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DRAMA DESK ADDS TO ACCOLADES FOR BERKELEY REP'S *AMERICAN IDIOT*

Michael Mayer wins Outstanding Director of a Musical for *American Idiot*

***Idiot* also wins ITBA Award for Outstanding New Broadway Musical**

MAY 23, 2010 – Today, the Drama Desk added to the accolades accumulating for Broadway shows born at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Michael Mayer won Outstanding Director of a Musical for Green Day's *American Idiot*, the thrilling rock opera that enjoyed a record-breaking run during its world premiere in Berkeley last fall. The Drama Desk Awards, which started in 1955, are the only honors for which Broadway, off-Broadway, and off-off-Broadway shows compete on equal footing. Over the years, shows developed at Berkeley Rep have earned eight prizes from the panel. On Thursday, *American Idiot* also received the 2010 ITBA Award for Outstanding New Broadway Musical from the Independent Theater Bloggers Association.

"All of us at Berkeley Rep send our congratulations to Michael and our collaborators on *American Idiot*," remarks **Tony Taccone**, the Theatre's artistic director. "When we develop new shows at Berkeley Rep, our focus is on creating work that entertains and invigorates Bay Area audiences. Their support and their intelligence make it a pleasure to launch plays here. But it is also gratifying to see our shows go on to enjoy successful runs on Broadway and beyond. We are extremely proud and enormously grateful that our work continues to receive such recognition."

Last Monday, two Broadway shows developed at Berkeley Rep also earned awards from the Outer Critics Circle: Carrie Fisher won for Outstanding Solo Performance with *Wishful Drinking*, and Kevin Adams of *American Idiot* was honored for Outstanding Lighting Design. *Idiot* is in the running for other prominent prizes as well, along with *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* – another script which had its world premiere at Berkeley Rep before creating buzz on Broadway:

- **Six nominations for Tony Awards:** *American Idiot* is nominated for Best Musical, Christine Jones for Best Scenic Design of a Musical, and Kevin Adams for Best Lighting Design of a Musical. *In the Next Room* is competing for Best Play, David Zinn for Best Costume Design of a Play, and Maria Dizzia for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Play. Winners will be announced on June 13.
- **Choreographer Steven Hoggett of *American Idiot* is up for the Astaire Award**, which recognizes excellence in dance on both stage and film. The winner will be announced on June 7.

In the last eight years, Berkeley Rep has helped develop six Broadway shows: *American Idiot* (2010), *In the Next Room* (2009), *Wishful Drinking* (2009), *Passing Strange* (2008), *Bridge & Tunnel* (2006), and *Metamorphoses* (2002). The Theatre has helped shepherd these successful plays to several significant awards:

- ***Passing Strange*** – which made its world premiere at Berkeley Rep – went on to win the Tony Award for Best Book, three Drama Desk Awards including Best Musical, four Audelco Awards including Best Musical, two Obie Awards including Best New American Theatre Piece, two Theatre World Awards, and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical.

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RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

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- In 2006, Sarah Jones won the Tony Award for Best Special Theatrical Event with ***Bridge & Tunnel***, which was staged by Artistic Director Tony Taccone and workshopped at Berkeley Rep before its Broadway run.
- Mary Zimmerman won the Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play with ***Metamorphoses***, which made its West Coast premiere at Berkeley Rep on its way to New York. The show also earned four Drama Desk Awards including Outstanding New Play, three Lucille Lortel Awards including Outstanding Play, the Drama League Award for Best Play, the Obie Award for Direction, and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Direction of a Play.
- And Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to a national leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. The Theatre 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. With two stages, a school, and a Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, Berkeley Rep is proud to premiere exhilarating new plays.

All told, the Theatre has helped send **13 shows to New York in the last 13 years**. In addition to six recent Broadway transfers, this list of hits includes Danny Hoch's *Taking Over* (2008), Ruhl's *Eurydice* (2007), Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak's *Brundibar* (2006), Naomi Iizuka's *36 Views* (2002), Hoch's *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop* (1998), Anne Galjour's *Alligator Tales* (1997), and Philip Kan Gotanda's *Ballad of Yachiyo* (1997).

Berkeley Rep has also announced its second London transfer. Following in the footsteps of *Continental Divide*, which played at the Barbican in 2004, *Tiny Kushner* is headed to London's Tricycle Theater this fall.

