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## **BERKELEY REP'S *VIBRATOR PLAY* HEADS TO BROADWAY**

**Les Waters to direct Sarah Ruhl's new comedy for Lincoln Center Theatre**

**8<sup>th</sup> Berkeley Rep show to hit New York in 8 straight years!**

MARCH 18, 2009 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre's 50<sup>th</sup> world premiere, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, closed on Sunday – but the buzz continues. Today, Lincoln Center Theater announced that the script is bound for Broadway. Berkeley Rep's associate artistic director, **Les Waters**, will stage a new production of **Sarah Ruhl's** stimulating script at a Shubert Theater in Manhattan this fall. The show begins previews on October 22 and opens November 19. While these artists have often worked off Broadway – including bringing *Eurydice* to Second Stage Theatre after producing it in Berkeley – both celebrate their Broadway debuts with this play.

**It's the eighth show in eight years that Berkeley Rep has helped develop and send to New York.** In addition to the recent Broadway run of *Passing Strange*, these successful plays include Danny Hoch's *Taking Over* (2008), Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2007), Sarah Jones' *Bridge & Tunnel* (2006), Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak's *Brundibar* (2006), Naomi Iizuka's *36 Views* (2002), and Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* (2001). In fact, Berkeley Rep's devotion to developing new work has delivered 17 shows to Manhattan in the last 22 years – and the Theatre has upped the ante by promising to commission dozens of new plays by 2013.

"I've focused my career on directing new work, and so I'm particularly glad that this play – which was born in Berkeley Rep's commissioning program – will now be seen by a wider audience," **Waters remarks.** "I'm delighted to continue my collaboration with Sarah, and grateful to be working with such a prestigious organization."

Known for its core values of innovation and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, Berkeley Rep provides a safe haven for emerging and established artists to take creative risks. In 1968, during its inaugural season, the Theatre staged its first premiere – and it has presented **50 world premieres, 38 West Coast premieres, and four American premieres** in its 41-year history. In the last five years alone, Berkeley Rep has invested more than \$1 million in new play development. Twenty-five artists have been selected to participate in its commissioning program, and audiences have embraced the results in new shows such as **Culture Clash's** *Zorro in Hell*, **Stew and Heidi Rodewald's** *Passing Strange*, and **Itamar Moses' Yellowjackets**, as well as **Paul Dresher's** score for *To the Lighthouse*.

Other writers currently under commission include **David Adjmi, Glen Berger, Marcus Gardley, Rinne Groff, Jordan Harrison, Naomi Iizuka, Dan LeFranc, Carlos Murillo, Tarell McCraney,** and **Dominic Orlando.** Through important new voices such as these – and daring initiatives such as this one – Berkeley Rep will continue to introduce inventive, intelligent, and relevant new material into the repertoire of American theatre.

*In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* is an exquisite new comedy about marriage, intimacy, and electricity from the creators of *Eurydice*. "**Some may find the title titillating,**" acknowledges Waters, "yet this is a serious work that examines how sexuality and sexual politics affect our lives,

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how race relations and women's rights influence our society, and how technology is trumpeted as an answer to our ills – even as it repeatedly fails to meet our deepest needs. Sarah achieves all this with the light touch and the elegant comic sense that have brought her national acclaim, and I'm honored to have been a part of her development as an artist." The world premiere in Berkeley was supported by the Edgerton Foundation's New American Plays Award, the Bernard Osher Foundation's New Play Development Program, and the Mosse Artistic Development Fund; the executive producer was the Strauch Kulhanjian Family.

