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NEWS RELEASE

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North Carolina Theatre prepares for its 2021-22 season by announcing new key roles by Triangle-area natives:

**Broadway veteran Robert Hartwell as Associate Artist
Lauren Juengel as Production Manager/Associate Producer
Maya Bryant as Communications Manager**



RALEIGH, N.C. – North Carolina Theatre, the region’s premiere nonprofit professional regional theatre, is excited to announce three new positions starting this spring, filled in preparation for live performance and the start of digital streaming in its 2021-22 season.

“We are proud to place a beacon of hope before our community by announcing these fantastic and talented artists and administrators working with North Carolina Theatre in 2021,” said President and CEO **Elizabeth Doran**. “As producing live theatre takes many months to plan, and we are integrating new elements that have arisen from this catalyzing time, such as digital media and community-engaged branding and marketing, we are taking steps forward after many months of radically reduced operations to set our plans in motion for a thrilling return to the stage this year.”

New support for mainstage production:

A distinguished theatre artist, **Robert Hartwell**, and an experienced production administrator, **Lauren Juengel**, will bring great impact to the NC Theatre stage in 2021. “Through our continuing dedication to celebrate local theatre makers, NCT is thrilled to invite two more NC natives with strong Broadway ties to “give back” to the theatre community which supported their early beginnings,” said Producing Artistic Director, **Eric Woodall**. “Our “Bridge to Broadway” ensures a current and constant connection between the steadfast development of homegrown talent and the mastery of Broadway’s brightest artists.”

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Robert Hartwell will join NC Theatre as Associate Artist to the 2021-22 season. The position of Associate Artist creates a formal mutually beneficially relationship between a professional theatre and an established artist, who may work in various ways toward furtherance of the artist's work and betterment of the company and the communities it serves. **Robert Hartwell** is the Founder and Artistic Director of **The Broadway Collective** where he is training the next generation of Broadway. As the only African American CEO in the professional musical theatre education space in NYC his passion lies in making Broadway stages more diverse and inclusive starting at the educational level. Robert holds a high school diploma from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts: School of Drama and a BFA in Musical Theatre from The University of Michigan where he graduated with summa cum laude honors and the Willis Patterson Diversity Award. He has performed in five Broadway shows and two national tours: *Dreamgirls*, *Memphis*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Cinderella*, *Motown*, and *Hello, Dolly!* starring Bette Midler. He has performed on the *Tony Awards* three times and the *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade* twice. Regionally he has performed at The Muny, Sacramento Music Circus, Hangar Theatre, Music Theatre Wichita, and the Fulton Opera House. As a Director/Choreographer his work has been seen at Lincoln Center, Music Theatre Wichita, North Carolina Theatre, Naples Performing Arts Center, and The University of Michigan. He is the creator of Broadway Quick Change, Hello Broadway - Broadway's Online Academy, Gathered NYC, Prescreen Prep, and Hello Broadway Live. He is a member of Actors Equity Association, SAG-AFTRA, and the Tony Award-winning Broadway Inspirational Voices. He recently served as the Assistant Director on the National Tour of the Tony Award-winning Revival of *Once On This Island*. He is featured in Pharrell and Jay-Z's latest hit single - *Entrepreneur*.

"Raleigh has my heart forever. When I was growing up there all I wanted to do was be on Broadway. North Carolina Theatre was my outlet to the dream," said Mr. Hartwell. "Our state has a long history of supporting the arts and it's evident when you open a Broadway Playbill - you will always find us there. My first paid job as an actor at age 12 was in the ensemble of NCT's *Oliver!*. That production changed my life. I got the opportunity to work with a director and choreographer and lead actors from NYC. The dream was humanized in that moment. Eric Woodall has had my respect and deepest admiration since I moved to NYC in 2009. He is a man of incredible vision and deep integrity. He understands the ever-evolving needs of the American theatre and the vital role we hold as educators and storytellers for young people, theatre patrons, and the artists we employ. When I was asked to serve in this new role there was no doubt in my mind that this would be one of the best yes's of my life. I'm honored to stand with Elizabeth and Eric and give back to the place that has given me so much. We have a window of opportunity in front of us and with their leadership we couldn't be in better hands." As Associate Artist for the 2021-22 season, Mr. Hartwell will direct and choreograph a mainstage musical, and will support artistic leadership in all matters of artistic programming decisions and planning, and utilizing his expertise as an arts educator and entrepreneur, will aid the company in areas of marketing and education.



