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BERKELEY REP DOUBLE PARKS IN NEW YORK WITH *EURYDICE* & *PASSING STRANGE*

Two shows from Tony Award-winning theatre run simultaneously in Manhattan

MAY 10, 2007 – This month, Berkeley Repertory Theatre is double parked in New York City with two shows running simultaneously on its celebrated stages: **Stew's *Passing Strange*** is rocking The Public Theater just as **Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*** starts up at Second Stage. It's double proof that Berkeley Rep is building a rep for creating spectacular shows and sending them on to nationwide acclaim.

In fact, six recent plays from Berkeley have seen out-of-town success with ten sensational runs in **Manhattan, Los Angeles, La Jolla, Minneapolis, New Haven – and even Juneau, Alaska!**

"It's been a period of artistic abundance for all of us at Berkeley Rep," remarks Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**, "and I'm thrilled by this latest milestone. I'm extremely pleased that we can introduce audiences in other parts of the country to the diverse and daring work that regularly appears on our stage."

After stunning runs in Berkeley, three of Taccone's shows traveled on to new triumphs last year. His Broadway staging of **Sarah Jones' *Bridge & Tunnel*** earned a Tony Award for its star. His production of **Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak's *Brundibar*** is in competition for two Drama Desk Awards after playing at the New Victory Theater in New York City and Yale Repertory Theatre in Connecticut. And, after taking ***Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*** to La Jolla Playhouse last fall, he just announced that it's headed to Hollywood in July.

Meanwhile, **Leigh Fondakowski** restaged ***The People's Temple*** at Alaska's Perseverance Theatre and Minnesota's Guthrie Theater following its acclaimed world premiere at Berkeley Rep. As if that weren't enough, the Theatre had to add a performance to its current presentation of **Tanya Barfield's *Blue Door*** to meet demand for tickets, and this week it launches the West Coast premiere of **Neil Bartlett's *Oliver Twist***. Top that off with two shows in Manhattan, and it's truly a landmark moment on the eve of Berkeley Rep's 40th birthday.

Passing Strange is the heartfelt and hilarious story of a young black bohemian who charts a course for "the real" through sex, drugs, and rock and roll. It features two artists who built a cult following with a band called **The Negro Problem** – **Stew** penned the book and lyrics for ***Strange***, and composed the music with his longtime creative partner, **Heidi Rodewald**. "This rocker in the midst of actors is creating a new kind of theatre, a spontaneous performance genre with few precedents outside of *Hedwig* and *Hair*," proclaims **National Public Radio**. "If sales are any indication, this musical hybrid may prove the songwriter's ticket out of obscurity."

The show is staged by **Annie Dorsen** and features movement from renowned choreographer **Karole Armitage**. The Manhattan run reunites the boisterous Berkeley cast: **de'Adre Aziza, Daniel Breaker, Eisa Davis, Colman Domingo, Chad Goodridge, and Rebecca Naomi Jones**. Co-commissioned and co-produced by Berkeley Rep and The Public, the show was developed at the Sundance Theatre Lab before making its world premiere last fall on Berkeley Rep's Thrust Stage. It plays through June 1 in The Public's Anspacher Theater at 425 Lafayette Street in the East Village. For tickets or information, call 212.967.7555 or visit www.publictheater.org.

(MORE)

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

Meanwhile Berkeley Rep's associate artistic director, **Les Waters**, is bringing *Eurydice* back to life uptown. In this luminous play, MacArthur genius **Sarah Ruhl** reimagines the myth of Orpheus through the eyes of its heroine. With contemporary characters, ingenious plot twists, and breathtaking visual effects, the play is truly a fresh look at a timeless love story. The *New York Times* placed the show on its Top 10 List for 2006: "Realized impeccably by the director Les Waters," it raved, "this may be the most moving exploration of the theme of loss that the American theater has produced since the events of Sept. 11, 2001."

The New York run of *Eurydice* showcases several actors from the original Berkeley production: **Maria Dizzia** in the title role, **Charles Shaw Robinson** as her father, **Ramiz Monsef** as the Big Stone, and **Mark Zeisler** as the Nasty Interesting Man and Lord of the Underworld. The cast also includes **Gian-Murray Gianino** as the Loud Stone, **Carla Harting** as the Little Stone, and **Joseph Parks** as Orpheus.

Waters – whose last import to New York won an Obie Award – made *Eurydice* a hit at Berkeley Rep in 2004 before revisiting it last fall at Yale Rep. Now he brings the show to Second Stage Theatre at 307 West 43rd Street in midtown Manhattan. *Eurydice* begins previews on May 30, opens June 18, and runs through July 24. For tickets or information, call 212.246.4422 or visit www.secondstagetheatre.com.

Or just stay by the Bay to see what Berkeley Rep is cooking up next! The Theatre's 40th season is full of surprises, including a world premiere, an American premiere, and two West Coast premieres featuring renowned artists such as **Will Eno**, **Frank Galati**, **Danny Hoch**, **Rita Moreno**, and **Mary Zimmerman**. Sign up for a subscription now, so someday you can say, "I saw it back when it began in Berkeley."

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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BERKELEY REP'S SHOWS IN NEW YORK CITY

FACT SHEET

PASSING STRANGE

- WHO:** Book and lyrics by Stew
Music by Stew and Heidi Rodewald
Directed by and created in collaboration with Annie Dorsen
Designed by David Korins (sets), Elizabeth Hope Clancy (costumes), Kevin Adams (lights), Tony Smolenski IV (sound), and Karole Armitage (choreography)
Starring de'Adre Aziza, Daniel Breaker, Eisa Davis, Colman Domingo, Chad Goodridge, Rebecca Naomi Jones, and Stew
Featuring a band with Christian Casson, Marc Doten, Heidi Rodewald, and Jon Spurney
- WHAT:** *Passing Strange*, the hilarious new musical about a young black bohemian who charts a course for "the real" through sex, drugs, and rock and roll
- WHERE:** The Public Theater's Anspacher Theater / 425 Lafayette Street / New York, NY
- WHEN:** Previews begin May 1 – Opens May 14 – Runs through June 3
- HOW MUCH:** \$20 - \$60
- TIX & INFO:** 212.967.7555 or www.publictheater.org

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EURYDICE

- WHO:** Written by Sarah Ruhl
Directed by Les Waters
Musical staging by Jon Carrafa
Designed by Scott Bradley (sets), Meg Neville (costumes), Russell H. Champa (lights), and Bray Poor (sound)
Starring Maria Dizzia, Gian-Murray Gianino, Carla Harting, Ramiz Monsef, Joseph Parks, Charles Shaw Robinson, and Mark Zeisler
- WHAT:** *Eurydice*, a timeless love story is reborn in a breathtaking new play from MacArthur genius Sarah Ruhl
- WHERE:** Second Stage Theatre / 307 West 43rd Street / New York, NY
- WHEN:** Previews begin 5/30 – Opens 6/18 – Runs through 7/24
- HOW MUCH:** \$58 - \$65
- TIX & INFO:** 212.246.4422 or www.secondstagetheatre.com

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