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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**IVONNE COLL TO PLAY *MOTHER COURAGE* IN BERKELEY & LA JOLLA**

**Two Tony-winning theatres collaborate on Brecht's masterpiece of brains and burlesque**

MAY 20, 2006 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre and La Jolla Playhouse announced today that they have cast the title role in their co-production of **Bertolt Brecht's** *Mother Courage*: Broadway's **Ivonne Coll** will play the lead in this vivid revival directed by Obie Award-winner **Lisa Peterson**. The show uses **David Hare's** brilliant adaptation of Brecht's masterpiece, and features an invigorating new score from composer **Gina Leishman**. *Mother Courage* runs from June 20 to July 23 in La Jolla before playing from September 8 to October 22 in Berkeley. The cast also includes **Katie Barrett, James Eckhouse, Brent Hinkley, Marc Damon Johnson, and Patrick Kerr**. Don't miss this incredible barrage of talent.

"The canvas of Brecht's stories is always very large, combining musical theatre with political tragedy," remarks **Tony Taccone**, artistic director of Berkeley Rep. "The goal is to realize all these ambitions with actors, musicians, and singers who are talented and flexible enough to traverse the many landscapes of the text. We needed performers versed in music hall and comedy who are also skilled dramatic actors. I'm pleased to say we've assembled a cast that is undoubtedly up to the task."

"Lisa Peterson was associate director at the Playhouse in the early days of her career," adds **Des McAnuff**, La Jolla's artistic director. "When Lisa came to me and said it was time for her to go back to Brecht, I instantly understood what she meant. We are living in a time when examining morality, politics, and war through a theatrical lens could not be more timely and necessary. What also excited me was that she wanted to capture the humor, as well as the pathos, of this powerful play. I couldn't be more pleased to bring Lisa and Brecht back to the Playhouse."

In *Mother Courage*, a religious war ravages the civilized world, killing soldiers and civilians alike. Plodding along in its wake is an itinerant peddler, shadowing the destruction and selling supplies to whichever side will grease her palm. Brecht penned his pacifist epic as the Nazi war-machine rolled through Poland, but its prescient lessons, stirring songs, and surprising humor are equally relevant today. There are no easy answers in this riveting tale of struggle and survival, but *Mother Courage* engages both our emotions and our minds in a production that resonates for our times.

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

IVONNE CALL PLAYS MOTHER COURAGE IN BERKELEY & LA JOLLA / 2 OF 5

**Ivonne Coll** (Mother Courage) has performed on Broadway in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *Goodbye Fidel*, and *Shakespeare on Broadway*. La Jolla audiences will remember her from *Arms and the Man*, *Bloodletting*, *The Hairy Ape*, and *Adoration of the Old Woman*, which netted her a Craig Noel Award for Outstanding Performance from the San Diego Critics Circle. Her extensive experience on regional stages includes work at Arizona Theatre Company, the Goodman Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, McCarter Theatre, the Public Theatre/New York Shakespeare Festival (NYSF), Puerto Rican Travelling Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, and South Coast Repertory. Coll made her screen debut in *The Godfather II*, and her many television appearances include recent roles on *Crossing Jordan*, *C.S.I.*, *Nip Tuck*, and *Veronica Mars*.

Coll's Courage is accompanied by an exceptional cast of accomplished actors. **Katie Barrett** (Yvette) recently played Maggie in the East Coast premiere of *Safe in Hell* at Yale Repertory Theatre, directed by Mark Wing-Davey. Her many regional credits include shows at Arena Stage, Center Stage, Ensemble Studio Theater, the Kennedy Center, the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, and the Round House Theatre. As a singer, she has performed with the Washington Bach Consort and the Woodley Ensemble, and as a soloist at Washington National Cathedral. **James Eckhouse** (The Cook) is best known as Jim Walsh from television's *Beverly Hills 90210*, and he had guest roles on recent episodes of *Boston Legal*, *Close to Home*, *Commander in Chief*, *Crossing Jordan*, and *Medium*. He starred in *Jimmy and Judy*, which won the 2006 San Francisco Independent Film Festival, and appears in two other films due out this summer: *Half-Life* and *Parental Guidance Suggested*. Eckhouse's recent stage work includes performing at the Taper in *The Goat* and directing the world premiere of *Bright Boy* at the Ensemble Studio Theater. **Brent Hinkley** (The Commander) serves as associate artistic director of the Actors' Gang in Los Angeles, where he has appeared in more than 25 plays. His other stage credits include Long Beach Opera, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, and the Public. He played the Sidler on *Seinfeld*, and has also been seen on TV's *C.S.I.*, *E.R.*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Monk*, and *The West Wing*. His film appearances include *Bob Roberts*, *Ed Wood*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Say It Isn't So*, and *The Silence of the Lambs*. **Marc Damon Johnson** (Recruiting Officer) was last seen at Berkeley Rep in the West Coast premiere of *Polk County*. He has also performed at Arena Stage, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, NYSF, and Signature Theatre, where he received a Drama League nomination for *Mr. Fox: A Ruminantion*. He has many film and television credits, including Woody Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown* and Charles Randolph-Wright's *Preaching to the Choir*. **Patrick Kerr** (Chaplain) performed in Berkeley Rep's production of *Love! Valour! Compassion!* He has worked

