

Boston Court Pasadena Announces New Leadership Team

Jessica Kubzansky, Artistic Director
Cheryl Rizzo, Managing Director

Acclaimed non-profit arts center elevates two longtime staff members, and prepares to launch new programming cycle

PASADENA, CA (September 12th, 2019) – Today, the Board of Directors of Boston Court Pasadena (BCP) announced a new leadership team, as well as plans to modify the 16-year-old organization’s programming cycle. These significant steps in the evolution of one of Los Angeles’ leading multi-disciplinary arts producers are aimed at supporting the continued growth of its local, regional, and national impact.

Jessica Kubzansky, a Founding Artistic Director of BCP, will become its sole Artistic Director beginning January 1, 2020. General Manager Cheryl Rizzo has been named Managing Director effective immediately. Kubzansky and Rizzo will co-lead the organization, and both will report to the Board of Directors.

Since its founding in 2003, BCP has utilized a shared artistic leadership model with Kubzansky and Michael Michetti serving as artistic directors for theatre, and with Mark Saltzman joining the team as artistic director for music in 2010. The triumvirate has collaborated closely to produce more than 100 performances annually in music and theatre, expand the number of new works developed and produced at BCP, grow community engagement programs, and expand its impact and reach by taking productions to Malibu, New York City, Boston, and Houston. This team will continue in their current roles for the duration of the 2019 season, after which time Michetti and Saltzman will continue as core collaborators at BCP. Founding Artistic Director Michetti will then assume the title of Artistic Director Emeritus.

In making the announcement, BCP Board of Directors Chair Edward Rada said, “We are thrilled to have Jessica Kubzansky and Cheryl Rizzo bring their expertise, vision, and institutional history to their new and expanded roles to build on our history of success. As we look forward to significant growth in the coming years, the logical next step in our evolution is to channel all programming into a singular focus with a dedicated leadership team. We are very excited about our next chapter under their guidance.”

In addition to the new leadership team, BCP, which has previously operated on a calendar year season, will move to a traditional fall-to-fall performance season starting with the 2020/2021 season, which will be announced in the Spring of 2020. Managing Director Rizzo, who has been part of the Boston Court administrative and production team since its early years, is excited about the change. She remarked, “This shift in the programming calendar will bring the organization into alignment with the majority of arts organizations in Los Angeles and across the country, will enable Boston Court to more easily explore partnerships with other organizations, and also better serve audience members by offering programming on a more standardized schedule.”

In making the transition to this new performance schedule, the current trio of artistic directors is planning a Bonus Series of theatre and music performances for Spring of 2020. This Bonus Series will involve a large-scale production that Michetti is directing, and a number of richly diverse concerts to be announced shortly.

Artistic Director Designate Kubzansky noted, “I could not be more honored to lead Boston Court Pasadena, this institution I have been so passionate about since inception, into its thrilling next chapter. It’s an incredibly important moment to be an arts leader seeking to increase our impact during these turbulent times. I look forward to continuing to work with my longtime colleagues and friends, Michael Michetti and Mark Saltzman, whose contributions to Boston Court have been so momentous.”

BCP’s 2019 season concludes with the world premiere of *How the Light Gets In* by E.M. Lewis, directed by Emilie Pascale Beck (September 19 – October 28), and the 15-concert Fall Music Series (September 20 – October 26) featuring artists including classical pianist Susan Svrček, Los Angeles Percussion Quartet, LA Master Chorale Music Director Grant Gershon, and jazz pianist Josh Nelson.

Key Player Biographies:

Jessica Kubzansky is a champion of innovation and artistic excellence, and as such she was invited to be one of two founding artistic directors of Boston Court Pasadena, creating a mission and vision for the company that produces risky adventurous new work coupled with intimate artistic excellence. She is also an award-winning director working both locally and in regional theatres nationally. She is committed to passionate illumination of texts to create productions that crack open minds and hearts so that people who experience her work walk out changed. Kubzansky specializes in new works, new classic adaptations, and classics. She does a great deal of work with New Play Development Institutions around the country, including New Dramatists, the Playwrights Center, South Coast Rep, Perry Mansfield, the Ojai Playwrights Conference, Portland Center Stage’s JAW Festival, and more, to shepherd playwrights’ new work to fruition. Kubzansky creates inventive work across many genres. She is known as a play-whisperer for her ability to dramaturg new plays, breathe powerful life into classic adaptations, and create exciting new takes on old classics.

