programs for students, families and professionals.

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