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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

¡TODOS SOMOS ZORRO!

**Culture Clash & Tony Taccone reunite at Berkeley Rep
for the hilarious world premiere of *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell***

FEBRUARY 8, 2006 – Few people know that Zorro lives in Berkeley, but it's true: the hero's secret lair is in an office at the marina which houses Zorro Productions, Incorporated (ZPI). Now the local people behind this mythic mask have gone out on a limb by letting Berkeley Repertory Theatre and three wild Chicanos create an uproarious comedy about the legendary fox. This March, the hilarious performance troupe, **Culture Clash**, and Berkeley Rep's artistic director, **Tony Taccone**, reunite for the world premiere of *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*. It's time to get your Z on at Berkeley Rep!

Commissioned by Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, and ZPI, the show begins previews in the Roda Theatre on **March 17**, opens on **March 22**, and closes **April 16**, 2006. Then *Zorro* rides to his fabled homeland in Southern California to be seen by audiences in La Jolla starting in September. American Express Company and ANG Newspapers are the valiant production sponsors of the Berkeley run, and the chivalrous executive producers are Richard Hoskins and Lynne Frame, Helen and John Meyer, and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family. Berkeley Rep proudly recognizes Wells Fargo as an official sponsor of the 2005/06 Season, along with returning Season Sponsor BART.

"Just when I thought that the forces of darkness and despair were about to win the day, Culture Clash arrives with *Zorro in Hell*, using their fierce wit and political insight to resurrect the spirit of Zorro and slay our collective demons," remarks Taccone. "The prospect of watching these guys tread the Berkeley Rep boards while **trying to squeeze into Zorro costumes** fills me with sheer delight."

"We simply could not resist the Zorro legend, though we tried at least once," Culture Clash comments. "But in there somewhere, in all those photos from the forties and fifties of pudgy little white kids trying with all their might to be Zorro... something touched us, and reminded us that **we too taped chalk to the end of sticks as we tried to make Z's on the sidewalk**. The cynic in

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

us wants to debunk, and we go about the business of that with fervor – but we also reveal the redemptive power of this hero who was based on true California Poet Bandits and dared to fight the tightening noose around their brown necks. *¡Todos somos Zorro!*

The trio – which is comprised of **Richard Montoya**, **Ric Salinas**, and **Herbert Sigüenza** – also speaks highly of its collaboration with Taccone, calling it “an ongoing wonderful conversation we’ve enjoyed with Comrade Tony over many years.”

“There is nobody on earth you want to develop new work with other than T.T.,” Montoya observes. “He’s **Tony Soprano mixed with Samuel Beckett** and the brains of a rocket scientist. I am sure Tony was pushed around the school yard by the fifth-grade bully, but look who’s getting the last laugh now – and all the important gigs! It’s his year, and we’re lucky to have him on *Zorro in Hell*.”

And Sigüenza sums it up in his usual succinct fashion: “Tony’s got **the smarts, the passion, and the cojones** to make American theatre important again.”

California was born from a clash of cultures, and now Culture Clash explodes the romantic myths surrounding its creation. Their 2002 hit, *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, also premiered at Berkeley Rep under Taccone’s direction – so these missionaries of mayhem are returning to the Bay Area for the world premiere of **Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell**. The irreverent trio takes on a legend to examine questions of homeland security in the Wild West... when Anglo-Americans struggled with issues such as Mexican immigration, Indian gambling, and a governor born on foreign soil. At long last, it’s a Latin look behind the mask of this mainstream icon invented by an Irish American. Zorro rides out of the pages of pulp fiction, through the Hollywood image machine, and beyond the barriers of class, race, and ethnicity to become a hero for the oppressed in every land. Both history and histrionics play a role when *Zorro* is unsheathed!

“Berkeley Rep has been a dream to work with, from the management to the artists,” says **Sandra Curtis**, senior vice president of ZPI. “What better luck than to have such an incredibly successful and respected theatre in our hometown, and to work with such a talented group as Culture Clash. Their rapid-fire wit, their acting and impressions, and their incisive political commentary are as sharp as Zorro’s blade.”

