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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARY ZIMMERMAN RETURNS TO BERKELEY REP WITH AN EXHILARATING *ARGONAUTIKA*

Tony Award-winner takes audiences on an epic quest with *Jason and the Argonauts*

OCTOBER 1, 2007 – The next guest at Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s 40th birthday party is a MacArthur genius and a Tony Award winner: in November, **Mary Zimmerman** returns to the Roda Theatre for the West Coast premiere of *Argonautika*. Based on *The Voyage of Jason and the Argonauts*, it’s another exhilarating adventure from the creator of *Metamorphoses* and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*. The show begins previews on **November 2**, opens **November 7**, and closes **December 16**. The executive producers of *Argonautika* are Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family. The production sponsor is American Express, and the official sponsors of Berkeley Rep’s 40th season are BART and Wells Fargo.

"It's beginning to feel like a myth of its own," **Zimmerman remarks**, "the way my work always brings me to the safe harbor of Berkeley Rep. Audiences here are so receptive and supportive, that it's always a pleasure to come back. The legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece is primarily a tale of adventure, so it provides unique challenges for a director with its battles and harpies and sailing ships. And, yet, this is also a simple love story, which is how it pulled me in. It has profound things to say to all of us about what it means to be human – insights that have survived through the ages."

"It's a pleasure to welcome Mary back to Berkeley," says **Tony Taccone**, the Theatre's artistic director. "Each show she stages is a revelation, and it's wonderful to see her vision evolve. In many ways, *Argonautika* feels to me like the culmination of her work – combining the classic content and epic scope for which she's known with an emotional urgency and social relevance tied to this precise moment in time. Our audiences always find Mary's shows enjoyable and insightful, and I'm sure this will be no exception."

In *Argonautika*, Zimmerman joins Jason on his ancient quest for the Golden Fleece – an epic journey of love and loss, hubris and honor, danger and adventure. Jason confronts giants, kings, sirens, nymphs, centaurs, sea monsters, and one treacherously heartsick sorceress. In her latest perilous voyage, Zimmerman shows us that love is the bane of all mankind – and yet it's all that

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we know of heaven on this earth. A co-production with the McCarter Theatre Center and The Shakespeare Theatre Company, *Argonautika* will travel to Princeton and Washington, DC in 2008. **See it in Berkeley before it sails for the East Coast!**

Argonautika made its world premiere at Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago. The **Chicago Sun-Times** called it “a production of great beauty, wild imagination, goofy humor, and emotional heat. The show is classic Zimmerman – a seamless meeting of actors, designers, and episodic text... the crowning installment in a long series of her works.” When the **Chicago Tribune** named its Top 10 Plays of the Year, *Argonautika* led the list. Declaring it “a masterpiece,” the *Tribune* says, “Mary Zimmerman – that most legitimate of theatrical artists – certainly hasn’t gone Hollywood with her all-new, typically smart, fresh, endlessly imaginative and thoroughly enjoyable *Argonautika*... a sizzling theatrical adventure, full of mythical flourish and dramatic excitement, but also replete with Zimmerman’s ability to take one step back from the fanciful story and ponder its deeper truths.” And **Variety** dubs it “a spare, lucid, elegant show... it’s so remarkably ambitious, enjoyable and meaningful overall that pointing out small weaknesses would be pointless.”

Mary Zimmerman earned the 2002 Tony Award for her breathtaking production of *Metamorphoses*. Every time the MacArthur genius brings a show to Berkeley Rep, audiences embrace it: *Journey to the West*, *Metamorphoses*, and *The Secret in the Wings* all made their West Coast debuts here, and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* also opened to acclaim. These plays – and others that she’s adapted and directed such as *The Arabian Nights*, *Eleven Rooms of Proust*, *The Odyssey*, and *Silk* – have enjoyed celebrated runs at About Face Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Goodman Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, Lookingglass, the Mark Taper Forum, McCarter Theatre Center, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Second Stage Theatre. Based in Chicago, Zimmerman has won ten Joseph Jefferson Awards – the city’s top theatrical honors – including prizes for best production and best direction. She is a member of Lookingglass, an artistic associate of Seattle Rep, the Manilow Resident Director at the Goodman, and a professor of performance studies at Northwestern University. Zimmerman has also applied her signature style to classics such as *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *The Trojan Women* at the Goodman; *Henry VIII* and *Measure for Measure* at the New York Shakespeare Festival (NYSF); *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Huntington; and *Pericles* at The Shakespeare Theatre. In 2002, she created a new opera with Philip Glass called *Galileo Galilei* which was presented at the Goodman, BAM, and the Barbican in London – and she just directed *Lucia di Lammermoor* to open the 2007/08 Season at New York’s Metropolitan Opera.

