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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beck Center Announces 2017- 2018 Theater Season
**Beck Center Theater Season includes 50th Anniversary Production of *Hair*,
a Broadway Triumph, and an Existential Masterpiece**

Lakewood, OH—Beck Center for the Arts is pleased to announce its 2017-2018 professional theater season filled with their signature eclectic titles that include classics, a regional premiere, and the seventh collaboration with Baldwin Wallace University Musical Theater program.

"This is an especially exciting slate of plays and musicals as they collectively have such an amazing pedigree. Artists and audiences will be exhilarated and challenged all season long with these terrific pieces." says Scott Spence, Beck Center Artistic Director (now heading into his 28th season at Beck).

Subscriptions and Flex Passes for the 2017-2018 season are on sale now and range from \$100 to \$267. For more information, call Beck Center Customer Service at 216.521.2540 x10. Individual tickets may be purchased beginning Tuesday, August 1, 2017 with ticket prices from \$12 to \$31. Curtain times are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays; however, performance times vary for *The Little Mermaid*, and *Hair*. Preview performances are the Thursdays before opening night. Beck Center is located at 17801 Detroit Avenue in Lakewood, just ten minutes west of downtown Cleveland. Free onsite parking is available. For more information visit beckcenter.org.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Written by Dale Wasserman

Book by Ken Kesey

Directed by William Roudebush

Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

September 15 – October 8, 2017; Mackey Theater

"Scarifying and powerful" - *The New York Times*

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, based on the cult novel written by Ken Kesey tells the story of institutional madness where obedience and conformity are the only acceptable indications of good mental health. Randle Patrick McMurphy, a charming rogue, instantly questions the asylum's procedures. He begins to rally his fellow patients in increasingly greater acts of Independence. When these acts are not tolerated, McMurphy learns that the authorities and Nurse Ratched, have terrible ways of enabling conformity. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is the winner of the 2001 Tony Award, and Outer Critics Circle Award, for Outstanding Revival of a Play.

"One of the great novels, plays, and films of our time. What a privilege to bring it to the Beck Main Stage!" – *Scott Spence*

Waiting for Godot

Written by Samuel Beckett

Directed by Eric Schmeidl

Presented through special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

October 6 – November 5, 2017; Studio Theater

"...a witty and poetic conundrum" - *The Guardian*

"It is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. But you can expect witness to the strange power this drama has to convey the impression of some melancholy truths about the hopeless destiny of the human race." – *The New York Times*

Waiting for Godot is tragic comedy in which Samuel Beckett explores the futility of man's hope. Two wandering vagrants wait in the middle of nowhere to meet up with Mr. Godot, hoping he will change their lives for the better. While they wait, they speculate, joke, engage with fellow travelers, and ponder life's greater questions. *Waiting for Godot* is a masterpiece that draws endless interpretations, and is considered one of the most significant plays of the twentieth century.

"As thrilling as it is challenging. We thank the Samuel Beckett estate for allowing Beck Center to take this journey"
– *Scott Spence*

ENCORE PRODUCTION

Disney's

The Little Mermaid

Music by Academy Award winner Alan Menken

Lyrics by Howard Ashman

Book by Glenn Slater & Doug Wright

Based on Hans Christian Andersen story and Disney film

produced by Howard Ashman & John Musker

Written & Directed by John Musker & Ron Clements

Directed by Scott Spence; Musical Direction by Larry Goodpaster; Choreography by Martín Céspedes;

Featuring Kathleen Rooney as Ariel and Natalie Blalock (Broadway's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*) as Ursula

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI)

December 1 – 31, 2017; Mackey Theater

Special Sensory-Friendly Performance Thursday, December 14

2016 Cleveland Critics Circle Awards Winner for Best Musical Direction (Larry Goodpaster), Best Projection Design (Adam Zeek), Rising Star Award (J.R. Heckman), and Superior Achievement Mentions for Best Musical, Best Choreographer, and Best Lighting Design.

Join us under the sea...again! Beck Center's award-winning production returns for another holiday season filled with family, magic, and more. Perfect for all ages, this timeless fairy tale begins with Ariel, a mermaid princess, as she dreams of the forbidden land above. Watch as she saves a human prince, falls in love, loses her voice to a sea witch, and ultimately fights to gain it back. Don't miss this wonderful production filled with dazzling video projections, innovative staging, beautiful costumes, and talented performers this holiday season!

