

For photos, interviews, videos, etc. contact:
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations
(510) 647-2917, tkeane@berkeleyrep.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARY ZIMMERMAN'S *ARABIAN NIGHTS* RETURNS TO BERKELEY REP

Tony Award-winning director brings back hit show in December – 24 performances only!

AUGUST 11, 2010 – When Mary Zimmerman staged *The Arabian Nights* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, tickets were harder to come by than water in the Sahara. The show earned stellar reviews, standing ovations, and sold-out houses both here and on its tour to Kansas City and Chicago. Now the Tony Award-winning director brings her alluring adaptation of this timeless tale back to Berkeley for the holidays.

The Arabian Nights will play only 24 performances between December 11 and December 30. **Tickets are on sale now exclusively to Berkeley Rep's subscribers and donors.** Seats go on sale to the general public later this fall.

"Mary Zimmerman has a unique ability to bring our oldest stories back to life in ways that make us remember why they're eternal and unforgettable," remarks **Tony Taccone**, artistic director of Berkeley Rep. "When we presented this show during the holiday season in 2008, it proved enormously popular with our audience. So we're pleased to welcome Mary back and get a second look at this magical show."

"It's beginning to feel like a myth of its own," **Zimmerman adds**, "the way my work always brings me to the safe harbor of Berkeley Rep. Audiences here are so receptive and supportive that it's always a pleasure to come back."

Renowned director Mary Zimmerman made her career by reanimating ancient myths like *Argonautika* and *Metamorphoses*... now she breathes new life into the legend of the 1,001 nights. To save her life, a beautiful bride must spin hypnotic tales of genies, jesters, thieves, and kings – winning her freedom by eventually winning her husband's heart. He falls under Scheherazade's spell, and Zimmerman enchants the audience as well with her signature style that transforms simplicity into the sublime. Amidst a thousand tales of honor, revenge, and humor, only love emerges victorious.

"If you want theatre at its most unpretentiously poetic, most fetchingly stylish, as humane as it is elegant, I commend to you *The Arabian Nights*," raved *New York* magazine. It's "a spectacular retelling of the old '1,001 nights' tales staged so wonderfully well that you feel better off just to have been in the theater that night. **This rare and breathtaking piece of theater made it into my all-time Top 10 list maybe 15 minutes after it started**, and it just kept climbing the chart as its 2½-hour production flew along," exclaimed the *Contra Costa Times*. And the *San Francisco Chronicle* called *Arabian Nights* one of the year's best shows: "Zimmerman and her cast transport the audience through hilarious and poignant tales of greed, sex and revenge, each tale opening into another and another, to a lingering, redemptive and provocative end."

A co-production with Arena Stage, *The Arabian Nights* will travel to Washington, DC in 2011. It features designs by Daniel Ostling (sets), Mara Blumenfeld (costumes), TJ Gerckens (lights), and Andre Pluess and Ben Sussman (sound).

(MORE)

Mary Zimmerman is the recipient of the 2002 Tony Award for Best Director and a 1998 MacArthur Fellowship. At Berkeley Rep, audiences embraced her acclaimed productions of *Argonautika*, *Journey to the West*, *Metamorphoses*, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, and *The Secret in the Wings*. These plays – and others that she's adapted and directed such as *Eleven Rooms of Proust*, *The Odyssey*, *Silk*, and *S/M* – have enjoyed celebrated runs at About Face Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Goodman Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, Lookingglass Theatre Company, the Mark Taper Forum, McCarter Theatre Center, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Second Stage Theatre, and The Shakespeare Theatre Company. Based in Chicago, Zimmerman has won 10 Joseph Jefferson Awards – the city's top theatrical honors – including prizes for best production and best direction. She is the Manilow Resident Director at the Goodman, a member of Lookingglass, an artistic associate at Seattle Rep, and a professor of performance studies at Northwestern University. She also directed classics such as *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Pericles*, and *The Trojan Women* at the Goodman; *Henry VIII* and *Measure for Measure* at the New York Shakespeare Festival; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Huntington; and *Pericles* at The Shakespeare Theatre. In 2002, Zimmerman created a new opera with Philip Glass called *Galileo Galilei*, which was presented at the Goodman, BAM, and the Barbican in London. In the last three years, she has staged *Armida*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *La Sonnambula* for the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

