

Media contact:

Jamie Sherman

312.334.2469

jsherman@harristheaterchicago.org

HARRIS THEATER ANNOUNCES INTERIM PRESIDENT AND CEO, PATRICIA BARRETTO



CHICAGO, IL – The Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater for Music and Dance announced today the appointment of Patricia Barretto as Interim President and CEO effective immediately.

“Paul Organisak has requested an indefinite leave of absence from his current role as President and CEO,” said Alexandra Nichols, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Ms. Nichols said, “This is a very exciting time at the Harris Theater, and Patricia has been integral to its recent successes. Patricia’s track record in arts management and her passion for engaging new audiences made her the logical choice to step into this role in Paul’s absence.”

Patricia Barretto joined the Harris Theater executive team as Vice President of Marketing & Communications in 2015, and in 2016 took on an expanded role, overseeing the marketing, development and community engagement departments as Executive Vice President of External Affairs.

Under Ms. Barretto’s leadership, the Harris Theater exceeded its ticket sales goals for two seasons, reaching 105% of its target revenue. During the 2016-17 season the Theater saw approximately 40,000 patrons for its presented performances, an unprecedented number in the Theater’s 13-year history.

Ms. Barretto has been instrumental in the achievements of the past two seasons at the Harris Theater during the completion of its building expansion and renovation, announcement of Brian Brooks as its first ever Choreographer in Residence, the launch of the brand-new *MIX at SIX* series and providing strategic support to the Theater’s resident companies in expanding their audiences.

Ms. Barretto said, “I am deeply honored and excited to take on this key position at the Harris Theater. Building on the success of the past 13 years, this role will allow me to help in shaping its future. It is a great privilege to be able to collaborate with the Theater’s outstanding staff and committed Board of Trustees.”

Ms. Barretto previously held the position of Executive Director of Toronto's Opera Atelier, where she guided the baroque opera company into an internationally recognized arts organization. With her at the helm, Opera Atelier expanded its profile to international stages, including Mozartwoche (Salzburg), the Salzburg Festival, The Glimmerglass Festival (upstate New York), Opera Columbus (Columbus, Ohio), the Royal Opera House (Versailles) and Milan's famous La Scala opera house.

Drawing from more than 20 years of combined experience with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Conservatory of Music, Canadian Stage, and Opera Atelier, Ms. Barretto is an expert in programming, brand development, fundraising, and innovative marketing strategies.

As an active member of the arts community in Toronto, Ms. Barretto served on various panels including the Canada Council for the Arts and the Toronto Arts Council, recognizing the country's most talented and innovative artists. She is passionate about nurturing young professionals, developing new audiences, and fostering lifelong patrons of the arts.

Harris Theater for Music and Dance

The Harris Theater is Chicago's primary residence for music and dance, connecting diverse audiences with outstanding artists from across the city, the nation, and the world. The Theater's activities fall under three central strategies: support for local music and dance companies, community engagement and educational programs, and presentation of national and international artists.

Opened on November 8, 2003, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance was the first multi-use performing arts venue to be built in the Chicago downtown area since 1929. Today the Theater continues to host the most diverse offerings of any venue in Chicago, and has earned national recognition as a distinctive model for collaboration and artistic advancement. The Theater's original group of 12 resident companies has grown to include 35 nonprofit music and dance organizations, and its *Harris Theater Presents* series has featured world-renowned artists and ensembles including Daniel Barenboim, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Joshua Bell, Renee Fleming, Hamburg Ballet, Paris Opéra Ballet, and Stephen Sondheim.

