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## **Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre names William Powell interim CEO**

*Powell, a long-time Indianapolis business leader and arts management consultant, will oversee the Cultural Centre heading into the 40<sup>th</sup> season of the Phoenix Theatre*

*Permanent CEO anticipated by January 1, 2024*

INDIANAPOLIS – William Powell, a long-time business leader and arts management consultant in Indianapolis and Columbus, Ohio, will become interim chief executive officer of the Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre on May 1, supporting the organization’s vision to use the Cultural Centre to regularly stage compelling theatre, dance, and critical community conversations for people living in Central Indiana.

Powell will oversee operations and fundraising at the Cultural Centre – located since 2018 along the Cultural Trail at Illinois Street in downtown Indianapolis. David Jose, president of the board of directors of the Cultural Centre, said the board is “excited to have someone with the vast business experience of William Powell to serve as interim leader and assist with the national search for a permanent CEO.” The board plans to have the newly created position filled by January 1, 2024.

Powell and the next CEO will work closely with the organization’s staff including Constance Macy, who has been Artistic Director since January 2022. The team will continue to drive the Phoenix Ignite Campaign in the absence of Bill Simmons, who will leave the Cultural Centre in June with the campaign ahead of schedule (already at more than 50 percent of its \$6 million goal). Simmons is leaving the organization to spend more time with the consulting firm he started in 2022.

Powell has been a consultant for arts organizations for many years and has served as a grant reviewer for the Ohio Arts Council, Greater Columbus Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He was the lead consultant on the Greater Columbus Arts Council's Arts Stabilization Program, working with more than 50 organizations to assist with developing and maintaining working capital reserves to create more stable operations. Powell was the longtime owner of the Monon Coffee Company in Broad Ripple and a partner in Indy's Kitchen,

a food service incubator that helped start more than 100 food businesses – generating more than \$5 million in economic activity in Indianapolis.

“The Phoenix, which produced its first show nearly 40 years ago, remains central to entertainment and culture in Indianapolis,” Powell said. “An evolving landscape, however, demands a fresh, innovative approach. The external environment – including effects of the pandemic that have changed arts organizations everywhere – is prompting theaters to reinvent themselves and take a broader approach to reaching their communities. With a state-of-the-art Cultural Centre in downtown Indianapolis, the Phoenix is uniquely positioned to do just that – making the experience pleasant, entertaining, and inviting regardless of who you are coming to see.”

Starting in September, seven theatre and dance organizations, including the Phoenix Theatre, will be resident companies (also known as collectives) of the Cultural Centre. The first and only theatre company in Indianapolis focused on women actors, directors, and playwrights as well as the first Black theater in Indianapolis to be recognized by the Actors’ Equity Association will be among other resident companies at the Cultural Centre.

Powell and the permanent CEO will work with the board of directors and others in the community to ensure the Cultural Centre is a venue committed to thought-provoking productions, presentations, and discussions for people in Central Indiana.

“William Powell is an outstanding choice to lead the Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre during this time,” Jose said. “William understands business, he understands the arts, and he understands Indianapolis. He’s a leader who is committed to helping the Phoenix Theatre and the Cultural Centre become true destinations for arts patrons everywhere.”

“We’re in the middle of a very exciting era,” added Macy, the first female artistic director of the Phoenix Theatre in nearly four decades, “and this year we are celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Indianapolis. The Cultural Centre has become a hub for actors and people of all backgrounds – and the CEO role, starting with William’s leadership and experience, will help us become a premier venue for diverse arts and culture in Central Indiana.”

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### **About the Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre**

The Phoenix Theatre Cultural Centre is a nonprofit that includes a professional, Equity theatre in Indianapolis producing contemporary, issue-oriented plays. Performances are year-round from its stages include the indoor mainstage Livia and Steve Russell Theatre and black box-style Frank and Katrina Basile Stage, and the new outdoor venue The Park at the Phoenix. The Phoenix serves as a catalyst in the Indianapolis region to help nurture new plays, showcase diverse voices, and engage audiences with unique, contemporary productions. Its mission

includes growing the community's reputation as an arts destination and serving as a hub to showcase local artists, host events, and help its neighborhood thrive.

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William Powell