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RITA MORENO RETURNS TO BERKELEY REP IN *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*

Obie-winner Les Waters directs legendary actress in an American masterpiece

FEBRUARY 22, 2006 – Following her celebrated performance as Maria Callas in *Master Class*, renowned actress **Rita Moreno** returns to Berkeley Repertory Theatre in another legendary role: Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie*. Expect a breathtaking performance from the woman who won the Oscar, the Tony, the Grammy, and two Emmys – and this time she'll be on Berkeley Rep's intimate Thrust Stage. Tennessee Williams' masterpiece is brought to the stage by the Theatre's associate artistic director, Obie Award-winner **Les Waters**, who also gave audiences a lush and lyrical look at Williams' *Suddenly Last Summer* in 2003. *The Glass Menagerie* begins previews on **April 6**, opens on **April 11**, and closes **May 31**, 2006. The executive producer of this show is the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, and the production sponsors are Citigroup Private Bank and the *Contra Costa Times*. The Theatre recognizes Wells Fargo as an official sponsor of the 2005/06 Season, along with returning Season Sponsor BART.

"At Berkeley Rep, I feel like a wanderer who has finally come home," **Moreno remarks**. "For the second time I have the great good fortune to team up with a director whom I respect and admire and be offered a play that I have always longed to perform... Lightning does strike twice in the same place! It was at Berkeley Rep that the talented director Moisés Kaufman and the play *Master Class* allowed me to live vicariously, even for a brief time, as Maria Callas. Soon, with the equally talented Les Waters, I will have the opportunity to become Amanda Wingfield in Tennessee Williams' touching, moving, and brilliant play, *The Glass Menagerie*."

"Rita is an icon, and it is an honor to work with her," **Waters comments**. "Like all great artists, it seems that she has always been here – and that kind of presence is perfect for Amanda. In my body of work, I view *The Glass Menagerie* as a companion piece to a show I directed last season, Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*. That play was a love letter to a father; this is a letter – and a very complex one – to a mother. Although she was neither as famous nor as talented as Rita, my mum was an iconic figure. She looked like Maggie Smith, had a great way with words, and dominated a long stretch of my life. I loved and hated her for it, just as Williams' autobiographical Tom both loves

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1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

and hates his mother. I have never seen *The Glass Menagerie*. It's a new play to me, and the one thing I know as I approach it is that I have a deep and emotional response to its eloquent content."

The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee Williams' autobiographical masterpiece about a fractured St. Louis family, made its Broadway premiere in 1945 and immediately established the playwright as an important voice in American drama. In this tale of endurance and forgiveness, a young man is torn between obligation to his family and the need to lead a life of his own. Williams' menagerie of characters, caught in their claustrophobic flat, includes Amanda, the domineering matriarch; Tom, the reluctant breadwinner; Laura, a fragile girl tending a collection of glass figurines; and Jim, the gentleman caller whose brief visit forever changes their lives. Williams called *Menagerie* his "memory play," and its expressionistic beauty illuminates the subjective nature of memory... For Amanda, it serves as a refuge; for her son, it's a prison he will never escape.

Unquestionably one of America's greatest dramatists, **Tennessee Williams** (1911-1983) was born Thomas Lanier Williams in Columbus, Mississippi. He shares more than a given name with the hero of *The Glass Menagerie*: Williams grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and worked in a shoe factory to help support his family, writing poems on the covers of shoeboxes while dreaming of a literary career. His mother, Edwina Dakin Williams, was an imperious woman, obsessed with fantasies of genteel Southern living. His emotionally disturbed sister, Rose, spent much of her life in mental institutions. Their distant and abusive father, a traveling salesman named Cornelius Coffin Williams, clearly favored his youngest son, Dakin, over the other children. A shy, sickly, confused young man, Williams was amply prepared to write about society's outcasts.

He had his first major success in 1945 with *The Glass Menagerie*, winning the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and cemented his reputation by following it two years later with the Pulitzer Prize-winning script for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams then entered his most prolific period, producing a new play about every two years, including *The Rose Tattoo* (1950), winner of the Tony Award for Best Play; *Camino Real* (1953); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), which netted him a second Pulitzer; *Garden District* (1957), later rewritten as *Suddenly Last Summer* (1964); *Orpheus Descending* (1957); *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959); and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). In addition to these landmark works of American theatre, Williams penned many other plays, several screenplays, six volumes of prose, and three volumes of poetry.

