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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP UNVEILS *AURÉLIA'S ORATORIO* FOR THE HOLIDAYS
Dazzling display of illusion directed by Victoria Thierrée Chaplin comes to Bay Area

OCTOBER 28, 2009 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre invites you to celebrate the holidays with *Aurélia's Oratorio*. **Aurélia Thierrée** literally grew up in the circus and has charmed audiences around the world with this dazzling display of stage illusion. The show was conceived and directed by Aurélia's mother, **Victoria Thierrée Chaplin**, who – along with her husband, Jean Baptiste Thierrée – created Cirque Bonjour, Cirque Imaginaire, and Cirque Invisible, innovative troupes that inspired Cirque du Soleil. Performed in the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre, *Aurélia's Oratorio* begins previews on **December 4**, opens **December 9**, and closes **January 24**.

“At Berkeley Rep, we always try to schedule something special for the holidays – not your predictable seasonal fare, but something uniquely enjoyable and theatrical. *Aurélia's Oratorio* perfectly fits the bill,” says **Tony Taccone**, the Theatre's artistic director. “This show draws on traditional circus techniques to create an ingenious and unexpected evening that is equal parts wit and wonder. We look forward to introducing it to local audiences.”

Welcome to *Aurélia's Oratorio*, where the impossible happens before your eyes. Behind the velvet curtain lies a surreal world of surprises, a topsy-turvy time of tricks and transformations. With dancing, puppetry, acrobatics, and more, *Aurélia's Oratorio* is an inventive adventure set to a quirky score of chamber music and gypsy jazz. Berkeley Rep unveils this 70-minute spectacle – a concoction of mystery and fantasy for the whole family – with ArKtype Productions in association with Crying Out Loud UK. The executive producers for the local run are Shirley D. and Philip D. Schild, the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, and Jean and Michael Strunsky. Production sponsors include the Bernard Osher Foundation and the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Philanthropic Fund. Season sponsors for Berkeley Rep's 41st year of fearless theatre are BART and Wells Fargo.

The critics love Aurélia! “She does wonder wonderfully,” gushes the *London Guardian*. “She balances whimsy and wit, childlike wonder and adult élan, throughout her quietly magical show,” says the *Boston Globe*. “Her grace, her inventive and fluid movement, and above all her humor simply invite our delight.” It's “an absolute spellbinder,” declares the UK's *Daily Telegraph*. “Like most vivid reveries, it momentarily colors the way you see the waking world.”

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RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

Aurélia Thierrée has been performing on stage since early childhood. She began her career in her parents' Cirque Imaginaire and Cirque Invisible, during which time she learned to combine a developing sense of the surreal with the demands and discipline required. In recent years she has worked with a diverse array of film artists, including Jacques Baratier, Milos Forman, and Coline Serreau. For several years, she toured with the Tiger Lillies in *The Tiger Lillies Circus*. She has also worked in cabaret and variety and shows, primarily in Berlin. With Victoria Thierrée Chaplin, Aurélia collaborated to create *Aurélia's Oratorio* for the stage, inspired by medieval drawings that depict worlds upside down and inside out.

In 1970, **Victoria Thierrée Chaplin** joined up with actor and director Jean Baptiste Thierrée, who dreamed up a new style of circus and invented Cirque Bonjour. In 1971, Cirque Bonjour was invited to the Festival d'Avignon and toured France, with Victoria's participation gradually increasing. The couple then moved toward a more personal style of circus: Cirque Imaginaire was born with just them, and their two kids, Aurélia and James, on stage. Cirque Imaginaire toured the globe. Cirque Invisible, their next show, was also seen worldwide. Recently, Victoria worked with her son on the design and costumes for his productions *Au Revoir Parapluie*, *Junebug Symphony*, and *La Viellée des Abysses*. And now, *Aurélia's Oratorio* is Victoria's creation with her daughter.

