



AHMANSON THEATRE  
MARK TAPER FORUM  
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

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For immediate release.

**CENTER THEATRE GROUP NAMES  
DEBORAH WARREN NEW DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
AND JAMES SIMS NEW DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
CENTER THEATRE GROUP UNVEILS NEW BRANDING AND WEBSITE**

Deborah Warren has been named the new Director of Marketing and James Sims the new Director of Communications at Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles, one of the largest and most active nonprofit theatre companies in the country, it was announced today by Stephen D. Rountree, Center Theatre Group's Managing Director.

Warren arrives at Center Theatre Group with a marketing background that includes a decade at League of Resident Theatres (LORT), including five years as Director of Marketing at the Geffen Playhouse. She spent 15 years marketing Broadway productions in New York and around the country with Disney Theatrical Group as Director of Tour Marketing and Serino Coyne, the Broadway advertising agency, where she oversaw the two-year run of "Wicked" in Los Angeles.

During Warren's time with Disney Theatrical Group, she worked directly with Center Theatre Group on touring productions at the Ahmanson Theatre. Warren has most recently been consulting on arts marketing in Los Angeles, including as the Head of Marketing and Communications at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts during its 2013 launch. She will begin her new role at Center Theatre Group on July 11, 2016.

"I'm impressed with the depth and breadth of Deborah's experiences across the country and in Los Angeles," said Rountree. "She has an extensive network of relationships within the field. But most of all, Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Producing Director Douglas C. Baker and I are impressed with her passion for theatre, energy level and lively mind."

"I am thrilled to be joining Center Theatre Group at an incredible time for the organization," said Warren. "I've spent the last decade working on Broadway blockbusters like 'Wicked' and 'The Lion King,' and I'm excited to bring that experience to the organization as I begin work on the slate of outstanding shows coming to the Ahmanson. I'm also eager to promote one of the country's most vital theatres, the Mark Taper Forum, as well as the adventurous Kirk Douglas Theatre. I hope to continue the great work that is already being done, and to work with the staff on creating more initiatives to increase the theatre's presence in our city and nationally."

James Sims will work closely with Warren in his new role as Director of Communications to lead Center Theatre Group into a strong position as the company celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2017/2018. Sims has been working at Center Theatre Group since 2013, most recently as Content Strategy Director managing a complete redesign of Center Theatre Group's website and overseeing the company's new branding and positioning efforts.

"We have reorganized our former Marketing and Communications department in a strategic shift to better serve the rapidly evolving communications landscape," said Rountree. "As audiences begin engaging with content far beyond a single news source, we knew there was a need for press relations, branded content and digital outreach to live under one forward-thinking leader. Among a field of 105 candidates that included senior communications professionals at arts organizations across the country, James emerged as a person uniquely experienced and trained to shape a vision and to manage this department in the digital age."

In the newly created position of Director of Communications, Sims will oversee a department that encompasses press relations, social media and digital communications, content development, brand management, web oversight, public relations and internal communications.

Sims has spent the last decade as a journalist and digital content strategist, working with leading cultural institutions including Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the American Museum of Natural History and the Nederlander Organization in New York City. Originally from Los Angeles, he started his career as a broadcast journalist in the United States Air Force, later attending Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

On May 26, 2016, Sims oversaw the launch of Center Theatre Group's redesigned website, following a year-long development process with Made Media Ltd., a London-based digital creative agency. The completely reimagined website focuses on a better user experience, featuring a mobile and tablet-friendly design, customized information based on a visitor's profile and history with the organization and an emphasis on new content, articles, podcasts and videos to allow visitors to discover Center Theatre Group's nonprofit mission.

"It's been an exciting year as we worked closely with each department within this large and busy organization in order to develop the best possible interface. Our website needs to externally reflect not only Center Theatre Group's many stellar productions at the Ahmanson, Taper and Douglas, but also the important work taking place through artistic development, education and community outreach programs and robust fundraising," said Sims. "Our new website is fast, smart and rich with our ongoing efforts to create engaging content while better telling the story of Center Theatre Group."

"This was a dream project for us on just about every level," said Andrew Shuttleworth, CEO of Made Media's U.S. operations. "We had a client who really pushed us and who didn't want to play it safe. Center Theatre Group wanted a website that advanced on all fronts. They have great taste and high standards for design and user experience, and the result is a user journey that's very intuitive yet very powerful for ticket buyers and subscribers. It's a vision we're proud to have helped them realize."

Along with a new website, as Center Theatre Group approached its 50th anniversary, the organization faced a singular opportunity to rethink and refresh its story and visual identity, as well as those of its three theatre programming series. A key objective for the project was to shift Center Theatre Group from a hierarchical “umbrella brand” to one in which the identities of the Ahmanson, Taper and Douglas programs enhance that of the organization overall and vice versa.

Through work with LaPlaca Cohen, the inspiration for the new identity system came from the contrasts that define theatre: between comedy and drama, light and dark, offstage and center stage. Of particular interest was the contrast between the hidden and the visible, and the fact that what audiences see onstage is only a small glimpse of the work and creativity behind the curtain. Bold typography and a bright, fun, yet contrasting color palette gives the identities of Center Theatre Group and the three theatre programming series a new and striking feel—and allows them to appear distinct, while still remaining in the same family.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, programming seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

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