

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARRIE FISHER'S *WISHFUL DRINKING* CAREENS ONTO BROADWAY

Fourth show to move from Berkeley Rep to Broadway in the last four years!

APRIL 30, 2009 – Lately, it seems like the Great White Way begins in Berkeley. Today, only six weeks after announcing that *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* will be staged in New York, the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre revealed that another show developed on its stage is bound for Broadway. During its extended run in Berkeley last year, **Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*** won critical acclaim, set box office records, and delighted theatregoers night after night. Then it became a *New York Times* bestseller and played for sold-out crowds on a six-city national tour. Now this outrageous solo show, staged by Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**, is headed for Manhattan where it will play Studio 54. The limited run – produced by Roundabout Theatre Company in association with Jonathan Reinis, Jamie Cesa, Eva Price, and Berkeley Rep – will start previews on September 22, 2009, open on October 4, 2009, and close January 3, 2010.

It's the fourth show to move from Berkeley Rep to Broadway in the last four years – following in the footsteps of *Bridge & Tunnel* (2006), *Passing Strange* (2008), and *In the Next Room* (2009) – **and the 12th show in 12 straight years that the Theatre has helped develop and send to New York.** This list of hits also includes Danny Hoch's *Taking Over* (2008), Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2007), Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak's *Brundibar* (2006), Naomi Iizuka's *36 Views* (2002), Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* (2001), Hoch's *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop* (1998), Anne Galjour's *Alligator Tales* (1997), and Philip Kan Gotanda's *Ballad of Yachiyo* (1997). In fact, Berkeley Rep's devotion to creating new work has delivered 18 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.

"This is the culmination of a long process," **Taccone remarks.** "Berkeley Rep has a history of developing new work and, with our commissioning program, continues its commitment to bring fresh ideas and alternative viewpoints to the stage. I am pleased with the success of this project, and honored to collaborate with all of the people involved to bring this show to Broadway. It has been truly gratifying in recent years to see our shows reach a wider audience in New York, Los Angeles, London, and other cities."

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.

(MORE)

Carrie Fisher is the life of the party in ***Wishful Drinking***. Onstage, she recounts a true and intoxicating story with the same strong, wry wit that she poured into bestsellers like *Postcards from the Edge*. Born to celebrity parents, Fisher lands among the stars when she's picked to play a princess in a little movie called *Star Wars*. But it isn't all sweetness and light sabers. As a single mom, she also battles addiction, depression, mental institutions, and that awful hyperspace hairdo. It's an incredible tale – from having Elizabeth Taylor as a stepmother to wedding (and shedding) Paul Simon, from having the father of her baby leave for a man to waking up one morning and finding a friend dead in her bed. After staging two completely different solo shows – the world premiere of Danny Hoch's *Taking Over* and Sarah Jones' Tony Award-winning *Bridge & Tunnel* – Taccone takes audiences on another wild ride with *Wishful Drinking*. The show has played in Berkeley, Boston, Hartford, Los Angeles, San Jose, Santa Fe, Seattle, and Washington, DC... Now audiences in Manhattan can get Carried away!

"Carrie Fisher sure can dish it. And we're only too happy to take it. Her blissfully gossipy one-woman show acerbically, uproariously and, yes, even affectionately mines the rich veins of a life lived to a conveniently lampoonable degree," declares the ***Washington Post***. "Fisher is a writer through and through, and ingrained in her wit is a Wildean panache, an ability to sew a snappy hem on a robe of desperation. She assumes we're smart, too, a strategy that propels us all the more eagerly into her circle, to gaze out at the absurd excesses of a Hollywood upbringing."

Entertainment Weekly calls *Wishful Drinking* "drolly hysterical," and the ***Los Angeles Times*** dubs it a "Beverly Hills yard sale of juicy anecdotes." The ***San Francisco Chronicle*** asserts, "Fisher knows how to write wickedly comic material and, better still, how to deliver it." And the ***Wall Street Journal*** raves: "Addiction, mental illness, movie-star parents, bad marriages, really bad hair. Carrie Fisher, right? You got it: Princess Leia has recycled her nightmarish life yet again, this time putting it onstage in the form of an exceedingly clever one-woman show called *Wishful Drinking*. [She's] drop-dead funny about a string of personal crises so horrific that the only alternative to laughing at them is slashing your wrists in sympathy."