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at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Minetta Lane Theatre in New York, as well as on regional stages such as the California Shakespeare Theater, Geffen Playhouse, Intiman Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, South Coast Rep, and the Taper. His countless screen credits include roles as Noel on *Frasier* and the Blind Guy on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

The La Jolla cast for *Mother Courage* also includes **Mark Danisovszky** (ensemble), **Scott Drummond** (Eilif), **Brian Hostenske** (ensemble), **Jonathan Piper** (Drummer), **Ryan Shams** (Swiss Cheese), and **Hilary Ward** (Katrin). Full casting for the Berkeley run will be announced at a later date.

**Lisa Peterson** (director) won an Obie Award for her staging of *Light Shining on Buckinghamshire* at the famed New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW). Her other off-Broadway credits include *The Batting Cage* and *The Fourth Sister* (Vineyard Theatre); *Birdy* (Women's Project); *Collected Stories* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *The Model Apartment* (Primary Stages); *The Scarlet Letter* (Classic Stage Company); *The Square and Tongue of a Bird* (The Public); *Sueño* (MCC Theater); and *Traps*, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *Slavs!*, and *The Waves* (NYTW). Her regional work includes world premieres and classics at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, Center Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, Intiman, Long Wharf Theatre, N.Y. Stage & Film, Prince Music Theater, Sundance Theatre Lab, Trinity Repertory Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Yale Rep. She has also staged work at La Jolla Playhouse, where she was associate director from 1992 to 1995, and at the Taper, where she was resident director from 1995 to 2005. Peterson is a graduate of Yale College, and a member of Ensemble Studio Theater and the Drama Dept.

**Gina Leishman** (composer) has written music for theatre, opera, dance, film, television, and the concert stage, garnering numerous awards. Audiences in La Jolla and the Bay Area will remember her music from Geoff Hoyle's *Feast of Fools*. In La Jolla, she also worked on *The Good Person of Setzuan* and *Don Quixote de la Jolla*, and in the Bay Area she's written music for Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, and ODC/Dance. Her many stage credits in New York include Broadway's *Comedy of Errors* and *Juggling & Cheap Theatrics* (Vivian Beaumont), *Helen and Tongue of a Bird* (NYSF), *L'Histoire du Soldat* (BAM/Next Wave Festival), and *Therese Raquin* (Centenary Stage Company), for which she received a Drama Desk nomination. Her other regional credits include scores for *Alice* (DTC), *Brothers Karamazov* (Arena Stage and Seattle Rep), *Burning Dreams* and *Red Noses* (San Diego Rep), *Imaginary Invalid* (Yale Rep), and

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*Oedipus the King* (Guthrie). She is co-founder of the Kamikaze Ground Crew, a septet which recently celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and co-leader of the Mr. Wau-Wa band, a quintet dedicated to the songs of Bertolt Brecht. Her recordings can be found on Koch Jazz and New World Records.

Edward Albee recently asserted that **Bertolt Brecht** (playwright) is one of only four playwrights from the 20<sup>th</sup> century “that we could not have done without.” Brecht’s many works for the stage include *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Good Person of Setzuan*, *The Life of Galileo*, *Happy End*, *Man is Man*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, and *The Threepenny Opera*. After he wrote *Mother Courage*, the Nazis exiled him, revoked his citizenship, and banned his plays for political views that disagreed with the regime. This production relies on the unadulterated translation by Sir **David Hare** (translator). Hare is one of the world’s most prolific and respected playwrights whose work often casts a skeptical eye on politics and institutions, examining the impact of ordinary people on events and revealing what goes on behind closed doors. His plays range all the way from 1970’s *Slag* through *Plenty*, *Pravda*, *Skylight*, and *The Blue Room* to his current hit, *Stuff Happens*, now playing in an extended run at the Public in New York.