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Rita Moreno (Amanda) is one of a select group of performers to have won all four of the most prestigious show business awards: the Oscar, the Emmy, the Tony, and the Grammy. She earned an Oscar for *West Side Story*, Emmys for *The Muppet Show* and *The Rockford Files*, a Tony for *The Ritz*, and a Grammy for *The Electric Company Album*. Her countless credits for stage and screen extend from her Broadway debut at age 13 in *Skydrift* with Eli Wallach all the way to her recent roles in John Sayles' *Casa de los Babys* and the acclaimed HBO series, *Oz*. Having appeared in more than 40 feature films – most notably *Carnal Knowledge*, *The Four Seasons*, and *The King and I* – Moreno was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1995. In 2004, during her celebrated run as Maria Callas in Berkeley Rep's *Master Class*, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to a civilian in commemoration of a lifetime of meritorious service.

Les Waters (director) became associate artistic director of Berkeley Rep in 2003, where he has staged *Eurydice*, *Fêtes de la Nuit*, *Finn in the Underworld*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, and *Yellowman*. He won an Obie Award for his production of Charles Mee's *Big Love*, directing its world premiere at the Humana Festival and subsequent runs at Berkeley Rep, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Goodman Theatre, and Long Wharf Theater. His other New York credits include the Connelly Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, and Signature Theatre Company. Elsewhere in America, he has directed for American Conservatory Theater, Guthrie Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. In his native England, Waters has staged work with the Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre Club, Joint Stock Theatre Group, National Theatre, Royal Court Theatre, and Traverse Theatre Club.

Waters has assembled a talented cast of accomplished actors to perform with Moreno. Local audiences will remember **Emily Donahoe** (Laura) for her heartbreaking portrayal last year of Sophie in Berkeley Rep's *Honour*, starring Kathleen Chalfant. Donahoe previously worked with Waters on the world premiere of Charles Mee's *Wintertime* at La Jolla Playhouse, as well as the recent off-Broadway production of Anne Washburn's *Apparition*. In 2004, she won a Helen Hayes Award for her performance in the world premiere of *Shakespeare in Hollywood* at Arena Stage. Her other credits include Keen Company, Ontological-Hysteric, and Soho Repertory Theatre in New York and regional work at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. **Erik Lochtefeld** (Tom) performed both on and off Broadway in Mary Zimmermann's *Metamorphoses*. He also appeared in her production of that show at Berkeley Rep, as well as last

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season's *Secret in the Wings*. Lochtefeld's other New York credits include *But I'm a Cheerleader* at the New York Musical Theatre Festival and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* at Second Stage. Regionally, he has been seen at noted theatres such as the Mark Taper Forum, McCarter Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Yale Repertory Theatre. **Terrence Riordan** (The Gentleman Caller) played Thaddeus Lapin in the Broadway production of *A Naked Girl on the Appian Way*. He originated that role in the show's world premiere at South Coast Repertory, and his other regional experience includes *Betty's Summer Vacation* at the Huntington Theatre and *Take Me Out* at Seattle Rep and the Old Globe. Riordan's television and film work includes Maria Maggenti's *Puccini for Beginners*, seen at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

An expert team of designers has been recruited for *The Glass Menagerie*, many of whom have worked on Waters' previous hits. **Scott Bradley** (scenic designer) received a Drama Desk Award and a Tony nomination for the Broadway production of August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* and a Drama Desk nomination for *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Berkeley Rep audiences will recall his magical collaboration with Waters on last season's *Eurydice*, as well as his designs for Zimmerman's *Journey to the West* and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*. **Lydia Tanji** (costume designer) designed her first show at Berkeley Rep in 1988 and has worked on more than 20 productions at the Theatre, including *Homebody/Kabul*, *Honour*, *Master Class*, and *Our Town*. Her extensive experience includes films such as *The Joy Luck Club* and *A Thousand Pieces of Gold*, as well as shows at ACT, Arena Stage, Aurora Theatre, the Huntington, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Mark Taper, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Public, San Jose Rep, Seattle Rep, and South Coast Rep. Last year, **Matt Frey** (lighting designer) created the lighting for Waters' chilling production of *Finn in the Underworld* at Berkeley Rep. He has also designed shows for BAM's Next Wave Festival and the Lincoln Center Festival, as well as for noted companies such as La Jolla Playhouse, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwright's Horizons, Ridge Theater, Signature Theatre, and Soho Rep. **Peter Golub** (composer) previously worked at Berkeley Rep on *The Laramie Project* and on Waters' production of Charles Ludlam's *Mystery of Irma Vep*. He was composer-in-residence for Ludlam's infamous Ridiculous Theatrical Company and has served as director of the Sundance Film Music Program for the past seven years. Golub's designs have been seen on and off Broadway, at regional theatres, with respected dance and concert companies, and on screen. The stage manager for this production is **Cynthia Cahill**.