See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. The current season concludes with the world premiere of another daring new show: *In the Wake* from Lisa Kron and Leigh Silverman, the Obie Award-winning creative team behind Broadway's *Well*. This summer, the Fireworks Festival takes off with a series of colorful and explosive solo shows from John Leguizamo, David Sedaris, Dan Hoyle, and Wes "Scoop" Nisker. Subscriptions are also on sale for the upcoming season, which features new work from Lemony Snicket, Rita Moreno, Mike Daisey, Rinne Groff, Sarah Ruhl, and other prominent artists. For details, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT *AMERICAN IDIOT*

The Broadway engagement of *American Idiot* is produced by Tom Hulse and Ira Pittelman in association with Berkeley Rep. The show tells the exhilarating tale of a new generation of young Americans as they search for meaning in a post-9/11 world, borne along by Green Day's electrifying score. With a cast of 19 led by Tony Award-winner John Gallagher, Jr., this high-octane musical follows the journey of three lifelong friends as one takes off for a life in the city, one leaves home to fight for his country, and one stays behind, frozen in the safety of suburbia.

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American Idiot made its world premiere in Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre in September 2009. Its record-breaking run brought in the biggest advance sale in the Theatre's 42-year history, the biggest day at the box office, 18 of the top 20 days ever, and due to demand had to announce its first extension before it played its first performance. Now it's rocking the St. James Theatre in Manhattan, which is located at 246 West 44th Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue.

Green Day – vocalist/guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong, bassist Mike Dirnt, and drummer Tré Cool – won two Grammy Awards for the groundbreaking rock opera *American Idiot*, which went on to become one of the best selling albums of all time. The band joined with one of theatre's most acclaimed creative teams – Tony Award-winning director of *Spring Awakening* Michael Mayer, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and orchestrator Tom Kitt, and Olivier Award-winning choreographer Steven Hoggett – to bring this explosive, iconic story to the stage. For more information on *American Idiot*, visit AmericanIdiotOnBroadway.com.

ABOUT IN THE NEXT ROOM

In 2007, Sarah Ruhl and Les Waters made a splash when they brought *Eurydice* from Berkeley Rep to an extended off-Broadway run. Then the Theatre commissioned a fresh script from the young writer, a comedy about marriage, intimacy, and electricity called *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*. The Obie Award-winning director staged its world premiere in the Roda Theatre in February of 2009; then both artists enjoyed their Broadway debuts when Lincoln Center Theater presented the show at the Lyceum. It ran on Broadway from October 22, 2009 through January 10, 2010. Development of the script was supported by the Bernard Osher New Play Development Fund, the Edgerton Foundation, and the Mosse Foundation Artistic Development Fund.

Audiences and critics embraced the show on both coasts. In *USA Today*, Elysa Gardner named it Best Play of the Year. Charles Isherwood of the *New York Times* declared it one of “the four best new plays to be produced in New York this year.” And John Lahr of *The New Yorker* proclaimed it the Top Moment in Theater for 2009, raving that “Ruhl’s benign detachment, her astute mind, and her capacity for wonder turn this evening into an indelible pleasure. In Les Waters, who directed her exciting *Eurydice* a few seasons back, she has found an expert collaborator... If *In the Next Room* doesn’t win the Tony for best play – it’s Ruhl’s first Broadway show – I’ll eat my shorts.”

ABOUT WISHFUL DRINKING

During its extended run at Berkeley Rep in 2008, 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 seven-city national tour. Onstage, she recounted a true and intoxicating story with the same strong, wry wit that she poured into bestsellers like *Postcards from the Edge*. After staging two completely different solo shows – the world premiere of Danny Hoch’s *Taking Over* and Sarah Jones’ Tony Award-winning *Bridge & Tunnel* – Artistic Director Tony Taccone took audiences on another wild ride with *Wishful Drinking*.

The show enjoyed a limited Broadway run at Studio 54, produced by Roundabout Theatre Company in association with Jonathan Reinis, Jamie Cesa, Eva Price, and Berkeley Rep. The production featured scenery, lighting, and projections by local designer Alexander V. Nichols. It started previews on September 22, 2009, extended its run for two weeks, and closed on January 17, 2010.

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