"Hurry to the box office as fast as you can and get your tickets," **ABC radio** proclaims. "You'll double over laughing at the skeletons in Carrie's closet."

Carrie Fisher has been a compelling force in the film industry since her feature film debut opposite Warren Beatty in the 1975 hit *Shampoo*. The daughter of Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, she became a cultural icon when she played Princess Leia in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Her star-studded career includes roles in countless films such as *Austin Powers*, *The Blues Brothers*, *The Burbs*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Garbo Talks*, *Hannah and her Sisters*, *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, *The Man with One Red Shoe*, *Scream 3*, *This is My Life*, *When Harry Met Sally*, and *Wonderland*. Her most recent films include *Fanboys*, *White Lightnin'*, and the remake of *The Women*. In 1987, Fisher's book, *Postcards from the Edge*, leapt onto the *New York Times*' bestseller list and netted her the Los Angeles Pen Award for Best First Novel. Four more bestsellers followed: *Delusions of Grandma*, *Surrender the Pink*, *The Best Awful*, and *Wishful Drinking*. Fisher turned *Postcards* into a screenplay for the hit film starring Shirley MacLaine and Meryl Streep, and is currently adapting *The Best Awful* for Lifetime and Sony television with producers Bruce Cohen and Dan Jinks. Her writing has also appeared in *Details*, *Harper's Bazaar*, the *New York Times*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Vogue*, and many other major publications. Fisher's television credits range all the way from *Laverne & Shirley* to *Sex in the City*, with a recent Emmy nomination for her appearance on the popular NBC program *30 Rock*. Her experiences with addiction and bipolar disorder – and her willingness to speak honestly about them – have made her a sought-after speaker and respected advocate for these communities.

(MORE)

Tony Taccone is completing 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 made his Broadway debut with *Bridge & Tunnel*, which was universally lauded by the critics and won a Tony Award for its star, Sarah Jones. He commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America*, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum, and has collaborated with Kushner on seven projects including *Brundibar* and the upcoming premiere of *Tiny Kushner*. 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, the Kirk Douglas Theatre, The Public 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, sat on the board of Theatre Communications Group, and acted as a regional representative for the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

Jonathan Reinis is the producer of over 150 plays, musicals, and dance performances including the Broadway productions of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* with Harvey Keitel at Carnegie Hall (2008), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2006-2007), *Kiki and Herb: Alive on Broadway* (2006 Tony nomination), *Dame Edna* (2000 Tony Award), *Russell Simmons's Def Poetry Jam* (2003 Tony Award), *Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home* (2003 Tony nomination), and *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* (1999 Tony nomination). His off-Broadway credits include *Room Service*, Marga Gomez's *Los Big Names*, Josh Kornbluth's *Love & Taxes*, and Shay Duffin as *Brendan Behan*. Bay Area touring productions include Carrie Fisher at Berkeley Rep; Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*; Josh Kornbluth's *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*; Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss* with Sean Penn, Woody Harrelson, Nick Nolte, and Cheech Marin; *Dame Edna*; *Ennio*; *His Way*; *Sandra Bernhard*; John Leguizamo's premiere of *Freak*; *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*; and the national tours of *Forever Tango*, *The Piano Lesson*, and Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. Reinis built and operated Theatre on the Square in downtown San Francisco for more than 20 years (1981-2002). His San Francisco shows include *Talley's Folly*, *Jeffrey*, *Irving Berlin in Revue*, *Bubbe Meises*, *The Kathy and Mo Show*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Love Letters*, *Mass Appeal*, *Nehemiah Persoff as Sholem Aleichem*, *Biloxi Blues*, *I'm Not Rappaport*, *Curse of the Werewolf*, and *Phantom of the Opera* by Ken Hill. He also presented *Stomp*, *Riverdance – The Show*, *Fame: The Musical*, and the national tours of *Dirty Blonde* and *Guys and Dolls*. Reinis is a member of the Broadway League and ATPAM.