**Sarah Ruhl** has written numerous award-winning plays, including *The Clean House*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Demeter in the City*, *Eurydice*, *Late: a cowboy song*, *Melancholy Play*, *Orlando*, and *Passion Play: a cycle*. The *Washington Post* declares that "the Golden Ruhl has the Midas touch," and *Smithsonian* asserts, "Ruhl, like Dickinson, is a wild original... Even when she tackles darker topics – heartbreak, loss, disease, and death – her touch is light." In addition to the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, the young writer has already earned the Fourth Forum Freedom Award, a Helen Hayes Award, the Helen Merrill Award, the PEN/Laura Pels Award, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, and a Whiting Writers' Award, as well as nominations for the NAACP Image Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Her scripts have been performed at theatres across the country including A Contemporary Theatre (ACT/Seattle), the Alley Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Clubbed Thumb, Cornerstone Theater Company, the Goodman Theatre, Lincoln Center Theater, Madison Repertory Theatre, the Piven Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Trinity Repertory Company, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Wilma Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Her plays have been translated into German, Korean, Polish, Russian, and Spanish, and produced internationally in Canada, Germany, Latvia, Poland, and the United Kingdom. A member of New Dramatists and 13P, Ruhl received her MFA from Brown University, where she studied with renowned playwright Paula Vogel.

**Les Waters** has served as associate artistic director of Berkeley Rep for the last six years. His shows ranked among the Top 10 Plays of 2007 in *Time Magazine*, 2006 in the *New York Times*, and 2005 in *Time Out New York*. Waters has a history of collaborating with prominent playwrights like Caryl Churchill and Charles Mee, and champions important new voices such as Will Eno, Jordan Harrison, Sarah Ruhl, and Anne Washburn. His productions at Berkeley Rep include the world premieres of *Fêtes de la Nuit*, *Finn in the Underworld*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, and *To the Lighthouse*; the American premiere of *TRAGEDY: a tragedy*; the West Coast premiere of *Eurydice*; and extended runs of *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Pillowman*, and *Yellowman*. He won an Obie Award for *Big Love*, staging its premiere at the Humana Festival and subsequent runs at Berkeley Rep, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Goodman Theatre, and Long Wharf Theatre. His other New York credits include Classic Stage Company, the Connelly Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, Second Stage, and Signature Theatre Company. Elsewhere in America, he has directed for ACT/Seattle, American Conservatory Theater, American Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Guthrie Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, the Mark Taper Forum, Steppenwolf, and Yale Rep. In his native England, Waters has worked with the Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre Club, Joint Stock Theatre Group, National Theatre, Royal Court Theatre, and Traverse Theatre Club. Waters led the MFA directing program at UC San Diego, and is an associate artist of The Civilians, a theatre group based in New York. 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.

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This season, in addition to the continuing run of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's South Pacific* at the Vivian Beaumont Theater, **Lincoln Center Theater** is also presenting a new production of August Wilson's prize-winning early work *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, directed by Bartlett Sher, opening April 16 on Broadway at the Belasco Theatre; *Happiness* a new musical with book by John Weidman, music by Scott Frankel, lyrics by Michael Korie, and direction and choreography by Susan Stroman, opening March 30 at the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater; and the return of John Lithgow in his critically acclaimed one man show *John Lithgow: Stories By Heart* on Sunday and Monday nights in the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, April 12 through May 25. LCT3 will present its second production, *Stunning*, a new play by David Adjmi directed by Anne Kauffman, June 1 through 27 at The Duke on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. For more information on these shows, visit [lct.org](http://lct.org) or call Telecharge at (800) 432-7250.

**See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep.** Next week, the Theatre will announce a new season of plays, including the premiere of several new works. Meanwhile, this spring, audiences can enjoy a gripping adaptation of *Crime and Punishment*, Waters' production of *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and the premiere of *You Nero*, written by Amy Freed and directed by Sharon Ott. Inviting new prices ensure that everyone can attend. For details, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-tix – or simply click [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org).

#### ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Born in a storefront, 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, a permanent home for its long 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, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 50 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 eight years, Berkeley Rep has helped send eight hit shows to New York: *36 Views*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Metamorphoses*, *Passing Strange*, and *Taking Over*.

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