

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Appoints Shanta Thake as Chief Artistic Officer

**Thake Will Help Realize Lincoln Center’s Artistic Future, Focusing on
Inclusive Excellence, Celebrating Constituent Organizations and City,
and Serving as a Core Team Member to Open David Geffen Hall in Fall 2022**

New York, NY (August 3, 2021) – Lincoln Center has tapped Shanta Thake, formerly the Associate Artistic Director of the Public Theater, as the institution’s Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer—charged with spearheading Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts’ artistic strategy as the organization builds greater connections with its constituent organizations and the entirety of the City of New York—Henry Timms, President and CEO and the Board of Directors announced today.

Thake joins Lincoln Center at a pivotal time in its history and will build upon its efforts to complement the work of its world-class constituent organizations, activate its full 16-acres to serve more New Yorkers than ever before, and support art forms under-represented on campus.

She will build upon recent endeavors to help instill the arts as core to daily life in the city and beyond—from initiatives like [Restart Stages](#) and [The GREEN](#), which activate the campus in new and innovative ways, collaborating with organizations from across the city to welcome New Yorkers to experience the transporting qualities of the arts; to civic activations like blood drives and vaccinations; to commissioning important works like [The Baptism](#) by Carl Hancock Rux and directed by Carrie Mae Weems. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts’ [Commitment to Change](#) benchmarks efforts to drive real and lasting change for the institution and community.

Having overseen the growth and development of The Public Theater’s marquee initiatives like Public Works, Mobile Unit, Under the Radar, Joe’s Pub, the Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Public Forum, Thake brings experience cultivating talent across genres and managing diverse teams to deliver on this strategy in new and bold ways. In addition, she is the co-director of GlobalFEST, North America’s world music festival and a non-profit organization whose mission is to foster cultural exchange and to increase the presence of world music in communities nationwide. In this role, she received the William Dawson Award for Programmatic Excellence.

This new position replaces Lincoln Center’s Artistic Director role, which Jane Moss filled for 26 years before stepping down in 2020. Thake will lead programming decisions alongside staff and guest curators, helping ensure a diversity of perspectives is woven throughout artistic endeavors—fostering openness, access, and building inclusive excellence into the heart of the institution’s programming. She will also help to launch the accelerated opening of David Geffen Hall in the fall of 2022, a project key to these goals.

“As co-chair of the search team for our Chief Artistic Officer, I was so impressed with Shanta’s focus on the plurality and democracy of art—her wide and deep understanding of genres and styles, and her profound knowledge and respect for artists across traditions and backgrounds,” said **Clara Wu Tsai, Founder of the Joe and Clara Tsai Foundation and co-chair of the search committee**. “Her experience comes first from a deep passion for the arts as a tool for communication and mutual understanding; I’m excited to welcome her to Lincoln Center.”

“We could not ask for a better person than Shanta Thake to fill the role of Lincoln Center’s first-ever Chief Artistic Officer to help us celebrate and elevate excellence across art forms and genres, to use our spaces in new and exciting ways, and help us usher in the opening of David Geffen Hall in ‘22” said **Katherine Farley, Chair of the Board of Directors of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**.

“Shanta Thake has made an extraordinary career celebrating and cultivating diverse talent from across the city and the world, and we are so pleased to count her as our Chief Artistic Officer,” said **Henry Timms, President & CEO of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “She will be an exceptional ambassador for Lincoln Center and the arts, the keystone in a leadership team that will shepherd Lincoln Center into a new era—as a hub for culture and civic life for all of New York and a symbol of the excellence and resilience of our city.”

“I’m so grateful to the Board of Directors and leadership for their support as I enter this role,” said **Shanta Thake, Incoming Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “I moved to New York almost twenty years ago to the day, with big ideas about what was possible—this is really the culmination of a lifetime of deep love of New York’s cultural diversity, the palpable excitement and critical importance of sharing a cultural experience together. I look forward to building upon the tremendous legacy of Jane Moss, while undergoing a period of listening and discovery. I’m confident that together we can help elevate all the greatest parts of this institution and build upon them even further—growing a Lincoln Center where all New Yorkers feel welcome no matter your background and where artists can shine and develop their craft in innovative and exciting new directions.”

Shanta Thake was previously the Associate Artistic Director / Director of Artistic Programs at The Public Theater. Before that role, she spent 10 years as the Director of Joe’s Pub, the intimate cabaret venue which hosts over 700 shows annually and is consistently hailed as one of New York City’s most prestigious venues for both emerging and established artists.

Thake has served as the co-chair for The Association of Performing Arts Professionals conference in 2019 and 2020. Ms. Thake received a BA in theater as well as a degree in management from Indiana University and currently lives in Brooklyn with her family.

“Shanta Thake is a singular powerhouse in cultural curation—a starmaker to some of the most respected musical and theatrical artists of our generation,” said **Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation and member of the Lincoln Center Board of Directors**. “For this reason alone, she is an extraordinary hire for Lincoln Center. It must also be said that if cultural institutions hope to meet the next moment successfully, they must meaningfully diversify, most importantly at the

executive level; Shanta joins an executive team that is becoming increasingly diverse, with disparate backgrounds that help big projects succeed. I have every confidence that her tenure will be a watershed one and congratulate her and the whole Lincoln Center team for this milestone.”

“I cannot think of a more exciting successor for Jane Moss than Shanta Thake,” said **Joel Ehrenkranz, member of the Lincoln Center Board of Directors**. “I am confident she will create a considerable legacy here just as Jane did, identifying and cultivating exceptional talent from New York City and across the globe, and leading Lincoln Center in building upon our history and inspiring future generations. Anne and I are thrilled to welcome Shanta to the team.”

“Shanta Thake is a bold advocate for artists and the power of art to transform our lives. As one of our city’s most innovative creative minds, she will be a strong voice to help lead the ongoing transformation of Lincoln Center,” said **Audra McDonald, singer, actor, alumna of the Juilliard School, and member of the Lincoln Center Board of Directors**. “With the greatest of esteem for her sweeping talent, her artistic fearlessness, and her collaborative spirit—and true excitement and optimism for our future—I am thrilled to welcome Shanta Thake to Lincoln Center.”

Thake will assume her role as Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer in September 2021.

Please access imagery and video assets [here](#).

About Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is the steward of the world’s leading performing arts center, an artistic and civic cornerstone for New York City comprised of eleven resident companies on a 16-acre campus. The nonprofit’s strategic priorities include: supporting the arts organizations that call Lincoln Center home to realize their missions and fostering opportunities for collaboration across campus; championing inclusion and increasing the accessibility and reach of Lincoln Center’s work; and reimagining and strengthening the performing arts for the 21st century and beyond, helping ensure their rightful place at the center of civic life. LincolnCenter.org.

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