

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP OFFERS FREE OUTREACH PROGRAMS FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Low-cost programs reinforce state standards – public schools get first hour free!

SEPTEMBER 8, 2009 – In response to increasing budget constraints on California schools, Berkeley Repertory Theatre is offering one free teaching hour to every public elementary, middle, and high school in the nine-county Bay Area. Additional low-cost programs are available to teachers and schools as well! All of the programs that the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre provides cover state-mandated content standards in multiple subjects while engaging students in hands-on, dynamic workshops.

“At the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, we understand the unique challenges facing California schools today,” declares **Rachel Fink**, director of the School of Theatre. “Now, more than ever, we must work together to reinforce arts education as a community value and as an integral part of our cultural fabric. By providing access and opportunities for participation in the arts, Berkeley Rep uses theatre as a means to challenge, thrill, and galvanize what is best in the human spirit.”

Whether bringing dramatic texts to life or developing students’ original work, professional teaching artists help students to expand their creative potential by challenging them to explore complex ideas and universal themes in literature and life. Using theatre arts techniques that encourage teamwork and ensemble-building, students gain self-confidence and understand not only the importance of human connection but the joy of dynamic engagement with their creativity.

One-hour, three-hour, and 10-hour workshops are available from September 2009 through May 2010 and can serve up to 30 students at a time. Teachers can work with Berkeley Rep to integrate topics from the curriculum. The first hour is free at any public school in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, or Sonoma County. Additional one-hour workshops can be arranged for \$75 (\$60 if paid by the teacher out of pocket). Additional three-hour workshops cost \$60 per hour (\$55 per hour if paid by the teacher out of pocket). Ten-hour sessions cost \$55 per hour. Title I schools only pay \$55 hour for any workshop; the rate for private schools is \$75 per hour.

A wide range of outreach programs is now available:

- **Target ® Story Builders (grades K-5):** Target ® Story Builders is a one-hour workshop that introduces students to theatre and helps develop literacy and communication skills in an artistic environment. Using dialogue, improvisation, movement, and sound, students turn the classroom into a living theatre, becoming characters in a story chosen from our reading list. In addition to one-hour sessions, Target® Story Builders is available as in-depth three- or 10-hour workshops, as well as a bilingual program for Spanish-speaking ELL students.
- **Creating Character / Acting (grades 6-12):** How do actors bring the uniqueness of their own lives into the life of a play? Learn the skills required to bring a scene to life with this program. Students focus on the fundamentals of acting technique through character development, script analysis, and scene work. Using movement, dialogue, and improvisation, they develop communication skills in an artistic environment. During these

(MORE)

BERKELEY REP OFFERS FREE PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS / 2 OF 3

workshops, students turn the classroom into a theatre, becoming characters that they create. This program is available as a one-, three-, or 10-hour workshop.

- **Play Makers (grades 6-8):** Play Makers is a program in which middle-school students create plays that are inspired by a particular topic or theme chosen by the classroom teacher, as varied as ancient civilizations or photosynthesis. Through interactive theatre exercises, students explore main events, given circumstances, over-arching themes, character development, obstacles, and motivations as they work towards a culminating project. This program is designed to give students a hands-on experience with the subjects that they study and a richer understanding of the world of theatre. Play Makers is an in-depth, 10-hour workshop.
- **Improvisation (grades 6-12):** Discover spontaneity through improvisation. Using a series of theatre games, listening exercises, improvisations and narrative scenes, students learn to communicate effectively and trust their impulses. In this workshop, they open up to the kind of spontaneity that breeds better comic timing on stage, stronger reactions in rehearsals, and increased laughter in the classroom. Improvisation is available as a one- or three-hour workshop.
- **Stage Combat (grades 6-12):** *En garde!* Stage Combat is an engaging and physical class in which students discover the art of creating the illusion of violence. Stressing safety and teamwork, students explore techniques including falls, ear pulls, tripping, and slaps, as well as how to use stage combat as a storytelling technique. Students learn a choreographed fight and create a scene that puts the fight in context, using partner exercises to create the illusion of violence. Stage Combat is available as a one-, three-, or 10-hour workshop.
- **Staging Student Stories (grades 6-12):** How do playwrights turn their ideas into dramatic plays? In Staging Student Stories, classes learn the fundamentals of playwriting and write their own theatrical texts. This workshop offers an exciting opportunity for artistic expression through creative writing and builds a sense of pride amongst students about their individual artistic potential. They learn how to listen to their own creative impulses, and in writing narrative pieces, address real-life issues of decision-making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Staging Student Stories is available as a one-hour or three-hour workshop.
- **Writing Monologues (grades 6-12):** Writing Monologues offers an exciting opportunity for artistic expression through creative writing and builds a sense of pride in each student about his or her artistic potential. Through the fundamentals of playwriting, students learn how to listen to their own creative impulses, and in writing their own narrative pieces, they explore a character's point of view. Writing Monologues is available as a one-hour or three-hour workshop.
- **Performance Lab (grades 9-12):** Performance Lab is a program in which high-school students create plays that are inspired by a particular topic or theme, such as a required novel, a historical period, or a current issue identified by the classroom teacher. Through interactive exercises, students are taught practical theatre skills such as acting, script analysis, and character development. This program also incorporates creative-writing and critical-thinking assignments to challenge students and spark their engagement, giving them a deeper experience with the subjects that they study and a richer understanding of the world of theatre. Performance Lab is an in-depth, 10-hour workshop.

(MORE)

BERKELEY REP OFFERS FREE PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS / 3 OF 3

Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre provides a wide array of programming for individuals of all ages. In addition to these outreach programs, the School offers classes for youth, teens, and adults; teacher training; and the Student Matinee Series for middle- and high-school students. The School also hosts the Teen Council, which allows youth to participate in all aspects of the dramatic process: on stage, backstage, and in front of the stage. For more information or to schedule a workshop, please call (510) 647-2972, e-mail outreach@berkeleyrep.org, or visit berkeleyrep.org.

###