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Zimmerman has recruited a **fearless crew of designers** to launch *Argonautika*:

- **Daniel Ostling** (scenic designer) created the sets for Berkeley Rep's productions of *Closer*, *Metamorphoses*, and *The Secret in the Wings*. An ensemble member of Lookingglass, he often works with Zimmerman and received a Tony nomination when they took *Metamorphoses* to Broadway. His other New York credits include BAM, Lincoln Center, the Met, the New Victory Theater, Playwrights Horizons, and The Public Theater/NYSF. Regionally, his designs have been seen at About Face, Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST), the Goodman, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, the McCarter, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Rep, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and the Taper.
- **Ana Kuzmanic** (costume designer) has worked with Arden Theatre Company, CST, the Cleveland Play House, the Goodman, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Steppenwolf, and Trinity Repertory Company. Her film credits include *Drunkboat* with John Malkovich and *Kubuku Rides*, directed by Terry Kinney. Kuzmanic's work – including a clothing line she designed and produced from 1993 to 2003 – has been exhibited in Canada, Europe, and the United States. She was part of the 2007 Prague Quadrennial and the recent World Stage Design conference in Toronto. While teaching costume design at Northwestern, Kuzmanic is working on *A Comedy of Errors* at Chicago Shakespeare and the Broadway production of *August Osage County*.
- **John Culbert** (lighting designer) recently designed lighting for *Mirror of the Invisible World* and *The Trojan Women* at the Goodman, *Uncle Vanya* at Court Theatre, and *A Year in the Life of Frog and Toad* at Chicago Children's Theatre. He also created scenery for Lyric Opera's *Regina* and Court Theatre's *Man of La Mancha*, which netted him a Jefferson Award. Culbert's other credits include About Face, Boston Lyric Opera, Long Wharf, the McCarter, L'Opéra National du Rhin, Northlight Theatre, and Singapore Repertory Theatre. He currently serves as dean of the Theatre School at DePaul University and designed lighting for the Chicago Park District's Buckingham Fountain.
- **Andre Pluess** and **Ben Sussman** (sound designers) deliver back-to-back beauty at Berkeley Rep by following their haunting soundscape for *after the quake* with the excitement of *Argonautika*. Local audiences will also recall their work from Berkeley Rep's productions of *Blue Door*, *Honour*, *Metamorphoses*, and *The Secret in the Wings*. Based in Chicago, they have countless credits with About Face, Court Theatre, the

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Goodman, Lookingglass, and Victory Gardens Theater. On Broadway, they designed the sound for *I Am My Own Wife* and *Metamorphoses*, and their regional credits include Arena Stage, Long Wharf, The Shakespeare Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Pluess and Sussman have won 11 Jefferson Awards, an L.A. Ovation Award, and a Drama Critics Circle Award.

Argonautika also features an array of unusual **puppets designed by Michael Montenegro**. His recent credits include *Chekov Stories: The Emerging Woman* at the Piven Theatre Workshop, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* at Writers' Theatre, *The Long Christmas Ride Home* at Next Theatre Company, and *The Portrait of Don Cristobal* at Shakespeare in Santa Fe. His original projects include *Dreams from an Upside-Down Man* at the Chicago Cultural Center, *Iktu Blas* at the Puppetropolis International Puppet Festival, *Sublime Beauty of Hands* at Links Hall, and *With a Trapezoid Heart* at The Actors Gymnasium. The stage manager for this production is **Cynthia Cahill**.

Like a siren luring sailors ashore with her song, Berkeley Rep is tempting theatre-lovers to arrive early for *Argonautika* by introducing **a new series of tastings**. At 7:00 PM on the following dates, audience members can whet their palettes for the play with free samples from our favorite local artisans:

- Friday, November 9: confections from Charles Chocolates
- Saturday, November 10: champagne from Domaine Carneros
- Friday, November 30: fine wines from Raymond Vineyards
- Friday, December 7: microbrews from Pyramid Alehouse
- Saturday, December 8: spirits from Craft Distillers

And intrepid theatregoers can further explore *Argonautika* with **21 special events**:

- On Friday, November 2, the run begins with *30 Below* – the coolest night of theatre for the under-30 crowd. See the show at 8:00 PM, and then party with your peeps. Berkeley Rep provides food, drinks, music, and more. Tickets start at only \$13.50 for anyone under 30 years old.
- *Target @ Teen Night* begins at 6:30 PM on Friday, November 2, and includes dinner, a behind-the-scenes discussion with a member of the artistic team, and a performance of *Argonautika*. Tickets are \$8 for members of Berkeley Rep's Teen Council, \$12 for all other teens. For details, call 510.647.2978 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org.

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- *Opening night* festivities for *Argonautika* are held on Wednesday, November 7, including a pre-show dinner for donors at Downtown Restaurant and a post-show party for the audience featuring food from Bistro Liaison and wines from Raymond Vineyards.
- *night/OUT*, an event for the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community, takes place on Thursday, November 8. The post-play party features gourmet hors d'oeuvres from Venus Restaurant, dance music mixed by a cutting-edge DJ, gorgeous blossoms from Darling Flower Shop, and complimentary drinks from Raymond Vineyards and Triple Rock Brewery.
- Berkeley Rep's new *book club* – led by the Theatre's literary manager, Madeleine Oldham – meets at 6:30 PM on Friday, November 16. Please read Joseph Campbell's *Myths to Live By* before attending – and RSVP by calling 510.647.2916 or e-mailing bookclub@berkeleyrep.org.
- A *student matinee* occurs at noon on Wednesday, November 28. Tickets are \$10 each, and a chaperone is admitted free for every 10 students. For details, call 510.647.2978 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org.
- Free 30-minute *docent presentations* about the show take place every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:00 PM: November 6, November 8, November 13, November 15, November 20, November 27, November 29, December 4, December 6, December 11, and December 13. There will be no docent presentation on Thanksgiving, but an extra presentation has been scheduled for Friday, November 23.
- Finally, *post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM shows on Thursday, November 29; Tuesday, December 4; and Friday, December 14.