The performance also features **Jaime Martinez**, recipient of a 1998 New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award honoring his achievements in dance. He was a founding member of The Parsons Dance Company in 1987 and has taught over 400 master classes, including residencies at The Juilliard School, North Carolina School for the Arts, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, and SUNY Purchase. Martinez has staged numerous works by David Parsons for such distinguished companies as Ballet du Rhin, Ballet National de Nancy, Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal, Carte Blanche Dance Company of Norway, Company C, Milwaukee Ballet, New York City Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, and Roland Petit Ballet National de Marseille. He is a founding member of Mark Dendy Dance & Performance and has also worked with Robin Becker, Lisa Giobbi, Pearl Lang, Diane Martell, Ruby Shang, Uris/Barr and Dancers, Douglas Wright, and Pooh Kaye's Excentric Motions.

Aurélia's Oratorio was designed by Victoria Thierrée Chaplin (sound and stage design), **Laura de Bernadis** and **Philippe Lacombe** (lighting design), and Victoria Thierrée Chaplin, **Jacques Perdiguez**, **Veronique Grand**, and **Monika Schwarzl** (costume design).

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During the run of *Aurélia's Oratorio*, theatregoers can enjoy **38 magical events**:

- *Low-cost previews* take place on Friday, December 4; Saturday, December 5; Sunday, December 6; and Tuesday, December 8.
- *Teen Night* begins at 6:30 PM on Friday, December 4 and includes dinner, a behind-the-scenes discussion with a member of the artistic team, and a performance of *Aurélia's Oratorio*. Tickets are only \$10 for high-school students. For details, call (510) 647-2972 or e-mail school@berkeleyrep.org.
- *30 Below* – the coolest night of theatre for the under-30 crowd – also returns on Friday, December 4. Enjoy a performance at 8:00 PM and a wild post-show party featuring free beverages provided by Pyramid Brewery and Raymond Vineyards. Tickets start at only \$13.50 for anyone under 30 years old!
- *Opening night* festivities are held on Wednesday, December 9, including a pre-show dinner for donors at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza and a post-show party for the audience catered by Tomatina and Raymond Vineyards.
- Free 30-minute *docent presentations* about the show take place at 7:00 PM on the following Tuesday and Thursday evenings: December 8, December 10, December 17, December 22, December 29, December 31, January 5, January 7, January 12, January 14, January 19, and January 21.
- *Post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM shows on Thursday, January 7; Tuesday, January 12; and Friday, January 22.
- In addition to afternoon performances on most Sundays, this show features *bonus matinees* at 2 PM on December 12, December 17, December 26, January 1, January 14, and January 23.
- And, on select evenings, patrons can whet their palates for the play with *free tastings* from these culinary artisans one hour before curtain: Artesa (Friday, December 18; Sunday, December 20; Friday, January 8, Saturday, January 9; and Sunday, January 10), Kokomo Wines (Saturday, December 19), Parry Cellars (Friday, December 11), Spanish Table (Sunday, December 13), and Teance (Saturday, December 12).

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Aurélia's Oratorio is part of an inventive season that includes six other new shows: the world premiere of *American Idiot* from **Green Day** and **Michael Mayer**, the world premiere of *The Wake* from **Lisa Kron** and **Leigh Silverman**, 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 West Coast premiere of *Tiny Kushner* from **Tony Kushner** and **Tony Taccone**, and the local debut of **Athol Fugard's** *Coming Home*.

Theatre-lovers can guarantee their seats for these shows by **subscribing to Berkeley Rep**. Choose three or more plays and get the best seats at the lowest price. In addition to significant savings, subscribers receive valuable benefits such as the right to reschedule for free, discounts when purchasing tickets for friends, and the opportunity to secure seats before the general public for special events like *American Idiot*. Berkeley Rep also offers generous discounts for senior citizens, theatregoers under 30, and employees of preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools. **Subscriptions begin as low as \$84** – and subscribers save up to 29% on every ticket. Because of the string of hits that have originated at Berkeley Rep, subscriptions are selling fast. For the best seats, order now!

Individual **tickets for the Oratorio start at only \$27** to ensure that everyone can experience the best theatre in the Bay Area. Additional savings are available for groups, seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age – meaning **discounted seats** can be obtained for as little as \$13.50. These new prices make Berkeley Rep more affordable to people in the community who are just starting school, starting careers, and starting families – because lower prices are now available for every performance.

