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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP LAUNCHES AN APPETIZING COURSE OF GOURMET TASTINGS

Before the show, audiences enjoy free samples of chocolate, champagne, and more

OCTOBER 17, 2007 – Like a siren luring sailors ashore with her song, Berkeley Repertory Theatre is tempting theatregoers to arrive early for its shows by introducing a new series of tastings. **Champagne, chocolate, cognac, and more...** You don't want to miss these delicious events. It's one more reason that, on its 40th birthday, Berkeley Rep is the place to be.

"It's no surprise that people who love great art also love great food," says **Susan Medak**, the Theatre's managing director. "There are so many culinary artisans here in our community, and they bring the same handcrafted care to their products that we bring to everything you see on stage. So we're thrilled to introduce this series of tastings – to ensure that your night at the theatre is **a complete feast of the senses**. It's just one more way that we promise a premium experience to our patrons."

Consider these tastings **an *amuse bouche* for an evening of gourmet theatre**. On select Friday and Saturday evenings, audience members can whet their palates for the play with free samples from Berkeley Rep's favorite local firms. The performance begins at 8:00 PM, but patrons who arrive at 7:00 PM can enjoy these delicacies:

- **Charles Chocolates** presents its gourmet confections on Friday 11/9, Friday 2/29, and Saturday 5/10.
- **Craft Distillers** offers samples of its handmade spirits – Aqua Perfecta *eaux de vie* and liqueurs, Crispin's rose liqueur, Germain-Robin brandies, Hangar One vodkas, Los Danzantes mezcal, Maison Surrene cognac, and St. George single malt whiskey – on Saturday 12/8, Friday 2/15, and Friday 5/23.
- **Domaine Carneros** uncorks its sparkling wine on Saturday 11/10, Saturday 2/16, and Saturday 5/3.
- **Pyramid Brewery** pours its award-winning Hefe Weizen, Thunderhead IPA, and the latest seasonal beer – Snow Cap Ale in the winter and Curve Ball Kölsch in the spring – on Friday 12/7, Saturday 3/1, and Friday 5/16.
- **Raymond Vineyards** shares fine wines from its cellars on Friday 11/30, Friday 3/28, and Friday 5/2.
- **Sushi Ko** serves up fresh Alaska rolls, California rolls, Irish rolls, spicy tuna rolls, and vegetarian dragon rolls on Friday 10/19.
- And the **Berkeley Farmers' Market** celebrates spring with organic produce and other seasonal treats on Saturday 5/17, Saturday 5/24, and Saturday 5/31.

What better appetizer to a four-course theatrical banquet that includes three Tony Award-winners and Hollywood legend **Carrie Fisher**? Come to Berkeley Rep and indulge yourself locally!

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Tastings are free with a ticket to that evening's performance, so enjoy a mouth-watering prelude to any of the following shows: **Haruki Murakami's** *after the quake*, staged by Tony-winner **Frank Galati**; the West coast premiere of *Argonautika* from Tony-winner **Mary Zimmerman**; *Figaro*, the latest morsel from the Tony-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune; and Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*, directed by **Tony Taccone**. Seats start at only \$27, and discounts are available for seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age. To attend a show, contact the box office at 510.647.2949, 888-4-BRT-tix (toll-free), or berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT THE ARTISANS:

The **Berkeley Farmers' Market** was launched in 1981 and has been a program of the Ecology Center for 20 years. Three markets are held year-round, rain or shine: Tuesdays on Derby Street, Thursdays on Shattuck Avenue, and Saturdays on Center Street. Each one is a festive, family-friendly, open-air market where California farmers bring fresh, locally grown fruits, nuts, vegetables, and farm-processed foods to sell directly to consumers. The Berkeley Farmers' Market is committed to supporting small-scale farmers who practice sustainable agriculture, so more than half of all produce is registered or certified organically grown. The markets also offer an abundance of fresh baked goods, jams and preserves, juices, olive oils, goats' milk and cheeses, flowers, and more. The Berkeley Farmers' Market has won praise in the *Contra Costa Times*, *East Bay Express*, *Gourmet Magazine*, *San Francisco Magazine*, and *Sunset Magazine*.

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*. It has also been featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, *PaperCity*, *ReadyMade Magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *SF Weekly*, *Wallpaper Magazine*, and online media such as Cooking With Amy, Daily Candy, KQED's Bay Area Bites, the Tablehopper, and Yelp.com. Charles Chocolates may be found nationwide and internationally in more than 400 retail locations – including the Berkeley Rep gift shop!

