

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New York City Center announces the departure of longtime Encores! Music Director Rob Berman following the 2022 Encores! Season

Music Contractor Seymour “Red” Press also to retire

March 30, 2022/New York, NY – New York City Center President & CEO **Arlene Shuler** announced today that Encores! Music Director **Rob Berman** will step down following the 2022 Encores! season at New York City Center.

Berman has been part of the Encores! Music Department since 2001, becoming Music Director in 2008. In his 20 plus year tenure at City Center, Berman worked with **Jack Viertel** (Encores! Artistic Director, 2000 – 2020) on more than 30 productions, including the celebrated revivals of Lane and Harburg’s *Finian’s Rainbow*, Sondheim’s *Anyone Can Whistle* and *Merrily We Roll Along*, Weill’s *Lost in the Stars*, Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Pipe Dream*, Loesser’s *The Most Happy Fella*, Lerner and Loewe’s *Brigadoon*, and Herman’s *Mack & Mabel*, among many others. For Encores! Berman has also overseen several score restorations, most notably *The New Yorkers* by Cole Porter. He has conducted six original cast recordings of Encores! productions.

“Rob has played a major part in bringing these revivals to our stage, working alongside Jack for so many years and now with Lear and Clint as part of this next chapter for Encores!,” said Shuler. “We’ve known for some time that Rob would step down following the 2022 season and are forever grateful for his invaluable contributions to the Encores! legacy.”

“I believe it’s so important to celebrate the rich history of American musical theater and all of the great scores and orchestrations that have come before us,” Berman said. “It has been my great honor and privilege to conduct so many wonderful productions over fourteen seasons. I have loved every minute.”



Berman's final Encores! show as music director will be Encores! *Into the Woods* (May 4 – 15), working with Encores! Artistic Director **Lear deBessonnet** who will direct the special two-week run. The final performance of *Into the Woods* on May 15 will be dedicated to Berman. He will return in future seasons as a guest music director. A successor will be announced later this spring.

It was also announced today that Music Coordinator **Seymour "Red" Press**, a theatrical icon who is the recipient of a Special Tony Award, will also step down at the end of the season, retiring at the age of 98. Press has been the orchestra contractor for The Encores! Orchestra since the inception of the series in 1994 and also played saxophone and woodwinds in the Orchestra for many years. Press worked on the original productions of *Gypsy*, *Pippin*, *Dreamgirls*, and almost 100 additional Broadway productions.

Both Berman and Press will continue to work on the 2022 Encores! season, the first for Artistic Director **Lear deBessonnet** and Producing Creative Director **Clint Ramos**, which launched in February with *The Tap Dance Kid* and includes *The Life* (directed by Tony, Emmy and Grammy Award-winner Billy Porter), and culminates in a special production of Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* starring **Sara Bareilles**, **Christian Borle**, **Denée Benton**, **Heather Headley**, and more.

BIOS

ROB BERMAN (Music Director) is in his 15th year as music director of Encores!, for which he has conducted over 30 productions and six cast recordings. Berman's Broadway credits include *Bright Star*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Dames at Sea*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, *The Pajama Game*, *The Apple Tree*, *Wonderful Town*, and *Promises, Promises*. For nine years he was music director of "The Kennedy Center Honors" on CBS, for which he won an Emmy Award for outstanding musical direction. He has conducted for Barbara Cook with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and he was also music director for the PBS presentation of *A Broadway Celebration: In Performance at the White House*. Other credits include *Sunday in the Park with George* (Kennedy Center, Helen Hayes Award), *Pacific Overtures*, and *Passion* (Classic Stage Company). Recordings include the complete restored score of Jerome Kern's *Roberta* for New World Records.

SEYMOUR RED PRESS (Music Contractor) received the Tony Honor for Excellence in Theater. Credits include more than 100 shows, including the original *Gypsy*; *Dreamgirls*; *Nine*; *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*; *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*; and the acclaimed revivals of *Anything Goes*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Carousel*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and *Flower Drum Song*. Screen credits include Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Mike Nichols' *The Birdcage*, and Paramount's *In and Out*. He is an ASCAP composer whose compositions have sold over 100,000 records. His playing career has segued



from Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman to Leonard Bernstein. This season on Broadway: *The Music Man* and *Funny Girl*.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. Manhattan's first performing arts center, City Center was founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with the mission of making the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. This commitment continues today through celebrated dance and musical theater series—the Fall for Dance Festival, the Tony-honored Encores! and Encores! Off-Center, and the newest series Artists at the Center and City Center Dance Festival—and a continued dedication to a culture built on the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The distinctive neo-Moorish theater welcomes over 300,000 annual visitors to experience internationally acclaimed artists on the same stage where legends like George Balanchine, Leonard Bernstein, Barbara Cook, José Ferrer, Martha Graham, and Paul Robeson made their mark. Home to a roster of renowned national and international companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, City Center's Principal Dance Company, and Manhattan Theatre Club, City Center's dynamic programming, art exhibitions, and studio events, are complemented by education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to over 11,000 New York City students, teachers, and families each year. [NYCityCenter.org](https://www.nycitycenter.org)

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