So spend the holidays with Berkeley Rep and *Aurélia's Oratorio*. The **Roda Theatre** is located at 2015 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots – and only half a block from BART. To purchase seats, or for more information, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-Tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

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 52 world premieres. In the last four years alone, Berkeley Rep

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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.

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AURÉLIA'S ORATORIO FACT SHEET

- WHO:** Conceived and directed by Victoria Thierrée Chaplin
 Starring Aurélia Thierrée
 Featuring Jaime Martinez
 Designed by Victoria Thierrée Chaplin (sound and stage design), Laura de Bernadis and Philippe Lacombe (lighting design), and Victoria Thierrée Chaplin, Jacques Perdiguez, Veronique Grand, and Monika Schwarzl (costume design)
- WHAT:** *Aurélia's Oratorio*, a dazzling display of stage illusion that has charmed the world
- WHERE:** Berkeley Repertory Theatre
 Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704
- WHEN:** **December 4, 2009 – January 24, 2010**
- Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays @ 8:00 PM
 - Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
 - Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
 - Special 2 PM matinees on 12/12, 12/17, 12/26, 1/1, 1/14, and 1/23
 - No matinee on 12/6 or 1/24
 - No evening performance on 12/12, 12/15, 12/24, 12/25, 12/27, 1/1, or 1/13

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					4 DEC 8 12 20 21 8 P	5 8 P
6 7 P	7	8 8 P	9 8 P	10 8	11 8 P	12 2 P
13 2/7 P	14	15	16 7	17 2/8	18 8 P	19 8 P
20 2/7 P	21	22 8	23 7	24 2	25	26 2/8
27 2	28	29 8	30 7	31 8	1 JAN 2	2 8
3 2/7	4	5 8	6 7	7 8 P	8 8 P	9 8 P
10 2/7 P	11	12 8 P	13	14 2/8	15 8	16 8
17 2/7	18	19 8	20 7	21 8	22 8 P	23 2/8
24 7						

Special Events:

Low-cost previews: Friday 12/4, Saturday 12/5 & Tuesday 12/8 @ 8:00 PM and Sunday 10/6 @ 7:00 PM

Teen night: Friday 12/4 @ 6:30 PM

30 Below (party for those under 30): Friday 12/4 @ 8:00 PM

Opening night: Wednesday 12/9 @ 8:00 PM

Pre-show docent talks: Tuesdays 12/8, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12 & 1/19 and Thursdays 12/10, 12/17, 12/31, 1/7, 1/14, & 1/21 @ 7:00 PM

Post-play discussions: Thursday 1/7, Tuesday 1/12, and Friday 1/22 @ 8:00 PM

Free tastings: Fridays 12/11 (Parry Cellars), 12/18 (Artesa) & 1/8 (Artesa) @ 7:00 PM; Saturdays 12/12 (Teance), 12/19 (Kokomo Wines) & 1/9 (Artesa) @ 7:00 PM; and Sundays 12/13 (Spanish Table), 12/20 (Artesa) & 1/10 (Artesa) @ 6:00 PM

PREVIEW	30 30 BELOW
TEEN NIGHT	POST-SHOW DISCUSSION
OPENING NIGHT	TASTING
	DOCENT PRESENTATIONS EVERY TUE & THU 7PM

HOW MUCH: \$13.50 - \$86

	Section B	Section A	Premium
Previews.....	\$27	\$34	\$39
Tue 8 PM / Wed 7 PM / Thu, Fri, Sat 2 PM.....	\$33	\$45	\$52
Thu 8 PM / Sun 2 PM / Sun 7 PM	\$37	\$51	\$57
Friday @ 8 PM	\$45	\$57	\$63
Saturday @ 8 PM.....	\$51	\$63	\$71

- Discounts:
- Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
 - \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
 - Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

PHOTOS: <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-09ao.asp>

TIX & INFO: (510) 647-2949 – berkeleyrep.org – (888) 4-BRT-Tix (toll-free)