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Kelli Strickland Named The Hypocrites' Executive Director; Managing Director Megan Wildebour Stepping Down

CHICAGO (February 5, 2015) – **The Hypocrites** are pleased to announce the appointment of **Kelli Strickland** as the company's new Executive Director. Strickland joins The Hypocrites' leadership directly from her post as Executive Director of Chicago's Raven Theatre.

Artistic Director **Sean Graney** is eager to begin this new collaboration. "I cannot wait to work with Kelli who is not only a longtime supporter of our plays, but bears the exact expertise, intelligence and passion The Hypocrites desperately need." He says, "I am thrilled by this partnership, Kelli will be able to unlock the latent potential of the company and spur us into henceforth unattainable levels of accomplishment."

"I am impressed by the success Kelli has had with strategic planning, board development and fundraising. With her leadership, The Hypocrites will continue to expand in ways that will support the art. We are excited to have her at the helm," says Board President Bob Webb.

"I look forward to collaborating with Sean on a plan that will expand audiences for The Hypocrites' inventive and engaging work," comments Kelli Strickland. "Like most things Sean does, the vision is big. The intent is to not only cultivate a stronger theater-going community here in Chicago, but to share the work nationally. We need to build a lasting infrastructure to make that happen. That's exciting!"

Kelli has served as the Executive Director of Raven Theatre since 2013, having previously served as the theatre's Director of Education and Outreach since 2007. She took a leave from Raven in 2012/2013 to complete the prestigious Devos Fellowship for Arts Management at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. During her tenure as Executive Director at Raven, Ms. Strickland wrote and implemented the theatre's first Strategic Plan, secured funding for a major facility improvement project to begin this spring and doubled the theatre's revenues. In addition to her arts management background, Ms. Strickland has 20 years experience as an arts educator and consultant in program development, program evaluation and arts learning assessment.

According to a long-term plan, Managing Director **Megan Wildebour**, who for six years led the theatre through its most successful period of growth, will step down in March and the position of Managing Director will no longer exist. Wildebour will remain a member of The Hypocrites' Artistic Council, providing consultation to Graney and Strickland.

Wildebour states, "I proudly step aside as the company's first Managing Director after six years of amazing growth – both for the company and in my own career. I'm excited to find my next challenge at the same time as helping The Hypocrites' forward momentum. I feel we are incredibly lucky that Kelli has agreed to lead The Hypocrites into the next phase of institutional building."

Sean Graney adds, "We are all fortunate that Megan will remain a vital part of our community."

In the past six seasons, Megan Wildebour was able to transform The Hypocrites into a financially viable organization by tripling the operating budget and producing over twenty Hypocrites shows locally as well as in Boston and Louisville. Megan also orchestrated the creation of The Hypocrites' new home at the Den Theatre Mainstage, a tremendous achievement that will leave a lasting legacy in the landscape of Chicago storefront theater.

About The Hypocrites

Artistic Director **Sean Graney** created The Hypocrites in 1997. The Hypocrites, one of Chicago's premier off-Loop theater companies, specializes in startling and thoroughly entertaining adaptations of classic plays and stories, mounting bold productions that challenge preconceptions and redefining the role of the audience through unusual staging (such as promenade and in-the-round) and direct engagement. The mission is to explore recognizable stories—mixing the familiar and the strange—to make theater that thrills and provokes, defying expectations with humor, staging, and surprise. The company has a reputation in Chicago for creating exciting, surprising, and deeply engaging theater as it re-interprets well-known works for contemporary audiences, reveling in the absurd while revealing the core of what makes classics classic. The company has grown significantly in the past few years, receiving acclaim for productions at the Steppenwolf Garage, Goodman Theatre, Museum of Contemporary Art, DCASE Storefront and Chopin Theater. The company's smash-hit production of *Our Town*, directed by David Cromer, transferred in 2009 to Off-Broadway, Los Angeles and Boston. *The Pirates of Penzance* has appeared at Actors Theater of Louisville and American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.). A.R.T. has also brought *Romeo Juliet*, *12 Nights* and *The Mikado* (forthcoming). The American Theatre Wing, best known as the creator of the Tony Awards, presented The Hypocrites with one of the 2013 National Theatre Company awards in 2013. The critically acclaimed fall 2013 production of *All Our Tragic* is being brought back by popular demand in June 2015. For more information, please visit www.the-hypocrites.com.

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