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TINY KUSHNER ON A TRICYCLE: BERKELEY REP'S SHOW HEADS TO LONDON

Kushner and Taccone take acclaimed evening of one-acts to the Tricycle Theatre

APRIL 15, 2010 – Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the Guthrie Theatre announced that their production of *Tiny Kushner* is headed for London. A series of short scripts by legendary playwright **Tony Kushner**, *Tiny Kushner* debuted at the Guthrie in May 2009 and played to acclaim at Berkeley Rep last fall. Staged by Berkeley Rep's artistic director, **Tony Taccone**, the production will transfer to London's Tricycle Theatre with its original cast and design team intact. The show runs from **September 1 to September 25**.

The Tricycle Theatre has gained renown in Britain for presenting plays that examine contemporary issues and investigate cultural diversity. This fall, in a complementary exchange, both Berkeley Rep and the Guthrie welcome Tricycle's production of *The Great Game: Afghanistan* to their stages.

"This has been a fertile time for Berkeley Rep," **Taccone remarks**. "Our commitment to new work, and the support of our adventurous audience, has allowed us to collaborate with exceptional artists on remarkable shows. It is always gratifying when those productions travel and people in other places can get a taste of what we're creating here. I am honored to bring *Tiny Kushner* to London, and pleased to work with the Tricycle Theatre to bring *The Great Game* to America."

This is the second show that Berkeley Rep has shipped to London. In 2004, Taccone's production of David Edgar's two-part *Continental Divide* transferred to the Barbican after playing at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, and England's Birmingham Rep. **In the last five years, five shows have also moved from Berkeley Rep to Broadway:** Sarah Jones' *Bridge & Tunnel* (2006), Stew's *Passing Strange* (2008), Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking* (2009), Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* (2009), and *American Idiot* (2010), which opens next week at the St. James Theatre in Manhattan.

In *Tiny Kushner*, the celebrated playwright brings his brilliance and humor to bear in a sparkling string of one-act plays. And his gilded language is guided, as always, by an unwavering moral compass. Travel to the moon – and to the afterlife – with Laura Bush, Nixon's analyst, the queen of Albania, and a host of real-life tax evaders, all adrift in an increasingly fragile world. Don't miss these gems from a theatrical giant.

It's a tale of two Tonys: Kushner and Taccone first collaborated on *A Bright Room Called Day* at the Eureka Theatre in 1987. Then Taccone commissioned the playwright's masterpiece, *Angels in America*, and co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum in 1992. Berkeley Rep has presented five previous works by Kushner. Taccone staged *Slavs!* in 1996, the West Coast premiere of *Homebody/Kabul* in 2002, and the West Coast premiere of *Brundibar* in 2005, which featured designs by Maurice Sendak and went on to enjoy a sold-out off-Broadway run. The Theatre also produced *The Illusion* in 1991 and *Hydriotaphia* in 1998.

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Now this talented pair gets *Tiny*. Here's what the press had to say about the show:

- **“A thinking person's comedy...** the West Coast premiere of *Tiny Kushner* took place on Wednesday at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where so much of the nation's talked-about dramatic product seems to come from these days, and the double pedigree – playwright and theater – is attention-getting... Individually and even collectively, the five entries here are snacks in the Kushner canon. However, that doesn't make them nonnourishing or the evening unsatisfying; Mr. Kushner's fierce liberal conscience (he's Arthur Miller's heir, in that regard), colossally fanciful imagination and virtuosic gift for composing verbal arias are too much in evidence for that... They have been directed with wry precision by Mr. Kushner's longtime collaborator, Tony Taccone, the Berkeley Rep's artistic director; the four actors all handle Mr. Kushner's serious humor with engaging aplomb, but you never lose the sense that it's the playwright who is performing... *Tiny Kushner* might well find a wide audience. Given Berkeley Rep's recent history, that wouldn't be a surprise. Like ballplayers, theaters sometimes get hot, rapping out hits with unlikely regularity, and the Rep, 41 this year, is on fire. Since 2006, seven shows that originated or were revised there have moved to New York (and elsewhere).” – Bruce Weber, ***New York Times***
- **“It's just bloody amazing...** One of the five plays in the new anthology of Tony Kushner's short works, *Tiny Kushner*, now playing at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, is called *Only We Who Guard the Mystery Shall Be Unhappy* and is clearly the star of the show...It was published in the *Nation* in 2003, and it was performed many times around the time of the 2004 Republican convention, with various luminaries – Susan Sarandon, Holly Hunter –playing the central role of Laura Bush. I can't imagine any of them doing a better job than Kate Eifrig.” – Jon Carroll, ***San Francisco Chronicle***
- **“Scintillating... makes a thundering impact...** Keenly directed by Tony Taccone in its West Coast premiere at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, it's a multifaceted theatrical crown of small gems, all of which offer dazzling insights into the teeming brain of one of our most celebrated playwrights. Dizzying gyrations in tone and theme come with the territory as Kushner contemplates the postmodern American experience. By turns quirky and cosmic, these wee one-acts were written at different times for different reasons, but they coalesce in a tartly existential meditation on the bedrock national themes of death, taxes and redemption... Kushner's genius for the idiosyncratic speech patterns of a universe of characters, from militant survivalists to petulant teens, remains mind-blowing.” – Karen D'Souza, ***San Jose Mercury News*** / Bay Area News Group
- **“A slam-bang series of five plays** providing kaleidoscopic windows into the recesses of the artist's fertile mind... *Tiny Kushner* exists in its own imaginative realm, engaged in the process of working out the American experience without approval or condemnation.” – Quinton Skinner, ***Variety***
- “The only tiny thing about *Tiny Kushner* is that it's made up of five short one-acts. The play, by Tony, Emmy and Pulitzer Prize winner Tony Kushner, perhaps best known for the epic *Angels in America*, is **a really big show**. It's brainy, complex, political, crazy, funny, sarcastic and a little bit touching... An evening of one-of-a-kind entertainment that dares to raise – as well as try to answer – questions about humanity and morality.” – Leslie Katz, ***San Francisco Examiner***

