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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WITH LAUGHTER, SONG & SORROW, *MOTHER COURAGE* MARCHES ON BERKELEY
Vivid revival of Brecht's masterpiece blends brains and burlesque at Berkeley Rep

JULY 31, 2006 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre's 2006/07 Season explodes onto the stage with a vivid revival of *Mother Courage*, **Bertolt Brecht's** anti-war masterpiece, directed by Obie Award-winner **Lisa Peterson** and starring Broadway's **Ivonne Coll**. The show deploys **David Hare's** brilliant adaptation of Brecht's script, and features an irresistible new score from composer **Gina Leishman**. Don't miss this incredible barrage of talent, which begins previews in The Roda Theatre on **September 8**, opens **September 13**, and closes **October 22**. The executive producers of *Mother Courage* are Richard Hoskins and Lynne Frame, the production sponsor is downtown restaurant, and the show is a co-production with La Jolla Playhouse. Berkeley Rep thanks Wells Fargo and BART for re-enlisting as official sponsors of the Tony Award-winning theatre's fearless new season.

"*Mother Courage* is one of the great plays of the 20th century," remarks **Tony Taccone**, artistic director of Berkeley Rep. "Brecht understood that incessant warfare, fueled by the arms industry and married to a popular desire for religious and national identity, is a hallmark of history. There is a bit of *Mother Courage* in each of us, seeking simply to survive, to protect our families and our property in an increasingly chaotic world defined by war."

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 anti-war 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.

Edward Albee recently asserted that **Bertolt Brecht** (playwright) is one of only four playwrights from the 20th 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*, *Happy End*, *The Life of Galileo*, *Man is Man*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, and *The Threepenny Opera*. After he wrote *Mother Courage*, the Nazis revoked Brecht's citizenship and banned his plays for political views

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

that disagreed with the regime. This production relies on the gritty 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 important 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 international hit, *Stuff Happens*, which just completed an extended run at the Public Theatre in New York.

Lisa Peterson (director) won an Obie Award for her staging of *Light Shining on Buckinghamshire* at the famed New York Theatre Workshop. 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, California Shakespeare Theater, Center Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, Intiman Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, New York Stage & Film, Prince Music Theater, Sundance Theatre Lab, Trinity Repertory Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Yale Repertory Theatre. She has also staged work at La Jolla Playhouse, where she was associate director from 1992 to 1995, and at the Mark Taper Forum, where she was resident director from 1995 to 2005. A graduate of Yale, Peterson is 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. Her many New York credits include Broadway's *Comedy of Errors* and *Juggling & Cheap Theatrics* (Vivian Beaumont Theater), *Helen* and *Tongue of a Bird* (New York Shakespeare Festival), *L'Histoire du Soldat* (BAM/Next Wave Festival), and *Therese Raquin* (Centenary Stage Company), for which she received a Drama Desk nomination. Leishman composed for Berkeley Rep's productions of *Endgame/Act Without Words* and *Our Country's Good*. In the Bay Area, she has also worked at Cal Shakes and ODC/Dance; in La Jolla, she composed for *The Good Person of Setzuan* and *Don Quixote de la Jolla*; and audiences in both locales remember her music from Geoff Hoyle's *Feast of Fools*. Leishman's other regional credits include scores for *Alice* (DTC), *Brothers Karamazov* (Arena Stage and Seattle Repertory Theatre), *Burning Dreams* and *Red Noses* (San Diego Repertory Theatre), *Imaginary Invalid* (Yale Rep), and *Oedipus the King* (the Guthrie). She is co-founder of the Kamikaze Ground Crew, a septet which recently celebrated its 20th 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.

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Ivonne Coll (Mother Courage) has performed on Broadway in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *Goodbye Fidel*, and *Shakespeare on Broadway*. She also starred in La Jolla Playhouse's productions of *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, Goodman Theatre, McCarter Theatre, the Public/NYSF, Puerto Rican Travelling Theatre, San Diego Rep, South Coast Repertory, and the Taper. 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 career began when she was named Miss Puerto Rico in 1967; during the Vietnam War, she was the only Hispanic entertainer who sang for the troops.

Coll's Courage is reinforced by an exceptional **supporting cast**, which mixes veteran actors with bright, young talents. **Katie Barrett** (Yvette) recently played Maggie in the East Coast premiere of *Safe in Hell* at Yale Rep, 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. **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*. **Drew Hirshfield** (Swiss Cheese) has appeared on many local stages, including at American Conservatory Theatre, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, Magic Theatre, Marin Shakespeare Company, Sacramento Theatre Company, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. **Katie Huard** (Kattrin) has trained at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, the College of Charleston, and A.C.T.'s MFA program. Among her favorite credits was performing *The Wait* at the Spoleto Festival. **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 Ruminaton*. 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** (The Chaplain) performed in Berkeley Rep's production of *Love! Valour! Compassion!* He has worked at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Minetta Lane Theatre in New York, as well as on regional stages such as Cal Shakes, Geffen Playhouse, Intiman, Pasadena Playhouse, South

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Coast Rep, and the Taper. His countless screen credits include roles as Noel on *Frasier* and the Blind Guy on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. **Justin Leath** (Elif) appeared in numerous shows at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, where he received the Michael and Jan Finlayson Memorial Acting Award. He has also performed as a soloist with the Milwaukee and San Antonio Symphony Orchestras. Local audiences recently saw him portray Baby Face in *Happy End* at A.C.T., where he is completing his MFA. **Jarion Monroe** (The Cook) has acted on Berkeley Rep's stage nearly every season since 1985, including memorable roles in *Hard Times*, *The House of Blue Leaves*, *Our Town*, *Rhinoceros*, and *Volpone*. His stage and screen credits also include appearances on *Frasier* and *Seinfeld* and regional work at A.C.T., Ahmanson Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Cal Shakes, the Magic, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Rep, and Yale Rep.