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Zorro, "the fox," is California's original superhero, a 19th-century nobleman named Diego de la Vega who fights injustice in the Pueblo de Los Angeles. He was created in 1919 by the writer, Johnston McCulley, for his serialized novel, *The Curse of Capistrano* – and immediately became an icon for the ages. Douglas Fairbanks generated a sensation in 1920 with his silent film, *The Mark of Zorro*, and Tyrone Power and Basil Rathbone starred in an unforgettable remake in 1940. In the fifties, Disney introduced the *Zorro* television series featuring Guy Williams, which was embraced by the Baby Boomers. For the next three decades, Zorro continued to attract fans worldwide with new movies and TV shows, including countless foreign films. The hero was reborn in the nineties, when Antonio Banderas inherited the mantle from Anthony Hopkins in *The Mask of Zorro*, produced by Steven Spielberg. Catherine Zeta-Jones made her name as the film's female lead, and she and Banderas reunited for *The Legend of Zorro* in 2005. Isabel Allende published her own Zorro novel last year and has signed on as a producer of the Gipsy Kings' West End musical, scheduled to open in 2007. For more than 30 years, Zorro's exploits have been guided by ZPI, which is based in Berkeley. In all, the masked man has been the subject of at least 50 films, nine TV series, hundreds of comic books, and dozens of books – in addition to the original 65 tales penned by McCulley. As evidence of his multicultural appeal, his image can be seen today on everything from Advent calendars in France to pachinko machines in Japan – and people around the globe recognize Zorro from the three slashing sounds of his sword. Now the boys from Culture Clash are going to have their say!

Culture Clash's *Zorro in Hell* comes in the group's 22nd year as theatre artists, writers, activists, and all around troublemakers. In 1984, Montoya, Salinas, and Sigüenza founded the group in the heart of San Francisco at the Mission District's venerable Galeria De La Raza with Bay Area super-curator, Rene Yanez. Culture Clash started out as a performance group with a strong sense of political satire, social commentary, stand-up comedy, performance art, rap, spoken word, and agitprop Chicano Teatro. Never far from their roots, the group's work has shifted in the last ten years, however, as they've created full-length, site-specific works for the nation's premier regional stages. *Anthems* (D.C.), *Bordertown* (Tijuana/San Diego), *Chavez Ravine* (L.A.), *Mission Magic Mystery Tour* (S.F.), *Nuyorican Stories* (N.Y.C.), and *Radio Mambo* (Miami) are a few of the company's works. They've also produced new plays for Berkeley Rep, Boston's Huntington Theatre, Houston's Alley Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theater in New Haven, as well as two musicals: an adaptation of Aristophanes' *The Birds* and *Señor Discretion, Himself*, a long-lost Frank Loesser tuner. Their work fills a unique role in American arts, and their goal is to bring new and untraditional audiences to American theatre. *Zorro in Hell* marks the first of two world premieres for the group in the next six months: *Water and Power*, penned for the boys by Montoya, premieres at the Mark Taper Forum in August.

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Tony Taccone made his Broadway debut last month with Sarah Jones' *Bridge & Tunnel*, which was universally lauded by the critics. He serves as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged more than 35 shows, including the world premieres of *Continental Divide*, *The Convict's Return*, *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, *The First 100 Years*, *Geni(us)*, *Ravenshead*, and *Virgin Molly*. He commissioned Tony Kushner's renowned *Angels in America*, and co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum. His latest collaboration with Kushner features designs by beloved children's author, Maurice Sendak: a holiday hit in Berkeley, *Brundibar* travels this year to Yale Rep and New York's New Victory Theatre. Before bringing *Bridge & Tunnel* to Broadway, Taccone staged its record-breaking off-Broadway run, and also directed Sarah Jones' previous show, *Surface Transit*. In 2004, his production of David Edgar's *Continental Divide* transferred to the Barbican in London after playing Berkeley Rep, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and England's Birmingham Rep. Taccone frequently works in Ashland, where he has also directed *Coriolanus*, *Othello*, *Pentecost*, and the American premiere of Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy*. His other regional credits include noted theatres such as Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arizona Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, San Jose Rep, Seattle Rep, and San Francisco's Eureka Theatre, where he served six years as artistic director before coming to Berkeley Rep.

In addition to *Culture Clash*, the swashbuckling cast for *Zorro in Hell* features three more musketeers. **Joseph Kamal** previously worked with *Culture Clash* on *Anthem*s at Arena Stage and was last seen at Berkeley Rep in the world premiere of Charles Mee's *Fêtes de la Nuit*. He has also appeared on Broadway, off Broadway, and regionally with prominent theatres such as the Culture Project, HERE, Lincoln Center Theater, Mabou Mines, and the New York Theatre Workshop. **Sharon Lockwood** is a veteran of Bay Area stages seen frequently at Berkeley Rep over the last 20 years in shows such as *The Alchemist*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Convict's Return*, *Hydriotaphia*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Magic Fire*, *The Oresteia*, *Our Town*, *Pentecost*, *Reckless*, *The Triumph of Love*, and *Volpone*. **Vincent Montoya** is a singer, songwriter, and composer inducted into the Sacramento Music Hall of Fame in 2003. Known as a member of two local bands, Seventy and Tattooed Love Dogs, his excursions into theatre include *The Birds* at Berkeley Rep and *El Otro* at Brava Theatre.

