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GOURMANDS LAUNCH NEW LOCAL, ORGANIC, SUSTAINABLE MENU – AT A THEATRE!

Tony Award-winning Berkeley Rep pairs premium food with premium entertainment

OCTOBER 17, 2007 – While Berkeley Repertory Theatre is renowned for serving up fresh and delicious shows, it's causing a stir on its 40th birthday – in true Berkeley tradition – by completely reinventing its menu to focus on local, sustainable, and organic foods. Now, in addition to gourmet theatre, Berkeley Rep offers a wide range of epicurean options for those who want something to nibble or sip at intermission or before the show.

“Are you hungry for **cheese, salumi, and flatbreads** or would you rather indulge with **chocolates, truffles, and champagne**? Want to be decadent with a red velvet cupcake and a rich merlot, or keep it healthy with organic fruit and probiotic kefir? Whatever your tastes, we've got it – and it all comes from the finest local artisans,” says **Susan Medak**, the Theatre's managing director. “This is just one more way that, as Berkeley Rep celebrates its 40th birthday, it's clear that our tastes have evolved right alongside the trend-setting, food-loving, free-speech town that we're proud to call home.”

The new menu was cooked up by a team of Berkeley Rep employees who love fine food, in-house gourmands who want to see healthier and tastier fare available at the snack bar. “One of life's great pleasures is eating well, and we want to extend that experience to our friends who come to the Theatre,” remarks Development Director **Lynn Eve Komaromi**, who is also a board member of **Slow Food USA**. “We are fortunate to live in the heart of one of the world's finest food communities. It just makes sense to collaborate in this way – to source delicious and sustainable fare from local artisans, producers, and farmers and, in turn, create awareness and connect our audience to the rich bounty of the Bay Area.”

So now theatre-lovers who want something savory can begin with a bite of creamy Carmody cheese from **Bellwether Farms** in Sonoma County paired with an organic *sel gris* flatbread from Larkspur's **Rustic Bakery**. Then add a nibble of the new *salametto* or *salametto piccante* from **Fra' Mani Handcrafted Salumi** in Berkeley – or, for a bigger appetite, try a focaccia pizza from Berkeley's beloved bakery, **The Bread Workshop**.

Those with a sweet tooth will appreciate the gourmet confections from **Charles Chocolates** in Emeryville and the seasonally flavored cupcakes from Berkeley's legendary **Love at First Bite**. Other guilty pleasures include truffles and chocolate-covered grahams from **Lyla's Chocolates** in Berkeley, as well as **Semifreddi's** delightful cookies and biscotti. Simpler palates may select a piece of fresh, seasonal fruit provided by **Planet Organics**.

Finally, the exclusive list of beverages features the **Domaine Carneros** 2004 Brut and the Reserve Chardonnay, the Reserve Merlot, and the Reserve Sauvignon Blanc from **Raymond Vineyards** in St. Helena. Beer drinkers will face a dilemma choosing between two microbrews from **Pyramid Brewery** in Berkeley: Pyramid Hefe Weizen and Snow Cap Ale.

Peet's Coffee and Tea continues its long relationship with Berkeley Rep by providing its Gaia Organic Blend and its Decaf House Blend, as well as the following premium teas: Earl Grey with Bergamot, English Breakfast, Jasmine Fancy, Masala Chai, and Xiao's Blend. Other nonalcoholic options include organic **Blue Sky Cola**, organic and fair-trade certified **Honest Tea**, and strawberry and pomegranate kefir from **Lifeway Foods**.