The **ensemble** for *Mother Courage* marches to the beat of a local drummer, and is fortified by two other accomplished musicians. **Ara Anderson** is a local composer and performer who leads two bands, Boostamonte! and Iron and the Albatross. He has collaborated with many noted artists, including Jonathan Richman, Tom Waits, and Victoria Williams. **David W. Collins** is lead sound designer and voice director at LucasFilm, Ltd. A graduate of the Berklee College of Music, he has extensive credits as a voice-over actor. **Mark Danisovszky** is an accordionist, pianist, composer, and musical director who has performed with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Hilton Head Orchestra, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Opera, San Diego Rep, and San Diego Symphony.

An **expert team of designers** has been recruited for *Mother Courage*. **Rachel Hauck** (scenic designer) 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 designer) 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. **Alexander V. Nichols** (lighting designer) has designed sets, costumes, lights, and projections for dance and theatre companies across America, including 12 previous shows at Berkeley Rep: *Civil Sex*, *Continental Divide*, *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*, *Fêtes de la Nuit*, *The Guys*, *Honour*, *The Life of Galileo*, *Menocchio*, *Ravenshead*, *Rhinoceros*, and *Surface Transit*. **Jill BC DuBoff** (sound designer) 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

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the Women's Project. In 2005, she was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards and a Hewes Award. Berkeley Rep's resident stage manager, **Michael Suenkel**, will stage manage the show.

Mother Courage's invasion of Berkeley includes **13 special events**:

- *Target @ Teen Night* begins at 6:00 PM on Friday, September 8 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, September 13.
- *Student matinees* occur at noon on Thursday, September 28 and Thursday, October 12. Tickets are \$10 apiece, and a chaperone is admitted free for every 10 students. For more information, call 510.647.2978 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org.
- Three *post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM shows on Thursday, September 28; Tuesday, October 10; and Friday, October 13.
- Free 30-minute *docent presentations* are held every Tuesday at 7:00 PM: September 12, September 19, September 26, October 3, October 10, and October 17.

Subscriptions to Berkeley Rep's spectacular 2006/07 Season are on sale now, starting as low as \$123 and including the best seats at the lowest prices for this show. Additional **tickets** for *Mother Courage*, priced from \$33 to \$61, go on sale to the public on Sunday, August 20. Discounts are available for students, seniors, groups, UC Berkeley alumni, employees of K-12 schools, and anyone under 30 years of age. For every weekday performance, half-price HotTix go on sale that day at noon at the box office. All discounts are subject to availability.

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.

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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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), Alexander V. Nichols (lights), and Jill BC DuBoff (sound)
 Featuring Ara Anderson, Katie Barrett, Ivonne Coll, David W. Collins, Mark Danisovszky, Brent Hinkley, Drew Hirshfield, Katie Huard, Marc Damon Johnson, Patrick Kerr, Justin Leath, and Jarion Monroe

WHAT: *Mother Courage* – a vivid revival of Brecht’s anti-war masterpiece filled with laughter, song, and sorrow

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s Roda Theatre
 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: Previews on 9/8 - 9/12/2006 – Performances on 9/13 - 10/22/2006

- Tuesdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays & Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
- No performance on Friday 10/20
- No matinees during previews or on 9/14, 9/23, 9/28, 10/7, or 10/12

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

□ docent talks ● previews
 ■ opening night ◆ discussion

Special Events –
Target @ Teen Night: Friday 9/8 @ 6:00 PM
Opening night: Wednesday 9/13 @ 8:00 PM
Student matinees: Thursday, September 28 & Thursday, October 12 @ noon
Post-play discussions: Thursday 9/28, Tuesday 10/10 & Friday 10/13 @ 8:00 PM
Docent presentations: Tuesdays 9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10 & 10/17 @ 7:00 PM

HOW MUCH: Previews\$33 Sundays (2 PM & 7 PM)\$49
 Tues (8 PM) / Wednesdays (7 PM) ..\$45 Friday evenings (8 PM).....\$55
 Thursdays (2 PM & 8 PM)\$47 Wednesday opening (8 PM)\$61
 Saturday matinees (2 PM).....\$47 Saturday evenings (8 PM)\$61

Discounts:

- ½ price tickets available to those under 30 (some restrictions apply)
- ½ price rush tickets for students and seniors sold ½ hour before curtain
- 20 half-price HotTix go on sale Tuesday through Friday at noon
- 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