On this journey, you may have to slay monsters – but it won't cost an arm and a leg! To celebrate its 40th birthday, Berkeley Rep has introduced **new prices** that let more people experience the best theatre in the Bay Area. Each theatre is now divided into three seating sections with different prices for each section. These new prices make Berkeley Rep more affordable to people in the community who are just starting school, starting careers, and starting families – because lower prices are now available for every performance. **Tickets to *Argonautika* start as low as \$27** – and discounts are available for groups, seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age.

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Take full advantage of these prices by subscribing to three or more shows at Berkeley Rep. **Subscriptions are on sale now and start as low as \$84**, a savings of up to 33% on every ticket! Subscribers receive the best seats, the lowest prices, and valuable benefits such as the right to reschedule for free, discounts when purchasing tickets for guests, and the opportunity to secure seats before the general public for special events like Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*. For the best seats, order now!

Argonautika is a mythic quest, but traveling to the theatre couldn't be easier... **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 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.

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Born in a storefront on College Avenue, **Berkeley Rep** has moved to the forefront of American theatre – and is still telling unforgettable stories. Founded in 1968 by Michael Leibert, the Theatre quickly earned respect for presenting the finest plays with top-flight actors. In 1980, with the support of the local community, Berkeley Rep built the 400-seat Thrust Stage where its reputation steadily grew over the next two decades. It gained renown for an adventurous combination of work, presenting important new dramatic voices alongside refreshing adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. The company celebrated by unveiling a new 600-seat proscenium stage in 2001, the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. It also opened the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the permanent home for a 22-year tradition of outreach and education programs. The addition of these two buildings transformed a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex, the linchpin of a bustling Downtown Arts District which has helped revitalize Berkeley. In four decades, nearly four million people have enjoyed 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including more than 40 world premieres. The Theatre now welcomes an annual audience of 180,000, serves 20,000 students, and hosts dozens of community groups, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 400 artists, artisans, and administrators. In the last two years, four shows seen at Berkeley Rep have gone on to New York: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice*, and *Passing Strange*. Now a series of gifted guests arrives with amazing stage presents for Berkeley Rep's 40th birthday.

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berkeley rep

ARGONAUTIKA
FACT SHEET

WHO: Written and directed by Mary Zimmerman
Adapted from The Voyage of Jason and the Argonauts
Designed by Daniel Ostling (sets), Ana Kuzmanic (costumes), John Culbert (lights), Andre Pluess and Ben Sussman (sound), and Michael Montenegro (puppets)

WHAT: Argonautika – Tony-winner Mary Zimmerman takes us on an exhilarating theatrical adventure with Jason and the Argonauts

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

WHEN: Previews on 11/2 - 11/6 – Performances on 11/7 - 12/16/2007
- 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 performances on Thanksgiving, Thursday 11/22
- No matinees during previews or on 11/8, 11/17, 12/1 & 12/6

Calendar grid showing dates from Sun 4 to Sat 15 with performance times and symbols for special events like Docent Talks, Previews, Target Teen Night, Opening Night, Night/Out, Book Club, Post-show Discussion, and Tasting.

Special Events –
Target® Teen Night: Friday 11/2 @ 6:30 PM
30 Below (party for the under-30 crowd): Friday 11/2 @ 8:00 PM
Opening night: Wednesday 11/7 @ 8:00 PM
night/OUT (LGBT event): Thursday 11/8 @ 8:00 PM
Free tastings: Fridays 11/ 9, 11/30 & 12/7 and Saturdays 11/10 & 12/8 @ 7:00 PM
Book club: Friday 11/16 @ 6:30 PM
Student matinee: Wednesday 11/28 @ noon
Post-play discussions: Thursday 11/29, Tuesday 12/4, and Friday 12/14 @ 8:00 PM
Docent presentations: Tuesdays 11/6, 11/13, 11/20, 11/27, 12/4, & 12/11 @ 7:00 PM;
Thursdays 11/8, 11/15, 11/29, 12/6 & 12/13 @ 7:00 PM; and Friday 11/23 @ 7:00 PM

HOW MUCH: Table with columns for Section B, Section A, and Premium. Rows include Previews, Tue 8 PM / Wed 7 PM / Thu 2 PM / Sat 2 PM, Thu 8 PM / Sun 2 PM / Sun 7 PM, Friday @ 8 PM, and Saturday @ 8 PM.

Discounts:
• 1/2 price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
• \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
• Groups of 10 or more, contact 510.647.2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

TIX & INFO: 510.647.2949 – toll-free 888-4-BRT-Tix – berkeleyrep.org