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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHAD JONES & TOM PEARL JOIN THE STAFF OF BERKELEY REP

JUNE 18, 2009 – Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced the addition of two esteemed professionals to its staff: **Chad Jones**, the respected local journalist, joins the Theatre as its new communications manager, and **Tom Pearl**, an experienced theatre leader, takes over the position of production manager. They join Berkeley Rep as it prepares for a season that features seven daring new shows: the world premiere of *American Idiot* from Green Day and Michael Mayer, the world premiere of *Girlfriend* from Todd Almond and Matthew Sweet, the world premiere of *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West* from Naomi Iizuka and Les Waters, the world premiere of a new play from Lisa Kron and Leigh Silverman, the West Coast premiere of *Tiny Kushner* from Tony Kushner and Tony Taccone, and local debuts for Athol Fugard's *Coming Home* and *Aurélia's Oratorio*.

"I'm pleased to welcome Chad and Tom to our team," remarks **Susan Medak**, the Theatre's managing director. "Chad has a long history of writing warm and insightful stories on local theatre, so his skills will be put to good use in communicating with our audience. And Tom has the perfect experience to spearhead our work on technically challenging shows such as *American Idiot*. It's going to be an exciting year at Berkeley Rep, and I'm glad they're here to help."

Jones has covered Bay Area theatre as a professional writer and editor since 1992, including ten years as the theatre critic and features writer for the *Oakland Tribune*. Under the supervision of **Terence Keane**, the Theatre's director of public relations, he will serve as editor-in-chief of the printed program distributed at each show, oversee Berkeley Rep's award-winning blog, and manage other online outreach to the Theatre's audience. With a single exception, he has seen every production at Berkeley Rep for the past 12 years, a depth of knowledge that will serve him well in his new position. His predecessor in this post, **Megan Wygant**, has become the Theatre's company manager.

Pearl comes to Berkeley Rep from Baltimore's CenterStage, where he served as production manager for three seasons and as master electrician for 11 seasons. Working under Medak and Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**, he coordinates with the director and designers of each show to translate their artistic vision into the physical production that appears on stage. His position supervises all of the artisans in Berkeley Rep's costume shop, prop shop, and scene shop, as well as electricians, sound technicians, stage managers, and the backstage crew.

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 51 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

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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.

See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. Subscribe now for the 2009/10 Season with inviting new prices that ensure everyone can attend. For details, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-Tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

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