***Arabian Nights* is the icing on an already delicious year of theatre at Berkeley Rep.** Starting in September, the season features **three world premieres**: Rinne Groff's compelling *Compulsion*, a delightful new look at Lemony Snicket's *The Composer is Dead*, and a tantalizing show written by Artistic Director Tony Taccone that stars legendary actress Rita Moreno. **Two West Coast premieres** take the stage as well: celebrated collaborators Sarah Ruhl and Les Waters reunite for a refreshing new translation of Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* while Berkeley Rep welcomes *The Great Game: Afghanistan*, an unprecedented cycle of 12 short scripts that caused a sensation in London. The upcoming season also introduces local audiences to Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Ruined* and **two audacious new monologues** from Mike Daisey: *The Last Cargo Cult* and *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs*. This ambitious, adventurous, and entertaining line-up is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, the official sponsors of Berkeley Rep's 2010-11 Season. Meanwhile, following in the footsteps of *Continental Divide*, **Berkeley Rep's production of *Tiny Kushner* is headed to London this fall** – even as *American Idiot* continues to rock Broadway.

Tickets to *The Arabian Nights* start at \$34 – or only \$17.50 for anyone under 30 years of age. Berkeley Rep subscribers save \$5 on tickets to the first 10 performances. The show is presented on the intimate Thrust Stage, which is located at 2025 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots, and only half a block from BART. For tickets, subscriptions, or information, call (510) 647-2949 or (888) 4-BRT-Tix (toll-free) – or just 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 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.

###



THE ARABIAN NIGHTS
FACT SHEET

WHO: Written and directed by Mary Zimmerman
Adapted from *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*
Translated by Powys Mathers
Designed by Daniel Ostling (sets), Mara Blumenfeld (costumes), TJ Gerckens (lights), and Andre Pluess and Ben Sussman (sound)

WHAT: *The Arabian Nights*
Berkeley Rep brings back this hit show for the holidays, an alluring adaptation of the 1,001 nights from the Tony Award-winning director of *Metamorphoses* and *Argonautika*.

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Thrust Stage
2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: **December 11 - 30, 2010**
Saturday 12/11 @ 8 PM
Sunday 12/12 @ 7 PM
Tuesday 12/14 @ 8 PM
Wednesday 12/15 @ 7 PM
Thursday 12/16 @ 8 PM
Friday 12/17 @ 8 PM
Saturday 12/18 @ 2 PM & 8 PM
Sunday 12/19 @ 2 PM & 7 PM
Tuesday 12/21 @ 2 PM & 8 PM
Wednesday 12/22 @ 2 PM & 7 PM
Thursday 12/23 @ 2 PM & 8 PM
Friday 12/24 @ 2 PM
Sunday 12/26 @ 2 PM & 7 PM
Tuesday 12/28 @ 8 PM
Wednesday 12/29 @ 2 PM & 7 PM
Thursday 12/30 @ 2 PM & 8 PM

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						11 DEC 8
12 7	13	14 8	15 7	16 8	17 8	18 2/8
19 2/7	20	21 2/8	22 2/7	23 2/8	24 2	25
26 2/7	27	28 8	29 2/7	30 2/8		

HOW MUCH: \$17.50 - \$73

	Section B	Section A	Premium
All Tuesday and Wednesday performances	\$34	\$46	\$54
Thursday, Friday, Saturday matinees @ 2 PM	\$34	\$46	\$54
Thursday @ 8 PM / Sunday @ 2 PM or 7 PM	\$39	\$53	\$59
Friday @ 8 PM	\$47	\$59	\$65
Saturday @ 8 PM	\$54	\$65	\$73

- Discounts:
- Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
 - \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
 - Berkeley Rep subscribers save \$5 on tickets to the first 10 performances
 - Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

PHOTOS: <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-10an.asp>

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