

For photos, interviews, etc. contact:
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations
510.647.2917, tkeane@berkeleyrep.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP IS TAKING OVER NEW YORK – WITH 7TH SHOW IN LAST 7 YEARS
Tony Taccone brings Danny Hoch's hit solo show to The Public Theater

NOVEMBER 3, 2008 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre is *Taking Over* New York – again! This Friday, Manhattan welcomes yet another show in a long string of hits sent to the city from this Tony Award-winning theatre in California. In January, Artistic Director **Tony Taccone** staged the world premiere of **Danny Hoch's** *Taking Over* at Berkeley Rep – now the acclaimed solo show starts a five-week run off Broadway. It's the third work directed by Taccone to move to Manhattan in the last three years, and the seventh show Berkeley Rep has helped land on its stages in the past seven years!

“Since we are both native New Yorkers – and this play is about Brooklyn and the ongoing effects of gentrification on our city – it is truly satisfying to bring *Taking Over* to The Public Theater,” **Taccone remarks**. “While Danny’s writing has relevance for people nationwide experiencing ethnic and economic changes in their cities, his characters are clearly created from people we’ve all encountered on the streets of New York. Local audiences see themselves in this story and, as a result, they react with intense emotion and true passion – and that reminds both of us why this project was so important to us.”

Hoch is renowned for the landmark show *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop* – which also debuted at Berkeley Rep before touring to 45 cities worldwide and becoming a cult film. Now he repeats this recipe for success with ***Taking Over***, which enjoyed an extended run at Berkeley Rep last winter before playing in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens, as well as Montreal. In this incisive new show, he captures the indelible characters of his New York neighborhood, where the melting pot is boiling over with ethnic and economic tensions. Hoch transforms effortlessly across the boundaries of race, age, and gender, masterfully depicting a city in transition with comical and compassionate results. “The gentrification of his native Brooklyn provides a terrific focus for Danny Hoch’s patented brand of multi-character, multi-ethnic solo theater,” *Variety* declares. **“Hoch and Taccone have every gesture and beat tuned to perfection.”** After its New York run, the show transfers to the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Los Angeles early next year – and then expect Hoch to be *Taking Over* the country.

Taccone is well-known for his work with solo performers. His production of **Carrie Fisher's** *Wishful Drinking* is also in the midst of a national tour – and he made his Broadway debut in 2006 with **Sarah Jones' Bridge & Tunnel**, which extended its run for five months and won a Tony Award for its star. Meanwhile, Taccone had another play just two blocks away at the New Victory Theater: **Tony Kushner** and **Maurice Sendak's** *Brundibar* also began at Berkeley Rep, sold out its New York run, and received two nominations for the prestigious Drama Desk Award.

Berkeley Rep's devotion to new work helped send **16 shows to New York in the last 21 years** – and now it's upped the ante by promising to commission 50 new plays by 2013! Beginning with *Hard Times* in 1987, the Theatre helped develop the following shows before they reached the Big Apple: Philip Kan Gotanda's *Yankee Dawg You Die* (1989); José Rivera's *Each Day Dies with Sleep* (1990); Craig Lucas' *Prelude to a Kiss* (1990); Heather MacDonald's *Dream of a Common Language* (1992); Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings* (1992); Gotanda's *Ballad of Yachiyo* (1997); Anne Galjour's *Alligator Tales* (1997); *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop* (1998); Mary Zimmerman's

(MORE)

Metamorphoses (2001); Naomi Iizuka's *36 Views* (2002); *Brundibar* (2006); *Bridge & Tunnel* (2006); Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2007); and Stew's Tony Award-winning *Passing Strange* (2007). "It is a striking body of work, a reminder of the importance of regional theaters," the *New York Times* noted in a recent feature. "Berkeley Rep has a tradition of playing host to formidable talents before their big breaks [and] the company continues to pride itself on producing provocative, often overtly political theatre, the kind that generates loud and clamorous debate."

