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**BERKELEY REP'S LES WATERS TAKES *EURYDICE* TO NYC**

**Sarah Ruhl's stunning script is fourth show this year to go from Berkeley Rep to the Big Apple**

NOVEMBER 13, 2006 – Clearly, the mythic Eurydice made the wrong choice when she wed Orpheus: if there's one man who can reliably bring her back to life, it's Berkeley Repertory Theatre's associate artistic director, **Les Waters**. The Obie Award-winning director first staged *Eurydice*, the stunning script from MacArthur genius **Sarah Ruhl**, at Berkeley Rep in 2004; then he brought it back to life at Yale Repertory Theatre this autumn. Now Waters is taking the show to Second Stage Theatre in New York City.

Beginning previews on May 29 and opening June 12, *Eurydice* will close Second Stage's 28<sup>th</sup> season. It's the fourth show this year to go from Berkeley Rep to the Big Apple. In 2006, Times Square was also the site of two hits for Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**: he directed **Sarah Jones'** Tony Award-winning *Bridge & Tunnel* and *Brundibar* from **Tony Kushner** and **Maurice Sendak**, which were both embraced by Berkeley Rep audiences before heading east. In addition, **Stew's** *Passing Strange* will head to The Public Theater in Manhattan after this world premiere completes its run in Berkeley. For Ruhl, this is the latest headline in a string of dramatic news: in September she received a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, and last week Lincoln Center announced a four-week extension for its acclaimed presentation of her play *The Clean House*.

"I am thrilled to continue collaborating with these artists on a work of such heartbreaking beauty, and to share a production that we're extremely proud of with the New York theatre audience," **Waters remarks**. "I am honored that Berkeley Rep has played a vital role in the career of this tremendously talented playwright. We trust that *Eurydice* and our current commission for a new work from Sarah are only the first two steps in a long and fertile relationship."

In *Eurydice*, Ruhl reimagines the classic myth of Orpheus through the eyes of its heroine. Tragically dying on her wedding day, Eurydice must journey to the underworld, where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. With contemporary characters, ingenious plot twists, and breathtaking visual effects, the play is truly a fresh look at a timeless love story. Waters received extensive praise for previous productions of the show, including a glowing *New York Times* review that said it was "devastatingly lovely" and "realized impeccably

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

by the director Les Waters... Like all fine poems, songs and paintings, it's a love letter to the world that deserves to be remembered for a good long time."

In New York, Waters reunites his celebrated creative team: **Scott Bradley** (scenic designer), **Meg Neville** (costume designer), **Russell H. Champa** (lighting designer), and **Bray Poor** (sound designer). Among their credits at Berkeley Rep, Bradley designed *The Glass Menagerie* for Waters, Neville created costumes for his *Suddenly Last Summer*, and Poor performed in Stephen Wadsworth's *Changes of Heart*. Like the New Haven production, the New York run also features musical staging by **John Carrafa**.

**Les Waters** is in his fourth year as associate artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged *Eurydice*, *Fêtes de la Nuit*, *Finn in the Underworld*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, and *Yellowman*. He won an Obie Award for *Big Love*, directing its premiere at the Humana Festival and subsequent runs at Berkeley Rep, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Goodman Theatre, and Long Wharf Theater. Elsewhere in America, he has staged work at American Conservatory Theater, the Connelly Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Public Theater, Signature Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and Yale Rep. In his native England, Waters has directed for the Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre Club, Joint Stock Theatre Group, National Theatre, Royal Court Theatre, and Traverse Theatre Club. The former head of the MFA directing program at UC San Diego, Waters' many honors include a Drama-Logue Award, an Edinburgh Fringe First Award, a KPBS Patte, and several awards from critics' circles in the Bay Area, Connecticut, and Tokyo.

This year, **Sarah Ruhl** was honored with a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, also known as the MacArthur genius grant. In addition to *Eurydice*, her plays include *The Clean House* (2004 Susan Smith Blackburn Award, 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist), *Late: a cowboy song*, *Melancholy Play*, *Orlando*, and *Passion Play: a cycle* (Fourth Forum Freedom Award from The Kennedy Center). In addition to Berkeley Rep and Yale Rep, her scripts have been staged at Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Goodman, Lincoln Center, Madison Repertory Theatre, Piven Theatre Workshop, South Coast Repertory, the Wilma Theater, and other theatres in Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Originally from Chicago, Ruhl received her MFA from Brown University. In 2003, she was the recipient of a Helen Merrill Award and a Whiting Writers' Award, and she is a member of 13P and New Dramatists. An anthology of her work is forthcoming from Theatre Communications Group. One of the Theatre's artists under commission, **Ruhl is presently working on a new script for Berkeley Rep on the history of the vibrator.**

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**Second Stage Theatre** has earned 23 Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, and the 2002 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Body of Work – and, when it produced *Metamorphoses*, Mary Zimmerman received the 2002 Tony Award for Best Director. Tonight, Second Stage opens Douglas Carter Beane's *The Little Dog Laughed* at Broadway's Cort Theatre, while its beloved musical *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* continues its run at Broadway's Circle in the Square. *Eurydice* will be performed at 307 West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, just off 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Manhattan.

**For tickets or more information**, visit [www.secondstagetheatre.com](http://www.secondstagetheatre.com) or call 212.246.4422.

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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.

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