Craft Distillers is about individual human beings making personal products. Distilling in small batches on copper pot stills, they build on little secrets, experiments, and tons of experience to transform extraordinary raw ingredients into truly great distilled spirits. That's how spirits were made long ago, before the invention of the continuous still, when products were made by hand. People spent years learning their craft, and craftsmen cared deeply about every aspect of their work. The Craft Distillers portfolio includes Aqua Perfecta *eaux de vie*, Crispin's rose liqueur, Germain-Robin brandies, Hangar One vodkas, Los Danzantes mezcal, Maison Surrene cognac, and St. George single malt whiskey.

Located in the heart of California's Carneros region, **Domaine Carneros** stands alone as the only sparkling wine producer using exclusively Carneros grapes for the super-premium *méthode-champenoise*. Established in 1987, Domaine Carneros is a joint venture between Champagne Taittinger of France and Kobrand Corporation. Believing that a world-class sparkling wine could be made in America given the right site and winemaking expertise, the partners undertook a long and exacting search for an ideal vineyard – which led to Carneros, where a 138-acre parcel was found. Pinot noir and chardonnay, the principal grapes used in making champagne, excel in the Carneros microclimate. All grapes are hand picked and gently pressed, then transferred to state-of-the-art equipment. Aging cellars, nestled in the hillside, provide the perfect environment for the

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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.

Way back in 1984, the folks at **Pyramid Brewery** decided to make beer their life. In a small, turn-of-the-century general store in Washington State, the first Pyramid Ale was brewed. 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 – from the award-winning, Bavarian-inspired Pyramid Hefe Weizen to the uniquely bold Thunderhead IPA, which was dubbed “hophead nectar” by the *Celebrator Beer News*. Over the years, Pyramid beers have won more than 40 medals at the Great American Beer Festival and the World Beer Cup. Enjoy these select brews at home, at your favorite restaurants and bars, at the Berkeley Rep concessions stand, or over great food at a Pyramid Alehouse in Berkeley, Portland, Sacramento, Seattle, or Walnut Creek.

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. The company is a generous supporter of Berkeley Rep, donating all the wine poured for special events at the Theatre. Different vintages will be available at each tasting, including the 2007 Raymond Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, the 2007 Raymond Rutherford Rosé of Merlot, the 2005 Raymond Eloquence Late Harvest Chardonnay, the 2004 Raymond Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2004 St. Helena Cabernet Sauvignon, and the exquisite 1992 Raymond Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon.

Sushi Ko is an authentic Japanese restaurant located in Shattuck Square, just around the corner from Berkeley Rep. It serves the freshest sushi, sashimi, and nigiri – along with traditional Japanese dishes such as tempura, teriyaki, and ton katsu. Sushi Ko always delivers delicious dishes – whether you’re looking for a daring new roll or a simple, vegetarian meal. Lunch specials start at only \$7.50, and bento boxes for dinner begin at \$9.95. On Yelp.com, local foodies exclaim, “Sushi Ko is great. Really excellent service. Great value. Such a quaint and attractive restaurant” and “This is the best sushi I’ve found in downtown Berkeley. Comfortable place, nice service, and huge selection. Good, fresh, sashimi, and creative rolls.” Sushi Ko is open seven days a week, and satisfaction is guaranteed.

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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

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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.

ATTENTION CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHO: Theatregoers with discriminating palates

WHAT: Berkeley Repertory Theatre's new series of pre-show tastings – featuring free samples of locally crafted beer, brandy, chocolate, champagne, mezcal, sushi, wine, vodka, whiskey, and more

WHERE: Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre / 2015 Addison St @ Shattuck / Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: At 7:00 PM on the following dates...

Friday 10/19: Sushi Ko	Friday 3/28: Raymond Vineyards
Friday 11/9: Charles Chocolates	Friday 5/2: Raymond Vineyards
Saturday 11/10: Domaine Carneros	Saturday 5/3: Domaine Carneros
Friday 11/30: Raymond Vineyards	Saturday 5/10: Charles Chocolates
Friday 12/7: Pyramid Alehouse	Friday 5/16: Pyramid Alehouse
Saturday 12/8: Craft Distillers	Saturday 5/17: Berkeley Farmers' Market
Friday 2/15: Craft Distillers	Friday 5/23: Craft Distillers
Saturday 2/16: Domaine Carneros	Saturday 5/24: Berkeley Farmers' Market
Friday 2/29: Charles Chocolates	Saturday 5/31: Berkeley Farmers' Market
Saturday 3/1: Pyramid Alehouse	

HOW MUCH: Free with a ticket to that evening's performance!

INFO: 510.647.2949, 888-4-BRT-tix (toll-free), or berkeleyrep.org

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