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There will be **six special events** during the run of *The Glass Menagerie*:

- *Target @ Teen Night* begins at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 6 and includes dinner, a preview performance, and a behind-the-scenes discussion with a member of the artistic team. Tickets are \$5 for members of Berkeley Rep's Teen Council, \$20 for all other teens. For more information, call 510.647.2978 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org
- *Opening night* festivities take place on Tuesday, April 11.
- *night/OUT*, an event for the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community, takes place on Thursday, April 13 and features a post-play party with hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and music mixed by cutting-edge Bay Area DJs.
- Three *post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the performances on Thursday, April 27; Friday, May 12, and Tuesday, May 23.

Tickets for *The Glass Menagerie* are priced from \$30 to \$59 and are on sale now. Discounted seats are available for groups of 15 or more, as well as half-price rush tickets for students and seniors. For every weekday performance, 20 half-price HotTix go on sale that day at noon at the Berkeley Rep box office (cash only). Berkeley Rep also offers half-price tickets for anyone under 30; this discount is subject to some restrictions, and valid identification is required.

Berkeley Rep's Thrust Stage and its box office are located at 2025 Addison Street, one block from Berkeley's downtown BART station and close to AC Transit bus lines. The theatre is accessible to the handicapped, offering wheelchair seating and special services for those with hearing- or vision-impairment. For tickets or information, call **510.647.2949** or toll-free at **888.4.BRT.Tix** – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Founded in 1968, the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre has established a national reputation for its ambitious programming and dynamic productions. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tony Taccone and Managing Director Susan Medak, Berkeley Rep seeks to engage its audience in an ongoing dialogue of ideas. Through its bold choice of material and vivid style of production, Berkeley Rep reflects a commitment to diversity, excitement, and quality. The company is especially well known for its presentations of important new dramatic voices and its fresh adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In 2001, Berkeley Rep opened The Roda Theatre, a 600-seat proscenium theatre that complements the 400-seat Thrust Stage, and the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, housed in the Nevo Education Center. The addition of these two buildings has transformed what was once a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex.

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THE GLASS MENAGERIE

FACT SHEET

WHO: Written by Tennessee Williams
 Directed by Les Waters
 Designed by Scott Bradley (sets), Lydia Tanji (costumes), Matt Frey (lights), and Peter Golub (composer)
 Starring Rita Moreno, Emily Donahoe, Erik Lochtefeld, and Terrence Riordan

WHAT: *The Glass Menagerie*
 Legendary actress Rita Moreno stars in an American masterpiece brought to the stage by Obie Award-winning director Les Waters

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Thrust Stage
 2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: Previews on 4/6 - 4/9/2006 – performances on 4/11 - 5/31/2006

- Tuesdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays & Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM

the glass menagerie / main

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
apr 6 – may 31				apr 6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
7pm ●		8pm ■		8pm ▲		8pm ●
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
2/7pm			7pm	2/8pm		2pm
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2/7pm			7pm	8pm ◆	8pm	2/8pm
30	may 1	2	3	4	5	6
7pm	8pm			8pm	8pm	8pm
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2/7pm		8pm	7pm	2pm	8pm	8pm
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2/7pm		8pm		2/8pm	8pm	2/8pm
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
2pm		8pm ◆	7pm	8pm	8pm	2/8pm
28	29	30	31			
2/7pm		8pm	7pm			

Special Events –

- *Target @ Teen Night*: Thursday 4/6 @ 6:00 PM
- *Opening night*: Tuesday 4/11 @ 8:00 PM
- *night/OUT* (LGBT event): Thursday 4/13 @ 8:00 PM
- *Post-play discussions*: Thursday 4/27, Friday 5/12 & Tuesday, 5/23

HOW MUCH: Previews\$30 Sunday evening (7 PM) \$48
 Thurs/Saturday matinees (2 PM) ..\$45 Friday evening (8 PM)..... \$53
 Tues/Wed/Thursday evenings.....\$45 Wednesday opening (8 PM) \$59
 Sunday matinee (2 PM).....\$48 Saturday evening (8 PM) \$59

Discounts: • ½ price tickets available to those under 30 (some restrictions apply)
 • 20 half-price HotTix go on sale Tuesday through Friday at noon
 • ½ price rush tickets for students and seniors sold ½ hour before curtain
 • Groups of 15+ may contact 510.647.2918 or eflisher@berkeleyrep.org

TIX & INFO: 510.647.2949 – toll-free 888-4-BRT-Tix – www.berkeleyrep.org

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