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BERKELEY REP'S *EURYDICE* EXTENDS ITS OFF-BROADWAY RUN

For second time this summer, rave reviews carry a play born at Berkeley Rep to NY success

JULY 5, 2007 – The staff scientists at Berkeley Repertory Theatre have begun to notice a new trend in the lifecycle of American drama: a show comes to life on Berkeley Rep's stage, it migrates to Manhattan, captures rave reviews in the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker*, and its life expectancy increases. Now this pattern is playing out for the second time this summer: the off-Broadway production of **Sarah Ruhl's** *Eurydice* staged by Berkeley Rep's associate artistic director, **Les Waters**, has extended its run through July 28.

The news comes only days after another play born at Berkeley Rep – the outrageous rock musical ***Passing Strange*** – completed its extended run at The Public Theater in the wake of equally enthusiastic notices. Last year, two shows embraced by Berkeley audiences went on to sold-out houses in New York City as well: ***Brundibar*** and ***Bridge & Tunnel***, both staged by Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**.

"I am so pleased that we've had an opportunity to share the work we produce at Berkeley Rep with audiences across the country," says Associate Artistic Director Les Waters, who brought *Eurydice* to Berkeley, New Haven, and New York. "I feel honored to have had such a fine team of designers and actors for this show, and I'm thrilled that their artistry is being recognized. Collaborating with Sarah has been wonderful, and I look forward to working with her on our current commission for a new work."

At Second Stage Theater in Manhattan, *Eurydice* had already sold out most performances – and then a glowing review in the current edition of ***The New Yorker*** increased demand for tickets. Renowned critic **John Lahr** employs a string of superlatives to describe the show: "luminous," "stunning," "brilliant," "spectacular," "**a sensational piece of theatrical magic.**" *Eurydice* "is exhilarating because it frees the stage from the habitual," he asserts. "Somehow, this subtle production works the trick of imagining the unimaginable." (For the complete review, visit http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/theatre/2007/07/02/070702crth_theatre_lahr.)

That praise came only two weeks after **Charles Isherwood** lauded the show for the second time in the ***New York Times***. "Gifted young writer Sarah Ruhl has adapted this mournful legend with a fresh eye," he wrote, "**in a rhapsodically beautiful production directed by Les Waters.**" *Eurydice* is "weird and wonderful," he proclaims. "Mr. Waters and his design collaborators have framed Ms. Ruhl's play with uncommon sensitivity and stylistic sympathy... I staggered out of the theater in the same state of sad-happy disorientation that I recall from my initial viewing... its hallucinatory imagery and emotional allure have remained with me." (To read this review in its entirety, visit <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/19/theater/reviews/19seco.html>.)

In ***Eurydice***, 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 a fresh look at a timeless love story. 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 Repertory Theatre.

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Wherever it goes, the show is celebrated for its dazzling design, so it's no surprise that Waters reunited his creative team for the New York run: **Scott Bradley** (sets), **Meg Neville** (costumes), **Russell H. Champa** (lights), and **Bray Poor** (sound). *Eurydice*'s off-Broadway incarnation also 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 is completed by **Gian-Murray Gianino** as the Loud Stone, **Carla Harting** as the Little Stone, and **Joseph Parks** as Orpheus. Second Stage Theatre is located at 307 West 43rd Street in midtown Manhattan. For tickets or information, call 212.246.4422 or visit www.secondstagetheatre.com.

Les Waters is beginning his fifth 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*, *The Pillowman*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Yellowman*. The *New York Times* placed his production of *Eurydice* among the Top 10 Plays of 2006, and *Time Out New York* named his off-Broadway staging of *Apparition* one of the Best 5 Plays of 2005. Waters 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. His other credits in the United States include American Conservatory Theater, the Connelly Theatre, the Guthrie Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public, Signature Theatre Company, and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. In his native England, Waters has staged work with the Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre Club, Joint Stock Theatre Group, National Theatre, Royal Court Theatre, and Traverse Theatre Club. He has a long history of working collaboratively with prominent playwrights like Caryl Churchill and Charles Mee, and champions important new voices, such as Jordan Harrison, Sarah Ruhl, and Anne Washburn. Waters is an associate artist of The Civilians, a New York-based theatre group, and former head of the MFA directing program at UC San Diego. His 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.

To celebrate Berkeley Rep's 40th birthday, Waters will direct *Heartbreak House* in September, as well as the American premiere of **Will Eno's** *TRAGEDY: a tragedy* next spring. To witness the theatrical breakthroughs born in Berkeley throughout the year, sign up for a subscription to Berkeley Rep. Ticket packages begin as low as \$84 – and subscribers save up to 33% on every seat! For details, call 510.647.2949 or 888-4-BRT-Tix (toll-free) – or just click berkeleyrep.org.

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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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