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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission and Columbia Festival of the Arts Announce Collaboration Effort

The Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission (DCACC) and the Columbia Festival of the Arts (CFA) yesterday announced a new collaboration effort to expand artistic, cultural, and community programming at Merriweather Post Pavilion and other venues throughout Columbia.

“Collaboration is critical to realizing our ambitious vision of making Downtown Columbia the premier destination for arts and culture in Maryland,” said Deborah Ellinghaus, chair of the board of directors for the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission. “We are excited to be formally working with the Festival and its staff to bring this shared vision to life.”

“With more than thirty years of experience hosting world-class performers and programs in Columbia, we are ready to help DCACC fully achieve its mission of expanding cultural programming at Merriweather Post Pavilion and beyond,” said Suzi Padgett, chair of CFA. “This new collaboration will benefit both organizations, as well as the community we serve through new and innovative ideas and programs.”

Under this agreement, staff from DCACC and CFA will work together to develop and produce new programs and events on a year-round basis, fulfilling DCACC’s mission and bringing to life the expansive vision for arts and culture laid out in the Downtown Columbia Master Plan of 2010. Additionally, CFA will provide DCACC with operational, communications, and outreach assistance to help build greater awareness about artistic, cultural, and community programming throughout the area.

In addition to collaboration between staff, DCACC will provide CFA with office space at Merriweather Post Pavilion in the heart of Downtown Columbia, putting the Festival organization in close proximity to the many venues where it produces events and also on the same property where the Commission has its offices. Co-locating offices will help facilitate the collaborative aspects of their new agreement, as well as allowing CFA to devote more of its resources to producing events and programs.

Columbia Festival of the Arts | Downtown Columbia Arts & Culture

“DCACC has a tremendous opportunity to make Downtown Columbia a signature destination for culture, in addition to the concerts for which Merriweather Post Pavilion is already known,” said David Phillips, Executive Director of CFA. “We are excited to join DCACC in realizing the full artistic potential of Columbia, Merriweather Post Pavilion, and both of our organizations.”

In 2016, DCACC acquired Merriweather Post Pavilion from the Howard Hughes Corporation and has been overseeing the renovations at the venue since then. The organization’s mission is two-fold: to preserve the cultural significance of Merriweather Post Pavilion and to expand artistic, cultural, and community programming in Downtown Columbia. In 2017, DCACC began producing a popular series of outdoor movie nights at Merriweather Post Pavilion which it has continued this year, including last night’s showing of *The Greatest Showman*.

CFA has been producing its annual summer festival for 31 years and in that time has attracted hundreds of thousands of people to Columbia for dynamic programs and events. In June, CFA produced another successful summer festival, which included its annual free *Lakefest* weekend at the Columbia Lakefront, as well as nine indoor theatrical, film, musical, and other events throughout Columbia featuring diverse performances and artists.

“We are a small organization with considerable responsibilities and big plans,” said Ian Kennedy, Executive Director of DCACC. “And now with the support of the team at the Columbia Festival of the Arts, we can truly begin to fulfill the promise of our organization with world-class arts and cultural programming at Merriweather Post Pavilion and throughout Downtown Columbia.”

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About the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission:

The Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission was founded in 2013 to expand artistic, cultural, civic, and educational programming in Columbia, Maryland. A 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the Commission owns Merriweather Post Pavilion and is dedicated to preserving and strengthening the venue’s cultural significance. Through collaboration and partnerships with government, businesses, and community organizations, the Commission works to ensure Merriweather Post Pavilion and Downtown Columbia are recognized throughout Maryland and beyond as premier destinations for dynamic, innovative, and high quality visual arts, performances, and programming.

About the Columbia Festival of the Arts

The mission of the Columbia Festival of the Arts is to present a world class celebration of the arts and entertainment that attracts, engages, and inspires the broad and diverse community it serves. Now in its 32nd year, the CFA produces Columbia’s popular *LakeFest* every June at the downtown Columbia lakefront. *LakeFest* comprises 3 days of bands, a juried artists’ show, children’s activities, festive food and beverages, and spectacle entertainment. CFA presents enriching music, theatre and dance programming in and around Howard County, continuously strengthening the area’s reputation as one of America’s most desirable communities.