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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **OpenStage Theatre & Company Announces Leadership Transition: Jacob Offen Named New Producing Artistic Director**

**Fort Collins, CO** — OpenStage Theatre & Company is proud to announce a significant leadership transition as Producing Artistic Director Sydney Parks Smith prepares to step down from her role this summer. After a comprehensive internal search process, the company's Board of Directors has unanimously approved the appointment of Jacob Offen as the next Producing Artistic Director.

Sydney Parks Smith has served as Producing Artistic Director since 2019 and has been a guiding force in the organization's growth and artistic excellence for over a decade. Under her leadership, OpenStage expanded its community partnerships, launched innovative programming, and garnered critical acclaim for bold and inclusive theatrical productions. She previously served as Associate Artistic Director from 2014 to 2019 and has been instrumental in mentoring emerging artists, securing new funding opportunities, and deepening the company's role as a cultural cornerstone in Northern Colorado. "Sydney has left an indelible mark on OpenStage," said Board Member Katie Rothstein. "Her vision, courage, and tireless advocacy for the arts have shaped the company in lasting ways. We are incredibly grateful for her leadership and look forward to honoring her legacy as she embarks on her next chapter."

The appointment of Jacob Offen comes after a thoughtful hiring process led by a search committee composed of Katie Rothstein, Eric LeDoux, Judith Allen, and Sydney Parks Smith, who served as a non-voting advisor. In a letter to the Board dated June 9, 2025, the committee unanimously recommended Offen for the role following interviews with the two final candidates.

A familiar face to many in the OpenStage community, Jake Offen has been deeply involved with the company for years as a performer, collaborator, and behind-the-scenes contributor

to both artistic and operational initiatives. His background in community engagement, leadership support, and development makes him uniquely suited to lead OpenStage into its next era.

“Jake demonstrated a profound understanding of OpenStage’s mission and a clear passion for the transformative power of theatre,” the search committee wrote. “His collaborative leadership style, commitment to equity, and eagerness to both honor the company’s legacy and innovate for the future made him the unanimous choice.”

Offen is expected to begin his tenure as Producing Artistic Director in late July. He will work closely with Smith during the transition period to ensure continuity and strategic alignment. “I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to lead OpenStage,” said Offen. “This company has shaped me as an artist and a person. I’m excited to champion the power of theatre to bring people together, challenge perspectives, and tell the stories that matter.” For more information about OpenStage Theatre & Company’s upcoming season and leadership transition, please visit [www.openstage.com](http://www.openstage.com) or contact [info@openstage.com](mailto:info@openstage.com).