



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT**  
Dayna Kalakau  
510.843.4042 x311  
dkalakau@auroratheatre.org

**JULIE SALTZMAN KELLNER TO STEP DOWN AS MANAGING  
DIRECTOR OF AURORA THEATRE COMPANY IN JUNE 2021**

*Departure will conclude 11 years at Aurora*

**BERKELEY, CA (May 11, 2021)** Aurora Theatre Company today announced that Managing Director Julie Saltzman Kellner will step down in the beginning of June 2021. When Saltzman Kellner departs, she will have served as managing director of the award-winning Berkeley theatre company for 11 years, one of which she spent leading Aurora through the COVID-19 pandemic that shuttered the arts nationwide.

Former Freight & Salvage executive director Sharon Dolan has been named interim managing director while the Aurora's Board of Directors takes "some time to create an equitable and far-reaching search for a managing director," said Board President Joan Braun.

Artistic Director Josh Costello lauded Saltzman Kellner's contributions to the theatre. "Julie has been a tremendous leader at Aurora and in the Bay Area theatre community. Before I came to work for Aurora, I knew it as a place of great professionalism and integrity, and in my time here I've seen how instrumental Julie has been in upholding those values. Working with Julie for the past nine years has been a pleasure and a privilege."

"Aurora has been a tremendously important part of my life," Saltzman Kellner said. "It's truly been a privilege to partner with the artists, administrators, volunteers, and patrons throughout our community, creating 65 productions and building meaningful relationships through the Bay Area and larger theatre community."

She continued, “I'm very proud to have been a part of the team constantly working to drive Aurora forward making the most honest and honorable decisions we can and reveling in the joy and exhilaration that theatre brings the world. But after eleven years it's time to make space for new ideas; I'm excited to see what comes next and enjoy the thrill of experiencing excellent theatre from the audience.”

Saltzman Kellner joined Aurora as managing director in November 2009 after a 10-month-long nationwide search. Under her leadership, Aurora's budget increased by more than 40%, from \$1.6 million to \$2.3 million before the COVID-19 pandemic. During her tenure she chaired and re-invigorated the Berkeley Cultural Trust and is the founder of the Berkeley Arts Connect internship program. She has been a member of Theatre Bay Area's Theatre Services Committee and has been the primary representative for the Bay Area Theatre agreement with Actors' Equity Association.

During her time at Aurora, Saltzman Kellner led the creation of two strategic plans, partnered with Aurora's Board to lead the search for a new artistic director, served on all Board committees, and worked closely with Board leadership to restructure Board requirements to increase accessibility and to recruit a wider variety of people to the Board. Saltzman Kellner also revolutionized many of Aurora's systems and operations to be that of a professional organization.

“For eleven years, Aurora has been sustained by Julie's steady hand, commitment to mission, and fine-tuned business sense,” continued Braun. “Never has that been more true than during the 14 months the theatre has been closed by the pandemic. It is not a cliché to say that without Julie we would not be where we are today. We are keenly aware of how big are the shoes she leaves for her successor to fill.”

Before coming to the Bay Area, Saltzman Kellner served as General Manager and then Producing Director at American Theater Company in Chicago (ATC) where she produced a number of shows including Greg Kotis and Mark Hollmann's *Urinetown* follow up, *Yeast Nation*. Prior to joining ATC she served as Managing Director at Seanachai Theatre Company. She has also worked as Associate Producer, Production Manager, Stage Manager, and Production Assistant at theatres throughout Chicago including Seanachai, Shapeshifters Theatre, Strawdog Theatre Company, Eclipse Theatre Company, and Victory Gardens Theatre and at regional theaters including Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Utah Shakespearean Festival. Saltzman Kellner holds a Bachelors of Arts in Theatre from Loyola University and a Masters of Arts Management from Columbia College Chicago.

Saltzman Kellner will join the staff of CuriOdyssey as Director of Finance and Operations. The San Mateo, Calif. science and wildlife center helps children acquire the tools to deeply understand the changing world through observation of wild animals and experimentation with real scientific phenomena. Calling itself the “serious science playground,” CuriOdyssey is dedicated to giving more kids the superpower of science and believes that kids learn about science and animals best out in the world and not behind a desk or a screen. For more information, visit [www.CuriOdyssey.org](http://www.CuriOdyssey.org).

## **ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY**

As the storyteller for our community, Aurora Theatre Company inspires new audiences and longtime theatre lovers alike with the visceral power of live theatre. Our venues, the most intimate professional stages in the Bay Area, highlight great acting, nuanced language, and an immediacy that makes for exhilarating theatre. By telling profoundly relevant stories, we’re building a new culture of theatregoing in the Bay Area and contributing to a revitalization of theatre nationwide, challenging all of us to think deeper, laugh louder, and engage more purposefully and profoundly with our neighbors and our world. It has an operating budget of \$2.3 million.

# # #