

NEW YORK CITY CENTER

AT THE CENTER OF THE ARTS FOR 75 YEARS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jack Viertel to step down as Encores! Artistic Director following 2020 season

July 16, 2019 (New York, NY)—New York City Center President & CEO **Arlene Shuler** today announced that **Jack Viertel** will step down as Artistic Director of Encores! at the end of the 2020 series—after twenty seasons as the renowned leader of the Tony-honored musical theater series.

A self-described theater kid, Viertel began his relationship with the venerable series as a member of the founding Advisory Committee. He was appointed Artistic Director of Encores! in 2000 and along with music directors Rob Fisher, Paul Gemignani, and for the last 12 seasons, Rob Berman, Viertel has overseen more than 60 productions (including gala presentations and Encores! Summer Stars). He will continue to play an active role at City Center in the new position of Consulting Producer for Musical Theater.

Highlights of his distinguished tenure include productions of popular works like *Follies*, *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*, *The Most Happy Fella*; cult favorites like *It's a Bird...It's a Plane...It's Superman*; and lesser known titles like *Juno*. Viertel also conceived the Encores! revues *Stairway to Paradise*; *Cotton Club Parade*; which transferred to Broadway as *After Midnight*; and *Hey, Look Me Over!*, in celebration of the 25th season of Encores! Viertel launched Encores! Summer Stars (2007 – 2009) with a production of *Gypsy* starring Patti LuPone, Boyd Gaines, and Laura Benanti, which transferred to Broadway—LuPone, Gaines, and Benanti all won Tony Awards for their performances. Encores! productions of *The Apple Tree* (2005) and *Finian's Rainbow* (2009) also transferred to Broadway. Under Viertel's leadership, the series embarked on major score restorations for productions of *Lady, Be Good!*; *Cabin in the Sky*; and *The New Yorkers*—preserving them for future generations. Viertel was also one of the principal forces behind the creation of the Encores! Off-Center series which debuted in 2013. He has played a part in launching the careers of numerous artists over the years including Kate Baldwin, Laura Benanti, Marc Bruni, Anne Hathaway, and Warren Carlyle.



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In recognition of Viertel's service to New York City Center and the art form, City Center Board Co-Chair **Stacey Mindich** will establish the **Jack Viertel Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement** to be awarded annually to an artist or creative team member who has contributed to a musical theater production at City Center during the past year and who exemplifies excellence in their craft. The recipient will be recognized with an award of \$10,000.

Jack Viertel said, "It has been a dream job for me. Having inherited the already thriving Encores! program built by my predecessors, I've been strongly supported by City Center's leaders over the years. We've made some unusual and risky choices, and I've been lucky to be dazzled by the productions that resulted. I've been grateful for every cheering fan and to every artist who has stepped on our stage or worked behind the curtain. I'm most especially grateful to the musicians of the inimitable Encores! Orchestra. But as musical theater itself evolves, so must we. It seems the most satisfying way to achieve that goal is to hand the baton to the next generation of creative artists and have them lead Encores! to its next chapter. I look forward to many more years in this great building, helping to celebrate its commitment to excellence in the performing arts and, especially for me, music theater of all kinds."

Arlene Shuler added, "Jack has made an extraordinary and everlasting contribution to City Center, to musical theater, and to hundreds of thousands of artists and loyal audience members over the years. He has been a wonderful partner, and I am personally grateful for his wisdom and endless knowledge of musical theater—it's hard to imagine Encores! without him. While we know it will be very hard to fill Jack's shoes, we are committed to building upon the great legacy he has nurtured for our beloved musical theater series."

City Center plans to announce a successor before the end of 2019 so that they might work alongside the Encores! team throughout the 2020 season.

In addition to his work with Encores!, Viertel is a senior vice president of Jujamcyn Theaters, which owns and operates five Broadway theaters presenting *The Book of Mormon*, *Frozen*, *Mean Girls*, *Moulin Rouge*, and *Hadestown*. This season he was the conceiver of the Broadway musical *The Prom*. He helped shepherd six of August Wilson's plays to Broadway, worked on the original Broadway productions of *Angels in America*, *Into the Woods*, and *M. Butterfly*, among others, and conceived and co-produced



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Smokey Joe's Cafe. Viertel served as dramaturg for *The Wedding Singer* and *Hairspray* on Broadway and is the co-author of the musical *Time and Again*. He spent two years as dramaturg of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles and began his work in theater as a critic for the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*. His book *The Secret Life of the American Musical* (a *New York Times* Bestseller) was published in 2016.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. Its landmark 75th Anniversary Season (2018 – 2019) paid tribute to this rich history while celebrating the institution's singular role in the arts today. For over 25 years, City Center's Tony-honored Encores! series has been "an essential New York institution" (*The New York Times*). In 2013, City Center launched the Encores! Off-Center series, which brings today's innovative artists into contact with groundbreaking musicals from the past. Dance has also been integral to the theater's mission from the start and programs like the annual Fall for Dance Festival, with all tickets \$15, remain central to City Center's identity. 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, New York City Center is Manhattan's first performing arts center, founded with the mission of making the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. That mission continues today through dynamic education and community engagement programs which bring the performing arts to over 11,000 New York City students, teachers, and families each year and the expansion of the theatrical experience to include art exhibitions, pre-show talks, studio events, and master classes that offer an up-close look at the work of the great theater and dance artists of our time.

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