"We are happy to continue Beck Center's tradition of family holiday shows," says Spence. "And we're excited to welcome back Kathleen Rooney as Ariel, Natalie Blalock as Ursula, and Darryl Lewis as King Triton."

HAIR

Music by Galt MacDermot

Book and Lyrics by James Rado & Gerome Ragni

Directed by Victoria Bussert

In collaboration with Baldwin Wallace University Music Theatre Program

Presented through special arrangement with Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc.

February 9 – February 25, 2018; Mackey Theater

Special Wednesday and Thursday evening performances February 15, 21, and 22

"Hair has a history of defying expectations" – The New York Times

Beck Center and Baldwin Wallace Music University Theatre Program collaborate for the 50th anniversary of the ground-breaking musical that introduced rock 'n' roll to Broadway. *HAIR* examines a group of 60s-era youth struggling to balance their lives, loves, and the sexual revolution with their rebellion against the Vietnam War and their conservative parents and society. The musical's depiction of drugs, sex, the nude scene, and irreverence for the American flag, has caused much controversy since its debut. The show spawned several Top 40 hits including "Aquarius" and "Let the Sun Shine In." *HAIR* is the winner of the 2009 Tony Award, and Drama Desk Award, for Outstanding Revival of a Musical and the 1969 Grammy Award Winner for Best Score from an Original Cast Show Album.

"Beck continues our proud collaboration with one of the finest college Musical Theatre Programs in the country!" – Scott Spence

REGIONAL PREMIERE

My First Time

Written by Ken Davenport

Directed by Scott Spence

Presented through special arrangement with Samuel French Inc.

March 30 – April 29, 2018; Studio Theater

"Funny and touching to sweet, sexy and silly!" - The Village Voice

"One of New York's best new plays! Phenomenal!" - EdgeNewYork.com

My First Time features hysterical and heartbreaking stories about first sexual experiences written by real people. Before blogging technically began there was myfirsttime.com. It allowed people to anonymously share their own true stories about their First Times. The website became an instant phenomenon and stories poured in from around the globe that were sweet, sad, absurd, funny, heterosexual, homosexual, shy, sexy, and everything in between. *My First Time* brings these true stories to life, and you may be able to share your first time – anonymously of course.

"I am so excited to bring this regional premiere to Cleveland. I think it will be one of the most talked about pieces of the year." – Scott Spence

Bent

Written by Martin Sherman

Directed by Matthew Wright

Presented through special arrangement with Samuel French Inc.

June 1 – July 1, 2018; Studio Theater

"Powerful and provocative." - *The New York Times*

"Brilliant...an explosive, overpowering experience." - *Women's Wear Daily*

The influential play *Bent* follows a group of gay men finding ways to survive persecution before and after the Night of the Long Knives. Within the confines of a concentration camp a secret love affair illustrates how the selfless love of one person for another can overcome oppression, even under the most extreme circumstances. When *Bent* was written, there was little awareness about the persecution of homosexuals by the Nazis. The original production starred Ian McKellen, and the play has gone on to increase education and historical research. Nominated for a 1979 Tony Award for Best Play.

"With world events unfolding every day, perhaps the most timely play of the season" – *Scott Spence*

Gypsy

Book by Arthur Laurents

Music by Jule Styne

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Directed by Scott Spence; Musical Direction by Larry Goodpaster; Choreography by Martín Céspedes

Presented through special arrangement with Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc.

July 6 – August 12, 2018; Mackey Theater

"Broadway's own brassy, unlikely answer to *King Lear*." – *Variety*

Winner of multiple Tony, Grammy, and Drama Desk Awards for both the original production and its revivals, *Gypsy* is considered by many to be one of Broadway's all-time triumphs. The musical follows an overbearing stage mother, Mama Rose, and her two daughters across the country during the 1920's when vaudeville was dying and burlesque was born. Based on the memoirs of Gypsy Rose Lee, the score features songs that have become standards, and helped launch the career of Stephen Sondheim. "Everything's Coming Up Roses" and "Let Me Entertain You," are among the musical highlights.

"It's been called 'The Perfect Musical'---and I'm not going to argue with that!!" – *Scott Spence*

Programming at Beck Center for the Arts is made possible through the generous support of the Ohio Arts Council. Beck Center gratefully acknowledges the generous funding provided by the citizens of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

Beck Center for the Arts is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that offers professional theater productions on two stages, arts education programming in dance, music, theater, visual arts, early childhood, and creative arts therapies for individuals with special needs, free gallery exhibits year-round, and outreach education programming.

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