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**THE GERSHWINS' PORGY AND BESS OPENS NOVEMBER 25 AT
THE AURORA FOX ARTS CENTER**

*Production is Regional Premiere of Book Adaptation by
Pulitzer Prize-winning Playwright Suzan-Lori Parks*

AURORA, Colo. – November 11, 2016 – *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* opens Friday, November 25 at The Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 East Colfax Ave., Aurora, Colo., and runs through Sunday, January 1. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. Tickets range from \$24 to \$37 and can be purchased at www.aurorafoxartscenter.org or by calling the Box Office at 303-739-1970.

Originally an opera that first premiered in 1935 featuring an all-black, classically trained cast, *Porgy and Bess* follows the lives of the inhabitants of Catfish Row, an African-American section of Charleston, S.C. The musical follows the crippled Porgy and his beloved Bess, who is under the dominance of the dangerous Crown and the sinewy drug dealer Sportin' Life. Based in the 1930s, *Porgy and Bess* centers on the tragic love story of the crippled beggar Porgy and the beautiful Bess, who longs to turn away from her former life as a prostitute and drug addict.

Porgy and Bess has evolved from its arguably racist stereotypes of 1930s Broadway. This version of the book is adapted by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks. *The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess* replaces the opera's sung recitatives with spoken dialogue, widening the focus to include the full cast of characters living in Catfish Row.

Classic songs like *Summertime*, *It Ain't Necessarily So*, and Porgy's celebration of love and life, *I Got Plenty of Nuttin'*, will stir the soul. Characters from the distant past will take audiences on a walk around a block that might exist today.

A regional premiere, *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* is fully staged and is directed by acclaimed director and filmmaker donnie l. betts, who attended the Yale School of Drama and is a founding member of local theatre companies City Stage Ensemble and Denver Black Arts Company. The role of Bess is played by Los Angeles-based, award-winning actor Tracy Camp, who recently premiered in San Francisco Opera's production of *Show Boat*. Local favorite Leonard Barrett plays Porgy. Barrett is acclaimed for performances at Boulder's Dinner Theatre, Bas Bleu in Fort Collins, and Phamaly Theatre Company productions at the Denver Center for the Performing arts and The Aurora Fox.

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ABOUT THE AURORA FOX ARTS CENTER

Now in its 32nd season, The Aurora Fox Arts Center is a public service of the city of Aurora under the Library and Cultural Services Department. Built in 1945 as a movie theater, the Aurora Fox was purchased by the city of Aurora in 1983, and completely renovated and reopened in 1985.



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