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These **local artisans use a variety of sustainable and organic practices** to produce the delicacies on Berkeley Rep's new menu:

- **Bellwether Farms** is a family-owned and operated dairy in Sonoma County which is at the forefront of the American revival in artisan cheese making. Bellwether's cows are fed a mix of grasses, supplemented with alfalfa and grain, and never treated with hormones. No herbicides or artificial fertilizers are used in its pastures. Carmody is made from Jersey cow milk and aged at least six weeks. Naturally golden in color with a smooth texture and wonderful flavor, it's a consistent blue-ribbon winner at the Los Angeles County Fair. Take a bite of Carmody and taste the difference that one family's commitment to quality can make.
- **The Bread Workshop** is a bakery and restaurant in Berkeley that specializes in safe, sustainable cuisine. Patrons of the new location on University Avenue can enjoy a full menu that includes organic salads and produce, free-range rotisserie chicken and other amazing entrees, mouthwatering pastries and shade-grown, fair-trade coffee. An assortment of sandwiches is available as well to make the perfect picnic or meal. Each of the focaccia pizzas served at Berkeley Rep is made with organic marinara sauce.
- Founded in 2004 and based in Emeryville, **Charles Chocolates** is redefining the world of premium chocolate. The company has many loyal customers for its classic line of products, and also excites connoisseurs with innovations such as its signature boxes built entirely of chocolate. Charles Chocolates has been named Best Chocolates in the *East Bay Express*, Best Future Classic Chocolates in *San Francisco Magazine*, Best of the West in *Sunset Magazine*, and Editor's Pick in *7x7 Magazine*. Look for these confections in more than 400 retail locations nationwide and internationally – including the Berkeley Rep gift shop!
- **Domaine Carneros** stands alone as the only sparkling wine producer using exclusively Carneros grapes for the super-premium *méthode-champenoise*. Pinot noir and chardonnay, the principal grapes used in making champagne, excel in California's Carneros microclimate. All grapes are hand picked and gently pressed, then transferred to state-of-the-art equipment in a solar-powered facility. Aging cellars, nestled in the hillside, provide the perfect environment for the wine to develop slowly in the bottle – and production is limited, ensuring the highest level of craftsmanship. The end result is superb, handcrafted sparkling wine, marked by an exceptional refinement and finesse.
- Founded by renowned chef Paul Bertolli, **Fra' Mani Handcrafted Salumi** is a new company based in Berkeley. The pork used in Paul's products comes from family farmers committed to the well-being of their animals and their land. The hogs eat only the finest grains and natural feed; they are never given antibiotics, artificial growth hormones, growth-promoting agents, or meat byproducts. This old-fashioned way of raising hogs produces pork of outstanding quality, which is the essential ingredient in all Fra' Mani *salumi*.
- **Love at First Bite** is a bakery and cupcakery in Berkeley's Gourmet Ghetto. It is dedicated to bringing the Bay Area delicious old-fashioned baked goods made from scratch and using premium ingredients – such as Callebaut, Guittard, and Schokinag chocolates and cocoa; Madagascar bourbon, Mexican vanillas, and Saigon cinnamon; and real butter, milk, and eggs from local dairies. And don't forget that it all starts with organic flour! Happiness can, and often does, come in the form of a pretty frosted cupcake.