Danny Hoch is the creator of *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop; Pot Melting; Some People; and Till the Break of Dawn*. His work has toured to 50 U.S. cities and 15 countries, earning him numerous honors including two Obie Awards, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an NEA Solo Theatre Fellowship, a Tennessee Williams Fellowship, and the CalArts/Alpert Award in Theatre. A senior fellow at the New School's Vera List Center for Art and Politics, his writings on hip-hop, race, and class have appeared in *American Theatre*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, the *New York Times*, the *Village Voice*, and several books: *Creating Your Own Monologue*, *Extreme Exposure*, *Out of Character*, and *Total Chaos*. Danny's film and television credits include *American Splendor*, *Bamboozled*, *Blackhawk Down*, HBO's *Def Poetry*, *Lucky You*, *Prison Song*, *Subway Stories*, *Thin Red Line*, *War of the Worlds*, *Washington Heights*, *We Own the Night*, and *Whiteboyz*. In 2000, Hoch founded the Hip-Hop Theater Festival, which has presented over 100 hip-hop generation plays and appears annually in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. As a director, his work includes the bilingual *Representa* for the San Francisco International Arts Festival at La Peña Cultural Center and Will Power's hit show *Flow* at the New York Theatre Workshop, which was named one of the Top 10 Plays of 2003 by the *New York Times*.

Tony Taccone is in his 12th year as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged more than 35 shows – including world premieres by Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Quincy Long, and Itamar Moses. Taccone commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America*, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum, and has collaborated with Kushner on six projects, including *Brundibar*. In 2004, his production of David Edgar's *Continental Divide* transferred to the Barbican in London after playing the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, and England's Birmingham Rep. Taccone often works in Ashland, where he has also directed *Coriolanus*, *Othello*, *Pentecost*, and the American premiere of Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy*. His other regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Arizona Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, the Huntington Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre, as well as San Francisco's Eureka Theatre where he served six years as artistic director before coming to Berkeley Rep. Taccone has served on the faculty at UC Berkeley and the board of Theatre Communications Group, and acted as a regional representative for the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

The New York production of *Taking Over* retains the original design team: **Annie Smart** (scenic design and costume design), **Alexander V. Nichols** (lighting design), and **Asa Taccone** and **Drew Campbell** (composers). A co-production between The Public and the Hip-Hop Theater Festival, it plays November 7 through December 14 in the Anspacher Theater at 425 Lafayette Street in the East Village. For tickets or information, call 212.967.7555 or visit publictheater.org.

See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. The 2008/09 Season includes the company's 50th world premiere – *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, another hot collaboration from **Sarah Ruhl** and **Les Waters** – as well as the premiere of *You, Nero* by **Amy Freed**. The other remarkable artists in this parade of theatrical talent are **Delroy Lindo**, **Sharon Ott**, **Martin McDonagh**, **August Wilson**, and **Mary Zimmerman**. Experience the future of American theatre, and then you can brag, "I saw it back in Berkeley." 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.

(MORE)

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 seven years, Berkeley Rep has helped send seven hit shows to New York: *36 Views*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice*, *Metamorphoses*, *Passing Strange*, and *Taking Over*.

###

TAKING OVER
FACT SHEET

- WHO:** Written and performed by Danny Hoch
Directed by Tony Taccone
Designed by Annie Smart (scenic and costume design), Alexander V. Nichols (lighting design), and Asa Taccone and Drew Campbell (composers)
- WHAT:** *Taking Over*, a powerful new solo show about gentrification from the Obie Award-winning creator of *Jails*, *Hospitals & Hip-Hop*
- WHERE:** The Public Theater / 425 Lafayette St / New York, NY 10003
- WHEN:** November 6 – December 14, 2008
- HOW MUCH:** \$20 - \$70
- TIX & INFO:** 212.967.7555 / publictheater.org
- PHOTOS:** <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-08dh.asp>

###