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BERKELEY REP LAUNCHES BLOG TO BRING THE AUDIENCE BEHIND THE SCENES

SEPTEMBER 4, 2008 – Please don't remain silent! That was Berkeley Repertory Theatre's motto in 1968, and it remains true today. As part of a 40-year tradition of engaging theatregoers in passionate dialogue about its work, the Tony Award-winning company launched its backstage blog this week. The website at berkeleyrep.org already lets visitors watch videos, download podcasts, purchase tickets, and read interviews and reviews. It also helps them find out about free events, nearby restaurants, and special offers. Now it brings the audience behind the scenes at blog.berkeleyrep.org.

"So much effort goes into everything you see on stage – but you only meet a few of the hundreds of people who work here every year," wrote Public Relations Director **Terence Keane** in the first post. "So we hope you'll get to know us better through this blog. If we do it right, the blog will have interesting and insightful stories about what really goes on at Berkeley Rep. It isn't a place for sales pitches or idle chatter... It's a forum where staff and volunteers throughout our organization can speak directly to you, providing **an authentic, unvarnished look at life behind the scenes**. And, like all blogs, you'll be able to comment or ask questions in return."

Berkeley Rep's blog will take readers inside the scene shop, the costume shop, the prop shop, the sound booth, and the box office. It will stay up late at parties like 30 Below and night/OUT, and get smart by attending pre-show talks, post-show discussions, and Page to Stage. It will hang out with the Teen Council and the teachers at the School of Theatre. Many voices will be heard – from interns to the artistic director, from the bookkeeper to the dramaturg. (What's a dramaturg? Come to the blog and find out.)

"It seems apropos to launch a blog that looks under the surface of Berkeley Rep at the same time that we launch this show," remarked **Susie Medak**, the Theatre's managing director, "because *Yellowjackets* looks under the surface of our local community. It's set at Berkeley High School, yet the underlying issues are national in scope – ethnic and economic divisions that deeply affect our education system and our entire society."

The blog will follow every show in the **2008/09 Season**, which brings brilliant artists back to Berkeley Rep's stage and provides proof of the Theatre's commitment to commission 50 new plays by 2013. The season kicks off when Artistic Director **Tony Taccone** directs the world premiere of *Yellowjackets*, an incisive new play penned by Berkeley native **Itamar Moses**. The next five shows present a parade of our audience's favorite artists: **Delroy Lindo** stages **August Wilson's** masterpiece *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*; **Mary Zimmerman** presents an alluring adaptation of *The Arabian Nights*; Associate Artistic Director **Les Waters** reunites with **Sarah Ruhl** for the world premiere of *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*; former Artistic Director **Sharon Ott** returns to direct **Fyodor Dostoevsky's** *Crime and Punishment*, and Waters tackles **Martin McDonagh** again with *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. The season concludes with a second show from Ott: the world premiere of *You, Nero* by **Amy Freed**.

Join the fun! Inviting new prices ensure that everyone can enjoy the best theatre in the Bay Area. For tickets or more information, call Berkeley Rep's box office at 510.647.2949 or 888.4.BRT.Tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org and come behind the scenes.

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