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- **Lyla's Chocolates** are wickedly delicious. These unique chocolates are crafted in the most delectable array of shapes, sizes, and flavors suitable for every age and taste. Every truffle starts with a creamy hand-rolled center made of the finest chocolate, whipping cream, and butter – with no preservatives. Then a thin, crisp, hand-dipped milk or bittersweet shell is added, and finally a decorative colored topping. Lyla's Chocolates is located in Berkeley, with a view of the Golden Gate Bridge... and, yes, they do make Golden Gate Bridges in chocolate.
- Since its founding in Berkeley more than 41 years ago, **Peet's Coffee & Tea** has been actively involved in developing long-term relationships with individual farmers, estates, and cooperatives, who have made great strides in improving the quality of their coffee in order to receive above-market prices. Peet's coffee buyers also travel regularly to the country of origin to visit with growers and lend their expertise with education, training, and production. The goal? To allow growers to focus on sustaining and improving quality coffee and more importantly, sustain the quality of life for their families and communities. Peet's also offers Fair Trade Blend and Gaia Organic Blend, is a member of Utz Certified, and in 2007 celebrated the opening of its new LEED-certified artisan roastery in Alameda.
- Based in Sonoma, **Planet Organics** proudly delivers pesticide-free fruits and vegetables – as well as a wide variety of healthy groceries – to families throughout the Bay Area. The company firmly believes in the many benefits of organic food and pursues an earth- and people-positive approach in all of its business dealings. Planet Organics uses a farm-direct buying program that supports local organic farmers, donates four percent of its sales to schools and nonprofits, and gives thousands of pounds of produce every year to the San Francisco Food Bank. It has been voted Best Grocery Delivery Service by *The Week*, Best Organic Grocery Service by the *SF Weekly*, and Best Vegetable Delivery Service by *SF Focus*.
- Way back in 1984, the folks at **Pyramid Brewery** decided to make beer their life. Since then their lineup has blossomed... With four year-round beers, two seasonal brews, and a few exclusive styles only available at its Alehouses, Pyramid is proud to offer a choice of distinctive, flavorful, and very fine beers. Berkeley Rep proudly pours the unfiltered and exceptionally smooth, Bavarian-inspired Pyramid Hefe Weizen and Snow Cap Ale, a rich, full-bodied, mahogany-colored winter warmer. Both of these beers have earned silver medals at the World Beer Championships.
- The Raymond family's roots in the Napa Valley date back to 1876, when Jacob and Frederick Beringer founded Beringer Brothers Winery. Five generations later, Craig and Krisi Raymond continue the family's winemaking legacy at **Raymond Vineyards** along with Krisi's father, Walter Raymond. Raymond Vineyards is a proud member of the Napa Sustainable Wine Growing Group, and the company is a generous supporter of Berkeley Rep, donating all the wine poured for special events at the Theatre.
- **Rustic Bakery** in Larkspur was founded by Carol LeValley, a skilled baker and founding member of the Napa Valley Bread Bakers Guild. Carol felt there was a need for a high-quality, organic flatbread to pair with the growing appreciation for artisan cheese. So, in 2005, she developed her recipe for flatbreads that are low in fat, high in fiber, and full of nutrients, making them naturally good for you. Rustic Bakery flatbreads are made entirely by hand in small batches, using only the finest organic flours and grains from Giusto's Mills in San Francisco.

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- **Semifreddi's** is one of the Bay Area's premier artisan bakeries – or, as they like to say, “the self-proclaimed bread and pastry nerds.” Semifreddi's mission is to make the best baked bread and pastries in the universe, offer them at a fair and reasonable price, provide superior customer service, treat their employees like family, and give back to the community. This family-owned, kosher bakery searches the world for the finest ingredients, including Guittard chocolate and Mission almonds from California and whole grain, non-genetically modified flour ground in Idaho. Berkeley Rep is pleased to serve Semifreddi's delicious chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, and snickerdoodle cookies, as well as the company's elegant almond and chocolate biscotti.

These foods are the perfect appetizer for a night of theatre. There are six shows remaining in **Berkeley Rep's 2007/08 Season**: *after the quake*, a poignant new play about life and love in the wake of a devastating earthquake from Tony Award-winning director **Frank Galati** and popular author **Haruki Murakami**; the West Coast premiere of *Argonautika*, an exhilarating adventure with Jason and the Argonauts staged by Tony Award-winner **Mary Zimmerman**; *Taking Over*, the world premiere of a spellbinding solo show from Obie Award-winner **Danny Hoch** staged by **Tony Taccone**; *Wishful Drinking*, the hilarious new play written and performed by Hollywood legend **Carrie Fisher**, also directed by Taccone; the American premiere of **Will Eno's** satirical *TRAGEDY: a tragedy*, staged by Obie-winner **Les Waters**; and the West Coast premiere of Theatre de la Jeune Lune's magical *Figaro*, directed by **Dominique Serrand**.

When theatre-lovers come to see these eminent artists, Berkeley Rep wants to ensure they also encounter the culinary artisans on the new concessions menu. So the Theatre has started a series of **free tastings** prior to select performances to share samples of many products. For more information about all of the dramatic and nutritious offerings at Berkeley Rep – and the **new ticket prices** that make its birthday the best party in town – contact the Theatre at 510.647.2949, 888-4-BRT-tix (toll-free), or 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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