Lauren Juengel will join NC Theatre as Production Manager/Associate Producer. This position is responsible for coordinating, managing, and growing all artistic, production and technical aspects of shows and programs ensuring artistic excellence, safety, and fiscal responsibility. A graduate of Elon University, Ms. Juengel spent twelve years stage managing over fifteen mainstage shows at NC Theatre. Eager to build upon the education she received at Elon, Ms. Juengel completed The Juilliard School Professional internship in New York City, and received her MFA in Stage Management at the University of California San Diego. She earned her Equity union card while stage managing a new production at La Jolla Playhouse. In addition to working in theatrical stage management, Ms. Juengel has travelled all over the world as a live event producer, supporting global corporations. Ms. Juengel frequently collaborates with Casey Hushion, Broadway director (and NC Theatre's past Artistic Director), including assisting her with *Nerds* (a new work originally

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staged at NC Theatre) at Philadelphia Theatre Company. Ms. Juengel has spent the past six years as a stage manager for the Broadway productions of *Allegiance*, *Significant Other*, *Cats* and, most recently, the new Broadway musical, *Mean Girls*. "I am thrilled to be joining the NC Theatre family in this new role," said Ms. Juengel, "and cannot wait to be a part of the team working to safely create professional theatre in Raleigh after such a challenging year."

"On the heels of a prestigious run of *Mean Girls* on Broadway, NC native Lauren Juengel returns to her NCT roots to share her vast production knowledge and keen Broadway experience," said Mr. Woodall, "and what a coup to score a collaboration with NC native and Broadway visionary, Robert Hartwell. We are so fortunate to collaborate with Robert this year, in conjunction with his many spectacular projects around the country."

New support for community-engaged communications:

Nearing a full year without mainstage production due to Covid-19, NC Theatre has continued its dedication to community through robust digital programming, social media communications, and participation in community engagement and partnership-driven activities. "NC Theatre is advancing its identity as a community-activated regional theatre," said Ms. Doran. "We are proud to strengthen our community by providing meaningful shows and platforms for self-expression that establishes our theatre as a purposeful haven for discourse, compassion, education and equality. The fantastic **Maya Bryant** will bring her digital savvy and communications experience to help us tell our story in creative and compelling ways so ever more people can benefit from the arts."



Maya Bryant will join NC Theatre as Communications Manager. With a focus on digital communications and PR, this position is responsible for the tactical and creative administration of all aspects of communications including earned media, website, social media, media relations, and more. A native of Durham, Ms. Bryant studied Communications and minored in Theatre at William Peace University and received her Masters' Degree in Communications from Liberty University and is currently pursuing an MBA part-time from Campbell University. Beyond her professional work in communications, nonprofit fundraising, and digital media, Maya enjoys competing in pageants. In the Miss America Organization, Maya was a top finalist at Miss North Carolina and is currently Miss Dunn 2021. Maya will compete for Miss North Carolina in 2021 promoting her personal platform, Arts at the Core, where she travels across the state promoting the importance of Arts Education in our schools. In addition, Maya has earned numerous awards including being a recipient of the Bronze and Silver Medalist with the Duke of Edinburgh Young American's Challenge Award program and Girl Scout Silver Award Recipient. "This past year has been hard on the Arts Community, but one thing remains the same that in our darkest hour, we need the Arts. Storytelling and Communication is more important than ever now as Art continues to imitate life. I could not be more delighted to join the team at North Carolina Theatre," said Ms. Bryant

About North Carolina Theatre

Established in 1984, North Carolina Theatre is Raleigh's premier, non-profit professional regional theatre. With its successful formula of producing top quality musicals with top national performers and local talent, North Carolina Theatre has been instrumental in the revitalization of downtown Raleigh over the years. Through its Conservatory, it has provided exceptional arts training to hundreds of local youth. By offering broad access to live theatre, while strengthening economic growth, the organization continues to fortify the vitality of the region

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