Jamie Cesa produced *Kiki and Herb: Alive on Broadway*, which received a Tony Award nomination for Best Special Theatrical Event. Off Broadway, he produced and managed *Los Big Names*, which earned nominations for the 2006 Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards, and currently he's producing *Naked Boys Singing!* – one of the top 10 longest running shows in off-Broadway history. His other off-Broadway producing credits include *21 Dog Years: Doing Time @ Amazon.com*; *Love, Janis*; *The Women of Lockerbie*; and the *The Last Session*, which received Outer Critics Circle and Drama League nominations for Best Musical. Cesa's general management credits include the off-Broadway productions of *Celia: The Life and Music of Celia Cruz*, *Criss Angel Mindfreak*, *The Last Word*, *Matt and Ben*, *SIDD*, and *Transatlantic Liaison*, as well as *Respect: A Musical Journey of Women* in Orlando, FL.

(MORE)

Eva Price's credits include *Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas* on Broadway; *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* (national and European tours); *Irving Berlin's I Love a Piano* (national tour); *The JAP Show: Jewish American Princesses of Comedy* (off Broadway and tour); *Joy* (off Broadway); *Los Big Names* (off Broadway, Drama Desk nomination); *Private Jokes, Public Places* (off Broadway and London); and *Sunfish* (a new musical in development). She is executive vice president of Maximum Entertainment, a producing, investing, and general management company located in New York City. Maximum Entertainment is a partner in Elephant Eye Theatricals, whose productions include *Saved* (Playwrights Horizons) and *The Addams Family* (Broadway 2009).

Now in its 43rd Season, **Roundabout Theater Company** has become one of New York City's most accomplished cultural institutions and one of the country's largest not-for-profit theatre companies. With four theatres both on Broadway and off, Roundabout reaches over 500,000 people annually, including over 40,000 subscribers, through award-winning productions of classical and contemporary plays and musicals. In addition to providing an artistic home for many of the finest actors, playwrights, composers, and directors of our time, Roundabout is home to model education and outreach programs designed to diversify and develop the theatre's audiences. Currently on Roundabout's stages: *Waiting for Godot* at Studio 54, *The Philanthropist* at the American Airlines Theatre, and *Distracted* at the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre/Laura Pels Theatre.

Born in a storefront, **Berkeley Rep** has moved to the forefront of American theatre – and is still telling unforgettable stories. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 50 world premieres. In the last four years alone, Berkeley Rep has helped send four shows to Broadway: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Passing Strange*, and *Wishful Drinking*. Founded in 1968, 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 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. 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.

Tickets for *Wishful Drinking* range from 31.50 to \$111.50 and are available from the Roundabout box office at (212) 719-1300 or roundabouttheatre.org. Studio 54 is located at 254 West 54th Street in Manhattan, between Broadway and Eighth Avenue. Fisher will perform Tuesday through Saturday evenings at 8:00 PM with Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday matinees at 2:00 PM.

See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. Subscribe now for the 2009/10 Season, which features four world premieres: Green Day's *American Idiot*, directed by Michael Mayer; Naomi Iizuka's *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, directed by Les Waters; Lisa Kron's *Five Questions*, staged by Leigh Silverman; and *Girlfriend* from Todd Almond and Matthew Sweet. The slate also includes the West Coast premieres of Athol Fugard's *Coming Home* and Tony Kushner's *Tiny Kushner*, as well as the local debut of *Aurélia's Oratorio*.

(MORE)

Meanwhile, this spring, audiences can enjoy Waters' extended production of *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* or the premiere of *You Nero* by Amy Freed. 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.

###

WISHFUL DRINKING
FACT SHEET

WHO:

Created and performed by Carrie Fisher

Directed by Tony Taccone

Designed by Alexander V. Nichols (sets/lights/projections)

Produced by Roundabout Theater Company in association with Jonathan Reinis, Jamie Cesa, Eva Price, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre

WHAT: *Wishful Drinking*, a hilarious new solo show from Hollywood legend Carrie Fisher

WHERE: Studio 54, 254 West 54th Street @ Broadway, New York, NY 10019

WHEN: September 22, 2009 – January 3, 2010

Tuesday through Saturday evenings @ 8:00 PM

Matinees on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays @ 2:00 PM

HOW MUCH: \$31.50 - \$111.50

TIX & INFO: (212) 719-1300 / roundabouttheatre.org

###