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BERKELEY REP OFFERS FREE ARTS EDUCATION IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

Outreach to the nine-county Bay Area helps schools meet state education standards

SEPTEMBER 26, 2011 – Every year, alongside its hit shows for Bay Area audiences, Berkeley Repertory Theatre offers outreach programs that challenge thousands of local youth to explore complex ideas and universal themes – both in the classroom and in life. Even as budget battles continue to cut funds for arts education in California and across the country, this nonprofit theatre provides low-cost programs for local schools and teachers. In fact, **Berkeley Rep now offers one free teaching hour to every public school in the nine-county Bay Area!**

“Berkeley Rep persists in its 40-year commitment to keep the arts alive for children in our community,” says **Rachel Fink**, director of the nonprofit’s School of Theatre. “Using techniques that encourage teamwork, students engage their creativity, gain self-confidence, and acquire a deeper understanding of the subject at hand. Our professional teaching artists collaborate with classroom teachers to meet the varying needs of different schools, different grades, and different students – while ensuring that the experience meets state-mandated content standards in multiple subjects.”

One-hour, three-hour, and ten-hour workshops are available from September 2011 through May 2012 and can serve up to 30 students at a time. The first hour is free at any public school in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties (pending staff availability). 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 per hour for any workshop; the rate for private schools is \$75 per hour.

A wide range of outreach programs is now available:

- **Acting (grades 6-12):** In this engaging workshop, students learn to express themselves while venturing into the dynamic world of acting. Using improvisation exercises and scene work, students are introduced to the elements of dramatic action, text analysis, and character development. Acting is offered as a one- or three-hour workshop.
- **Creating Character (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 in Creating Character. Students focus on the fundamentals of acting technique through script analysis, scene work, and character development. Using movement, dialogue, and improvisation, they develop communication skills in an artistic environment. Creating Character is available as a one- or three-hour workshop.
- **Improvisation (grades 6-12):** Discover spontaneity through improvisation. Using a series of theatre games, listening exercises, and narrative scenes, students learn to communicate effectively and trust their impulses. In this workshop, students 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-, three-, or ten-hour workshop.

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- **Performance Lab (grades 9-12):** Bring your curriculum to life! With Performance Lab, students create plays that are rooted in a particular topic identified by their teacher, such as a novel, a historical period, or a theme inspired by one of Berkeley Rep's shows. Through interactive exercises, students learn practical theatre skills such as acting, script analysis, and character development. This program also incorporates creative writing and critical thinking exercises to challenge and engage students, giving them a deeper understanding of the subjects that they study and a richer experience of the world of theatre. Performance Lab is offered as a ten-hour workshop.
- **Playwriting (grades 6-12):** In this workshop, students create short texts inspired by a topic identified by their teacher, such as ancient civilizations or contemporary literature. Through interactive exercises and individual writing assignments, they explore the cause and effect of different events, the motivations and obstacles of their characters, and the overarching themes of a given situation – and the end result is a written script that they've created themselves! Playwriting is offered a one-, three-, or ten-hour workshop.
- **Shakespeare (grades 6-12):** Shakespeare can come alive for students through interactive exercises that immerse them in the playwright's Elizabethan world, his language, and his extraordinary plays. In addition to decoding the poetry and precision of his iambic pentameter, verse, and prose, this workshop lets students build bridges from the Bard to their own worlds. This is offered as a one- or three-hour workshop.
- **Stage Combat (grades 6-12):** *En garde!* Stage Combat is an exciting, physical workshop in which students discover an unusual art: creating the illusion of violence. Stressing safety and teamwork, students explore a variety of techniques – including falls, ear pulls, tripping, and slaps – as well as how to use stage combat as a storytelling technique. The entire class learns a choreographed fight and then each student works with a partner to create a personalized scene that puts the fight in a meaningful context. Stage Combat is available as a one-, three-, or ten-hour workshop.
- **Story Builders (grades K-5):** Story Builders 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 Berkeley Rep's reading list. Story Builders is available as a one-, three-, or ten-hour workshop, as well as a bilingual program for Spanish-speaking ELL students.

Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre is committed to working with local schools and community members to reinforce arts education as a community value and an integral part of the 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. 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. Major support for the School of Theatre's education programs is provided by Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, and Target.

For more information or to schedule a workshop, please call (510) 647-2972, e-mail outreach@berkeleyrep.org, or visit berkeleyrep.org/outreach.

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