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The actors from the American cast – **J.C. Cutler**, **Kate Eifrig**, **Jim Lichtscheidl**, and **Valeri Mudek** – reprise their roles at the Tricycle. The London production also features the original designs of **Annie Smart** (sets), **Anita Yavich** (costumes), **Alexander V. Nichols** (lights and video), **Victor Zupanc** (sound), and **Marcela Lorca** (movement). The Tricycle Theatre is located at 269 Kilburn High Road in London. Tickets, ranging in price from £8.50 to £20.00, may be purchased by calling 011 44 020 7328 1000 or visiting www.tricycle.co.uk.

Tony Kushner is one of the most important and thought-provoking voices in American theatre. His many honors include a Pulitzer Prize, two Tony Awards, three Obie Awards, an Oscar nomination, an Emmy Award, and a Golden Globe. His plays include *Angels in America*, *A Bright Room Called Day*, *Homebody/Kabul*, *Hydriotaphia*, *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures*, and *Slavs!* He also wrote the book and lyrics for *Caroline, or Change*, a musical composed by Jeanine Tesori. Kushner has translated and adapted the libretto for the children's opera *Brundibar* by Hans Krása, *The Dybbuk* by S.Y. Ansky, *The Illusion* by Pierre Corneille, and two scripts by Bertolt Brecht: *The Good Person of Sezuan* and *Mother Courage and her Children*. He penned screenplays for Mike Nichols' film of *Angels in America* and Steven Spielberg's *Munich*, and is currently working on a film about Abraham Lincoln. Kushner's books include *Brundibar*, *The Art of Maurice Sendak: 1980 to the Present*, and *Wrestling With Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, co-edited with Alisa Solomon. He lives in Manhattan with his husband, Mark Harris, and is the subject of *Wrestling with Angels*, a documentary made by Oscar-winning filmmaker Freida Lee Mock.

Tony Taccone is artistic director of California's Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where he has staged more than 35 shows – including world premieres by Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Quincy Long, and Itamar Moses. Taccone made his Broadway debut with *Bridge & Tunnel*, which was lauded by the critics and won a Tony Award for its star, Sarah Jones. In 2009, he returned to Broadway to direct Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*, which set box-office records at Berkeley Rep before enjoying a six-city national tour. Taccone commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America*, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum, and has collaborated with Kushner on seven projects including *Brundibar* and the premiere of *Tiny Kushner*. His many regional credits in America include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Arizona Repertory Theatre, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, the Huntington Theatre Company, The Public Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre.

See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. The 2009/10 Season continues with even more daring new shows: the world premiere of *Girlfriend* from **Todd Almond** and **Matthew Sweet** and the world premiere of *In the Wake* from **Lisa Kron** and **Leigh Silverman**. 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 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

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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. In the last five years alone, the company has helped send five shows to Broadway: *American Idiot*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Passing Strange*, and *Wishful Drinking*. Come see tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep.

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TINY KUSHNER GOES TO LONDON

FACT SHEET

WHO: Written by Tony Kushner
Directed by Tony Taccone
Designed by Annie Smart (sets), Anita Yavich (costumes), Alexander V. Nichols (lights and video), Victor Zupanc (sound), and Marcela Lorca (movement)
Starring J.C. Cutler, Kate Eifrig, Jim Lichtscheidl, and Valeri Mudek

WHAT: The European premiere of *Tiny Kushner*,
a sparkling series of short scripts by legendary playwright Tony Kushner

WHERE: London's Tricycle Theatre, 269 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 7JR

WHEN: September 1 – September 25, 2010

HOW MUCH: £8.50 – £20.00

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

TIX & INFO: 011 44 20 7328 1000 or www.tricycle.co.uk

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