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Changes in Leadership at Chester Theatre Company

After seven successful seasons as Producing Artistic Director at Chester Theatre Company (CTC), **Daniel Elihu Kramer** is leaving to focus on his increased responsibilities at Smith College and his work as a freelance theatre artist. Chester audiences are already familiar with the organization's new leaders. **Tara Franklin** and **James Barry**, a couple who are known for their award-winning work on stages at CTC and around the region, have been named Co-Producing Artistic Directors.

"We are so pleased to welcome **Tara Franklin** and **James Barry**—two folks very familiar to our audiences—as our new Co-Producing Artistic Directors," said Board Chair **Karen Schader**. "They bring a wealth of experience and skills to their positions, and the board looks forward to working with them. For seven years and through challenging times, **Daniel Elihu Kramer** led Chester to increased artistic accomplishment, recognition, and financial strength. We are grateful to him and wish him the best as he assumes a new role as Chair of the Theatre Department at Smith College."

"We have both had a deep connection and commitment to this theatre for years," said **Franklin**. "It has given us a place to create thought-provoking work, collaborate with exceptional artists, and connect with our incredible audiences."

"I could not be prouder to stand beside **Tara Franklin** as Co-Producing Artistic Director of Chester Theatre Company," added **Barry**. "It's truly a dream come true for me to serve the extraordinary community of artists and audiences that make Chester Theatre Company the singular organization that it is."

"I have performed and directed all over the country," **Barry** continued, "and from my first production with CTC (2011's *Wittenberg*), I had never felt more at home in a theatre, artistically or philosophically. We are indebted to the seven seasons of brilliant leadership our dear friend **Daniel Elihu Kramer** gave to us all, and we are thrilled to carry that momentum into the future

by maintaining the highest caliber of actor-driven storytelling and continuing to expand our mission to be the most compassionate, collaborative, and equitable institution we can be.”

“It’s been a privilege being Producing Artistic Director at Chester Theatre Company,” said **Kramer**. “I’ve loved working and creating relationships with our artists, with our audiences, and with our board—and I’m proud of what we have accomplished together. We’ve built the theatre’s regional and national profile, and we’ve stabilized and grown the theatre’s financial base. We’ve told compelling contemporary stories full of exceptional performances and launched vital conversations.”

“After seven years in this role, including the past three seasons guiding Chester Theatre Company through the existential threat of the Covid pandemic,” continued **Kramer**, “I’m stepping down so that I can bring more of my energy to my work as Chair of Theatre at Smith College, and to my freelance work as a theatre artist. Choosing to step down is much easier knowing that **Tara Franklin** and **James Barry** will be stepping into the role of Co-Producing Artistic Directors. They are outstanding artists who are deeply committed to Chester Theatre Company. Artists and audiences alike know and trust them. I’m excited to see where they take this theatre in the years ahead.”

Franklin and **Barry** will have **Kramer** direct a show for CTC in its 34th season, and he will participate in the two upcoming theatre tours to Chicago and London.

“We are thrilled to continue and build upon the traditions that make Chester Theatre Company so special,” added **Franklin**, “telling the kinds of stories that excite and challenge artists and audiences, and which invite all of us to take part in conversations that explore our commonality, diversity, and compassion.”

About Chester Theatre Company

Founded by a former Artistic Director of Dublin’s Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, Chester Theatre Company is an award-winning professional theatre company known for presenting high quality, contemporary productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990.

For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chestertheatre.org.

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