All *Zorro* needs to succeed is a pistol and a whip, but nonetheless his latest adventure includes four fabulous designers as sidekicks. **Christopher Acebo** (scenic designer) has designed four previous shows for *Culture Clash*. His extensive experience includes scenery for recent world premieres at the Goodman Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, and Yale

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Rep. Among her many credits, **Christal Weatherly** (costume designer) designed the costumes for *Fêtes de la Nuit* at Berkeley Rep, and also collaborated with Les Waters on Mee's *Wintertime* at La Jolla Playhouse and Long Wharf Theatre. **Alexander V. Nichols** (lighting designer) has designed sets, costumes, lights, and projections for dance and theatre companies across America, including 11 previous shows at Berkeley Rep: *Civil Sex*, *Continental Divide*, *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, *Fêtes de la Nuit*, *The Guys*, *Honour*, *The Life of Galileo*, *Menocchio*, *Ravenshead*, *Rhinoceros*, and *Surface Transit*. **Robbin E. Broad** (sound designer) is a principal audio designer for Walt Disney Imagineering. Her award-winning work for theatre includes shows on Los Angeles stages such as Circle X, La Jolla Playhouse, and Taper Too. The unsung hero for Zorro's latest escapade will be Stage Manager **Kimberly Mark Webb**.

Bay Area theatergoers can don their masks for several **special events** during the run of *Zorro in Hell*:

- *Target ® Teen Night* begins at 6:00 PM on Friday, March 17 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 Wednesday, March 22.
- Three *post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the performances on Thursday, March 23; Friday, March 31; and Tuesday, April 4.
- *Page to Stage*, a free talkback with Culture Clash and Tony Taccone sponsored by Cody's Books and Peet's Coffee and Tea, occurs on Monday, April 3 at 7:00 PM.
- *Docents* from Berkeley Rep give presentations on Culture Clash and the history of Zorro before every Tuesday and Thursday performance. These half-hour discussions begin at 7:00 PM and are free with a ticket to that evening's show.

Tickets for *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell* are priced from \$10 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.

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Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre is located at 2015 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. The box office is next door at 2025 Addison Street. For tickets or information, call **510.647.2949** or toll-free at **888.4.BRT.Tix** – or simply click berkeleyrep.org to get your Z on.

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.

ABOUT ZORRO PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Zorro Productions, Incorporated controls the worldwide trademarks and copyrights in the name, visual likeness, and the character of Zorro. The brand is represented worldwide by over 35 licensing agents for all media and ancillary products. John Gertz, president, has guided the Zorro property for over 25 years producing major motion pictures, television series, stage productions, publishing projects, and hundreds of licensed products. His innovative business style has made Zorro an international sensation. Sandra Curtis, senior vice president, has spearheaded creative development of the Zorro brand for more than 15 years. She has initiated, consulted, and supervised projects and products across all media. Author of seven Zorro novels and *Zorro Unmasked: The Official History*, she conceived the origins project – recently published by internationally best-selling author Isabel Allende under the title *Zorro, a Novel* – and the subsequent Young Reader series. Zorro's corporate offices are located in Berkeley, California.

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CULTURE CLASH'S ZORRO IN HELL

FACT SHEET

WHO: Created, written, and performed by Culture Clash – Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Sigüenza
 Directed by Tony Taccone
 Designed by Christopher Acebo (sets), Christal Weatherly (costumes), Alexander V. Nichols (lights), and Robbin E. Broad (sound)
 Featuring Joseph Kamal, Sharon Lockwood, and Vincent Montoya

WHAT: *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*
 This wild world premiere is a Latino look behind the mask of a legend.

WHERE: Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre Berkeley Rep's Box Office
 2015 Addison St, Berkeley 2025 Addison St, Berkeley

WHEN: Previews on 3/17 - 3/21/2006 – performances on 3/22 - 4/16/2006

- Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM (except opening)
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
- No matinees during previews

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

● previews ■ opening night
 ◆ discussion

Special Events –

- Teen Night at the Rep: Friday 3/17 @ 6:00 PM
- Opening night: Wednesday 3/22 @ 8:00 PM
- Post-play discussions: Thursday 3/23, Friday 3/31 & Tuesday 4/4 @ 8:00 PM
- Page to Stage: Monday 4/3 @ 7:00 PM
- Docent presentations: every Tuesday and Thursday @ 7:00 PM

HOW MUCH:

Standing room (once sold out)\$10	Sunday evenings (7 PM)..... \$48
Previews\$30	Friday evenings (8 PM)..... \$53
Thurs & Sat matinees (2 PM)\$45	Opening night (8 PM)..... \$59
Tues/Thurs (8 PM) / Wed (7 PM) ..\$45	Saturday evenings (8 PM) \$59
Sunday matinees (2 PM)\$48	

- 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