Her recent work at Boston Court includes the world premieres of Kit Steinkellner’s *Ladies*, Sarah B. Mantell’s *Everything That Never Happened*, plus Luis Alfaro’s *Mojada, A Medea in Los*

Angeles (The Getty Villa). Recently at other venues: *Othello* (A Noise Within), Jeanne Sakata's *Hold These Truths* (Arena Stage), Aditi Kapil's *Orange* (South Coast Rep), *Stupid Fucking Bird* (ACT, Seattle). Upcoming: *The Father* with Alfred Molina at The Pasadena Playhouse, *Everything That Never Happened* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Kubzansky teaches graduate playwrights and directors at UCLA, has her MFA in Direction from the California Institute of the Arts, and her undergraduate degree in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins and Harvard. She has received many awards and honors, among them numerous direction and production awards, as well as the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle's Margaret Harford Award for Sustained Excellence in Theatre.

Cheryl Rizzo has worked in a variety of capacities at Boston Court since 2005. She is a seasoned theatre professional who, prior to Boston Court, worked for the legendary Broadway general manager Albert Poland as an assistant and company manager for multiple Broadway and Off-Broadway productions most notably including, Alfred Uhry's *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* (Tony Award Best Play) starring Paul Rudd, Dana Ivey and Jessica Hecht, *Mrs. Klein* starring Uta Hagen, *Present Laughter* starring Frank Langella and Allison Janney, and Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, among others. In Los Angeles Cheryl worked for producer Joan Stein while Stein operated and produced for the Canon Theatre in Beverly Hills and also later when Stein joined Steve Martin to start their own TV production company with a development deal at Carsey Werner. Since 2005, Cheryl has submerged herself in nearly every aspect of Boston Court's administration, helping to grow the theatre, music, and visual arts programs while shepherding upwards of 50 Boston Court productions both on- and off-site. Cheryl holds a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) with a Nonprofit focus from California State University, Northridge and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from Ithaca College in Theatrical Production and Design.

About Boston Court Pasadena

Boston Court Pasadena is a nonprofit arts center primarily dedicated to new and original work by living artists. Founded in 2003 by philanthropist Z. Clark Branson and Founding Producing Director Eileen T'Kaye, Boston Court features a state-of-the-art, intimate facility designed to bring audiences and artists closer together. The 80-seat Marjorie Branson Performance Space and the 99-seat Main Stage serve as homes for Boston Court's season of bold, adventurous theatre and its eclectic, diverse music series. Boston Court is also the home of an annual new play reading festival, an Emerging Artists Series, as well as Art Upfront, a rotating visual arts program.

Over the past 16 years, Boston Court has changed the Los Angeles theatre landscape, and has come to be known nationally as one of the go-to places for innovation and new work, producing 63 theatre productions, including 35 world premieres, eight second productions, and many West Coast premieres, as well as new translations, adaptations, radically re-envisioned classics, 14 new play festivals, and more. Boston Court frequently incubates and develops new works that become subsequent full productions in their mainstage seasons. Boston Court has also electrified the local music landscape with the rich diversity of its offerings, and has produced over 300 concerts. Known for its brilliant classical music, its barrier-breaking new music, and its eclectic jazz and popular music offerings, Boston Court is a place where stellar established musicians innovate by working on new forms. BCP is equally committed to

emerging artists, both by going into the public schools, and by supporting emerging talent with its prestigious Emerging Artists Series. BCP has also presented dozens of eclectic art exhibits. The organization has been honored numerous times, including Ovation, Los Angeles Drama Critics Association, and Stage Raw Awards, as well as being a two-time recipient of the prestigious National Theatre Company Award from the American Theatre Wing.

Key funding is provided to BCP by the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, The Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Shubert Foundation, The Colburn Foundation, Lazy L Foundation, Pasadena Arts & Cultural Commission and the City of Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division, The Ahmanson Foundation, The Amphion Foundation, and the Z. Clark Branson Foundation. The 2019 theatre season is sponsored by the S. Mark Taper Foundation.

For more information about Boston Court Pasadena Visit BostonCourtPasadena.org or call 626.683.6801.

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