



NEWS RELEASE

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**AFTER 4 SUCCESSFUL SEASONS OF GROWTH, MANAGING DIRECTOR
BILLY RUSSO TO STEP DOWN IN JUNE
GERI WRIGHT NAMED MANAGING DIRECTOR DESIGNEE; WILL START
JANUARY 6**

After coming to Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) during a tumultuous financial time and growing the organization to the solid footing it is on today, Managing Director Billy Russo announced he will not renew his contract at the end of the fiscal year.

Geri Wright has been named ATC's new Managing Director Designee starting January 6. She will transition to Managing Director on July 1. Previously she had been Senior Director of Development for ATC before joining ACT One Arizona in 2015 as Executive Director and then President and CEO.

"As Arizona Theatre Company moves to the next stage of our growth and reach, Geri brings tremendous leadership and business experience," said Susan Segal, chair of the ATC Board of Trustees. "Billy Russo has been instrumental in preparing ATC to move to the next phase both foundationally and financially. His significant experience and leadership in the industry was critical in guiding us through a very difficult time and has been a great benefit to the now-stabilized organization during the last four years. We are grateful and wish him continued success."

Wright's experience also includes serving as Chief Development Officer for the American Red Cross Grand Canyon Chapter and Director of Development at the Heard Museum.

"When you're on the inside, it's incredible to see what Billy has done, from a time when we're in every paper for nearly closing to now when we are on the verge of being a national leader," said Artistic Director Sean Daniels. "That, and Billy led two Artistic Director searches and transitions in three years,

which is unheard of. Also, with a six-month overlap between Billy and Geri, this will be one of the healthiest and smoothest transitions that any regional theatre has seen.”

“I’m honored to be a part of Arizona Theatre Company at such a monumental time,” Wright said. “The continued growth of our state theatre is so important artistically and economically to a vibrant Arizona.”

Russo said that “my time at Arizona Theatre Company has been a mixture of challenges, thrills and triumphs, sometimes all in one day. I am grateful for the opportunity and extremely proud of our accomplishments. The fierce commitment of the Board of Trustees, staff and, most importantly, the audience and patrons whose belief in the power of theatre to foster joy and friendship gave us the confidence to be bold. I have felt much joy, and even more friendship from the extended ATC family. Because of that, Richard and I feel like true Arizonans. And, we expect to keep it that way.”

For more information about Arizona Theatre Company, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

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About Arizona Theatre Company: Under new leadership, and now celebrating its 53rd-season, Arizona Theatre Company is truly “The State Theatre.” Our company boasts the largest subscriber base of any performing arts organization in Arizona, with more than 130,000 people each year attending performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of high quality productions reflects the rich variety of world theatre – from classic to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works – audiences enjoy the rich emotional experience and joy that can only be captured through live theatre. ATC is the preeminent professional theatre in the state of Arizona. Under the direction of Artistic Director Sean Daniels and Managing Director Billy Russo, ATC operates in two cities – unlike any other League of Resident Theaters (LORT) company in the country.

ATC shares the passion of the theatre through a wide array of outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives, and community events. With more than 700 Education & Engagement activities through the schools and summer programs, ATC focuses on teaching Arizona’s youth about the creative power of dramatic literature and how it can enrich their own lives in multiple ways. ATC reaches far beyond the metropolitan areas of Tucson and Phoenix, enriching the theatre learning experience for current and future audiences.