An **expert team of designers** has been assembled for *Mother Courage*. **Rachel Hauck** (scenic design) has created sets in New York for the Minetta Lane, the Public, the Vineyard, and the Women’s Project. For eight years, she was a company member of the Actors’ Gang, and her designs have also been seen regionally at Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, Huntington Theatre, Intiman, La Jolla Playhouse, the O’Neill, South Coast Rep, the Taper, Trinity Rep, and Yale Rep. **David Zinn** (costume design) won an Obie Award for *Mamba’s Daughters*. He frequently works with director Robert Woodruff and previously collaborated with Lisa Peterson on *Oedipus* at the Guthrie. His other credits include the Lyric Opera of Chicago, New York City Opera, NYTW, Seattle Rep, Second Stage, the Taper, and Yale Rep. **Marcus Dilliard** (lighting designer) has numerous international credits in theatre and in opera. He often designs for the Guthrie and for Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Theatre-lovers in Berkeley and La Jolla recently enjoyed his luminous work on Jeune Lune’s production of *The Miser*. **Jill BC DuBoff** (sound design) has numerous Broadway credits, including *Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home*, *The Constant Wife*, and *The Good Body*. Her off-Broadway work includes shows at the Cherry Lane Theatre, Clubbed Thumb, the Public, Playwrights Horizons, NYTW, Signature, the Vineyard, and the Women’s Project. In 2005, she was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards and a Hewes Award. The stage manger for this production is **Lisa Porter**.

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By uniting these eminent artists and respected theatres, *Mother Courage* promises a timely look at a timeless play. For more details, contact the box office near you:

- June 20 – July 23, 2006:  
***Mother Courage in La Jolla***  
La Jolla Playhouse / Sheila & Hughes Potiker Theatre  
2910 La Jolla Village Drive / La Jolla, CA 92039  
858.550.1010 / [www.lajollaplayhouse.com](http://www.lajollaplayhouse.com)
- September 8 – October 22, 2006:  
***Mother Courage in Berkeley***  
Berkeley Repertory Theatre / The Roda Theatre / 2015 Addison St / Berkeley, CA 94704  
510.647.2949 / [www.berkeleyrep.org](http://www.berkeleyrep.org)

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#### **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.

#### **ABOUT LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE**

La Jolla Playhouse has received more than 300 awards for theatre excellence, including the 1993 Tony Award as America's Outstanding Regional Theatre. Located in La Jolla, California, the Playhouse is nationally acclaimed for its innovative productions of classics, new plays, and musicals. Led by two-time Tony-winner Des McAnuff, artistic director; Steven Libman, managing director; and Shirley Fishman, associate artistic director, the Playhouse was founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire, and Mel Ferrer. More than 30 Playhouse productions have moved to Broadway, garnering 23 Tony Awards, including *Big River*; *The Who's Tommy*; *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*; *A Walk in the Woods*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; *Dracula, the Musical*; Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays*; the Pulitzer Prize-winning *I Am My Own Wife*, fostered as part of the Playhouse's Page To Stage New Play Development Program; and the currently running *Jersey Boys*, the smash hit musical about Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons.

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**MOTHER COURAGE**  
*FACT SHEET*

**WHO:** Written by Bertolt Brecht  
Translated by David Hare  
Original score by Gina Leishman  
Directed by Lisa Peterson  
Designed by Rachel Hauck (sets), David Zinn (costumes), Marcus Dilliard (lights),  
and Jill BC DuBoff (sound)  
Featuring Katie Barrett, Ivonne Call, James Eckhouse, Brent Hinkley, Marc Damon  
Johnson, and Patrick Kerr

**WHAT:** *Mother Courage*

**WHERE &  
WHEN:** **June 20 – July 23, 2006**  
La Jolla Playhouse  
Sheila & Hughes Potiker Theatre / 2910 La Jolla Village Drive / La Jolla, CA 92039  
858.550.1010 / [www.lajollaplayhouse.com](http://www.lajollaplayhouse.com)

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