Obie Award-winning composer Michael Friedman will be the next Artistic Director of Encores! Off-Center

April 19, 2016/New York, NY—New York City Center President & CEO Arlene Shuler today announced that Obie Award-winning composer Michael Friedman (Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, Pretty Filthy) will be the next Artistic Director of Encores! Off-Center, City Center’s popular summer musical theater series. Beginning with the 2017 season, Friedman will succeed founding Encores! Off-Center Artistic Director Jeanine Tesori, who will maintain her relationship with City Center as an artistic advisor.

“We are delighted to welcome Michael to the City Center family,” said Arlene Shuler. “As an institution, it is important that City Center not only bring artists to our stage but to provide a platform for their vision as leaders in the artistic community. With the success of Encores! Off-Center, Jeanine has expanded the range of musicals we’re able to present at City Center, and I’m excited to see how Michael will bring his unique sensibility to the program.”

“As a musical theater writer, Michael represents the theater of today and tomorrow at its absolute best,” added Encores! Artistic Director Jack Viertel. “He possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of the past, which makes him an ideal fit for the series. He’s smart, he’s funny, he has a prodigious imagination, and he knows his stuff, which means he’ll be a great person to work with and a suitable successor to Jeanine Tesori. While she can never be replaced, she’s paved the way for what will follow."

"Being the artistic director for Encores! Off-Center has taught me the importance of advocating for other artists, taking a stand for their work as I do for my own,” said Jeanine Tesori. “I can't wait to see where the bold and innovative Michael Friedman will take us next, and I’m thrilled to see another composer take the lead."

“What I love about City Center,” said Friedman, “is that it has always had a populist vision of the performing arts as something that is available to everyone. Encores! Off-Center has quickly become one of the irreplaceable institutions in New York—which is daunting—but I’m eager to build on the work that Jeanine and Jack have done to broaden our understanding of what musical theater is in America. I’m looking forward to reimagining these risky, unexpected, and sometimes forgotten works which the audience may think they know, but will now see in perhaps a different light.”

Michael Friedman’s recent credits include the musicals Unknown Soldier, Pretty Filthy, The Fortress of Solitude, Love’s Labour’s Lost, and Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, the last of which premiered at the Public
Theater before transferring to Broadway. With the acclaimed company The Civilians, he has also written
music and lyrics for Canard Canard Goose, Gone Missing, Nobody's Lunch, This Beautiful City, In the
Footprint, and The Great Immensity, and music for Anne Washburn's Mr. Burns. With Steve Cosson, he is
the co-author of Paris Commune (BAM Next Wave Festival). Friedman has been a MacDowell Fellow, a
Princeton Hodder Fellow, a Meet The Composer Fellow and a Barron Visiting Professor at The Princeton
Environmental Institute. His Tedx talk, “The Song Makes a Space,” can be seen on YouTube. An evening
of his songs was featured at Lincoln Center’s American Songbook, and “The New Yorker Radio Hour” on WNYC
features his songs about the 2016 election. He is artist in residence and director of the Public Forum at the
Public Theater, and received an Obie Award for sustained achievement.

**Encores! Off-Center** was founded in 2013 with the mission of presenting Off-Broadway musicals that
pushed creative boundaries when they were first produced. Filtered through the lens of today’s artists,
these shows are presented not as historical documents but as living, vital works that continue to resonate
with audiences. The New York Times has called Encores! Off-Center “a summer theater highlight,” with past
productions including Violet with Sutton Foster (which transferred to Broadway the following year); tick,
tick...BOOM! with Lin-Manuel Miranda; A New Brain with Jonathan Groff; and Little Shop of Horrors with
Ellen Greene and Jake Gyllenhaal. This summer’s Encores! Off-Center season will feature Runaways (Jul 6-9),
Off-Center Jamboree! (Jul 16), and Kurt Vonnegut’s God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater (Jul 27-30). In keeping
with City Center’s founding mission to make the arts accessible to all, many Off-Center tickets are $25.

New York City Center gratefully acknowledges the Encores! Off-Center Founding Sponsors, Stacey and Eric
Mindich and Stacy Bash-Polley; Leadership Sponsor, Nathalie and Pablo Salame; Series Sponsors, American
Express, Luigi Ciola and Sean McGill, Andrew Martin-Weber, and the Stephanie and Fred Shuman Fund for
Encores!; with additional support provided by The Frederick Loewe Foundation, Paula and Ira Resnick and
Alec Stais and Elissa Burke. In addition, City Center thanks The Howard Gilman Foundation and Lisa and
Richard Witten for their generous support in establishing the Artistic Innovation Fund.

**New York City Center** (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the
city since 1943. It was Manhattan’s first performing arts center, dedicated by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia
with a mission to make the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences.

Today, City Center is home to many distinguished companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance
Theater, City Center’s Principal Dance Company, as well as Manhattan Theatre Club; a roster of renowned
national and international visiting artists; and its own critically acclaimed and popular programs. The Tony-
honored Encores! musical theater series has been hailed as “one of the very best reasons to be alive in New
York.” In summer 2013, City Center launched Encores! Off-Center, a series that features landmark Off-
Broadway musicals filtered through the lens of today’s most innovative artists. Dance has been integral to
the theater’s mission from the start — and dance programs, including the annual Fall for Dance Festival,
remain central to City Center’s identity. Vital partnerships with arts organizations including Jazz
at Lincoln Center and London’s Sadler’s Wells Theatre enhance City Center’s programmatic
offerings. City Center brings dance and musical theater to over 9,000 New York City students each year
through its robust education program, and other learning opportunities are offered to seniors, families, and
the general public. City Center is expanding its programming beyond the proscenium and activating its
alternative spaces with pre-show talks, master classes, exhibitions of visual art, and intimate performances
that give an up-close look at the work of the great theater and dance artists of our time. In October
2011, City Center completed an extensive renovation project to revitalize and modernize its historic theater.

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