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ZORRO TAKES BACK HOLLYWOOD THANKS TO TACCONE & THE CLASH

In July, Berkeley Rep's hit show rides south to the Ricardo Montalbán Theatre

MAY 1, 2007 – Question: Who was that masked man riding from town to town and doing good works? Answer: **Tony Taccone**, artistic director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre, whose string of theatrical successes continues when *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell* hits the stage in Hollywood. Just last week, Taccone's New York production of *Brundibar* was nominated for the prestigious Drama Desk Award – now the acclaimed director ambushes Los Angeles with another show born at Berkeley Rep.

After making its world premiere last year in Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre, *Zorro* storms the historic Ricardo Montalbán Theatre at the intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Created, written, and performed by Culture Clash – the notorious trio comprised of **Richard Montoya**, **Ric Salinas**, and **Herbert Sigüenza** – the show also features **Joseph Kamal** and beloved Bay Area actress **Sharon Lockwood**. This open-ended commercial run starts previews on July 11 and opens July 18; tickets go on sale on Cinco de Mayo.

"We're really pumped up to work on this show again," **Taccone** remarks, "and it will be an interesting adventure to enter the L.A. market. While it's terrific as comedy, the show is also overtly political – so let's see if our agitprop play can pull in a large audience. Culture Clash has developed a lot of goodwill in the community and has a real rapport with the local audience. We look forward to bringing in their traditional fans and new audiences, helping revitalize the Ricardo Montalbán Theatre and helping make that area vibrant once again with live theatre."

"**Taccone is a true artistic collaborator**," Culture Clash comments. "We've really enjoyed this exciting ride that started at a little ranch up north known as Berkeley Rep. ¡Viva Zorro! ¡Viva Culture Clash! ¡Viva Taccone and Berkeley Rep!"

"There is nobody on earth you want to develop new work with other than T.T.," Montoya adds. "We refer to him as Skipper. 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 Sigüenza sums it up in his usual succinct fashion: "Tony has 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. At long last, it's a Latin look behind the mask of an icon invented by an Irish American. In *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*, the legend 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. It's a hilarious adventure as your favorite missionaries of mayhem explore questions of homeland security in the Wild West – when Anglo *amigos* struggled with issues such as Indian gambling, Mexican immigration, Hispanic girlie men, and a governor born on foreign soil. Commissioned by Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, and Zorro Productions, Incorporated, the show debuted at Berkeley Rep in March 2006 with another run at La Jolla Playhouse last autumn.

(MORE)

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

ZORRO TAKES BACK HOLLYWOOD WITH TACCONE & THE CLASH / 2 OF 2

Tony Taccone is completing his tenth year 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*, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum, and has collaborated with Kushner on six projects. Their latest piece featured designs by beloved children's author Maurice Sendak: *Brundibar* debuted at Berkeley Rep and then traveled to Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven and the New Victory Theatre in New York City. Taccone recently made his Broadway debut with *Bridge & Tunnel*, which was universally lauded by the critics and won a Tony Award for its star, Sarah Jones. He also staged the show's record-breaking off-Broadway run, workshopped it for Broadway at Berkeley Rep, and directed Jones' previous hit, *Surface Transit*. In 2004, his production of David Edgar's *Continental Divide* transferred to the Barbican in London after playing the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, 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 Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and San Francisco's Eureka Theatre, where he served six years as artistic director before coming to Berkeley Rep.

Theatre artists, writers, activists, and all around troublemakers, Montoya, Salinas, and Sigüenza founded **Culture Clash** in San Francisco in 1984 at the Mission District's venerable Galeria De La Raza with 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* (Washington, D.C.), *Bordertown* (Tijuana/San Diego), *Chavez Ravine* (Los Angeles), *Mission Magic Mystery Tour* (San Francisco), *Nuyorican Stories* (New York City), and *Radio Mambo* (Miami) are a few of the company's works. They've also produced new plays for the Alley Theatre, Berkeley Rep, the Huntington Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, and Yale Rep, 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.

Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell is presented in Hollywood by **Zorro's Legion, LLC** in association with the **Ricardo Montalbán Foundation**. Four swashbuckling designers from the show's Berkeley run reprise their roles when the hero rides on Hollywood: **Christopher Acebo** (sets), **Christal Weatherly** (costumes), **Alexander V. Nichols** (lights), and **Robbin E. Broad** (sound).

The **Ricardo Montalbán Theatre** is located at 1615 North Vine Street in Hollywood, between Hollywood Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard. Performances are Wednesday through Sunday at 8 PM, with matinees at 2:30 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. **Tickets**, priced from \$25 to \$40, can be purchased online at www.cultureclash.com or by calling **1-877-EL-ZORRO** (1-877-359-6776).

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.

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)
Also starring Joseph Kamal and Sharon Lockwood
- WHAT:** *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*
Berkeley Rep's hit comedy heads south so the masked man can take back Hollywood.
- WHERE:** Ricardo Montalbán Theatre / 1615 North Vine St @ Hollywood Blvd / Hollywood, CA
- WHEN:** Previews begin July 11 / Opens July 18 / Open-ended run
- Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
 - Saturdays & Sundays @ 2:30 PM & 8:00 PM
- HOW MUCH:** \$25 - \$40
- TIX & INFO:** www.cultureclash.com or 1-877-EL-ZORRO (1-877-359-6776)

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