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BERKELEY REP AWARDS 16 FELLOWSHIPS TO YOUNG LEADERS IN THEATRE

Best and brightest from colleges across the country enter prestigious training program

JULY 11, 2010 – Today Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced that 16 college graduates from across the nation – **including four natives of Northern California** – have been awarded fellowships for the upcoming season. Every year, through this prestigious training program, young leaders from across America learn their craft alongside accomplished professionals at this Tony Award-winning nonprofit.

It's an unparalleled opportunity to get behind the scenes at one of the nation's hottest theatres. **In the last six years, six shows developed at Berkeley Rep have ended up on Broadway!** Seven more landed off Broadway, one moved to London, two turned into films, and others have toured the nation. Berkeley Rep's fellowship program is sponsored by American Express. In the upcoming season, fellows will collaborate on eight productions with renowned artists such as **Rita Moreno** and **Mikhail Baryshnikov**.

"Most people know about Berkeley Rep's deep commitment and continued investment in new plays and new artists," said **Susan Medak**, the Theatre's managing director. "What they may not realize is that we are also committed to the young administrators and artisans who work behind the scenes. These young people are the future of American theatre, so our fellowship program is an investment in their future and in the future of our vibrant industry. We look forward to collaborating with these talented individuals over the course of the coming year and discovering what they can contribute to a promising season of new plays."

Fellowships at Berkeley Rep combine hands-on practical experience with educational seminars that provide insight into the operation and inner workings of a professional theatre. The program, one of the nation's most esteemed and most extensive, offers training in more than a dozen different disciplines. Fellows make an 11-month commitment to the Theatre, generally starting in August and concluding their residencies in June. The partnership between Berkeley Rep and the fellowship recipient provides invaluable experience and professional contacts, providing a pathway to employment. Many of Berkeley Rep's staff members are former fellows, and a full two-thirds of past fellows continue to work professionally in the industry.

Fellowships for the 2011-12 Season have been awarded to the following 16 young people:

- **Elliott Ares**, a native of Hemet, CA and graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, will be mentored by Sound Supervisor James Ballen.
- **Akasha Atherton**, a native of Sequim, WA and graduate of the Evergreen State College, will be mentored by Properties Manager Ashley Dawn.
- **Amy Bobeda**, a native of Santa Cruz, CA and graduate of UC Santa Cruz, will return for another year under the mentorship of Costume Director Maggi Yule.
- **Mariko Conner**, a native of Berkeley, CA and graduate of Carleton College, will be mentored by Director of Development Lynn Eve Komaromi.
- **Kathryn Gucik**, a native of Hudson, OH and graduate of Ohio University, will be mentored by Company Manager Megan Wygant.

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- **Mary Kay Hickox**, a native of Alameda, CA and graduate of San Francisco State University, will be mentored by Art Director Cheshire Isaacs.
- **Hana Kadoyama**, a native of Fairfax, CA and graduate of Smith College, will be mentored by Production Stage Manager Michael Suenkel.
- **Anya Kazimierski**, a native of Croton-on-Hudson, NY and graduate of Oberlin College, will be mentored by Scenic Artist Lisa Lázár.
- **Alling Langing**, a native of Flagstaff, AZ and graduate of the University of Arizona, will be mentored by Master Electrician Fred Geffken.
- **Hannah Lennett**, a native of Litchfield, ME and graduate of Brown University, will be mentored by Rachel Fink, director of the School of Theatre.
- **Julie McCormick**, a native of Shorewood, WI and graduate of Carleton College, will serve as the Peter Sloss Literary and Dramaturgy Fellow under Literary Manager Madeleine Oldham.
- **Shari McDonald**, a native of Brooklyn, NY and graduate of Bennett College for Women, will be mentored by Rachel Fink, director of the School of Theatre.
- **Gayle Riess**, a native of Melville, NY and graduate of SUNY New Paltz, will be mentored by Production Manager Tom Pearl.
- **Benjamin Sandberg**, a native of Albany, CA and graduate of Oberlin College, will be mentored by Technical Director Jim Smith.
- **Kyle Sircus**, a native of Chicago, IL and graduate of Tufts University, will be mentored by Director of Marketing and Communications Robert Sweibel.
- **Brandon Weinbrenner**, a native of Dallas, TX and graduate of the University of Minnesota, will serve as the Bret C. Harte Directing Fellow under Artistic Director Tony Taccone.

This fresh class of fellows joins Berkeley Rep as it launches a new year of exhilarating plays. The **2011-12 Season** features a script that won the Tony Award for Best Play, performances by legendary talents like Rita Moreno and Mikhail Baryshnikov, a classic Molière comedy, and world premieres for four exciting new shows.

First it's *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*, a captivating new show created specifically for this outstanding actress. Then **Bill Cain**, the award-winning author of *Equivocation* and *9 Circles*, premieres a poignant play about caregiving called *How to Write a New Book for the Bible*. For the holidays, **Kneehigh Theatre Company** comes back to the Bay Area with *The Wild Bride*, another spectacular fairy tale from the creators of *Brief Encounter*. After that, with *Ghost Light*, **Tony Taccone** takes the plunge as a playwright and hands the reins to respected director **Jonathan Moscone**. Next **Steven Epp** – the star of *Figaro* and *The Miser* – returns to unleash a Molière masterpiece with *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*. In March, Associate Artistic Director **Les Waters** takes on **John Logan's** Tony Award-winning *Red*, and finally **Dael Orlandersmith** delivers a fierce and unforgettable performance in the world premiere of *Black n Blue Boys*. As an added attraction, Berkeley Rep is offering a special presentation of *In Paris*, a beautiful romance starring Mikhail Baryshnikov. This entire experience is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors.

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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 six years alone, the company has helped send six shows to Broadway: *American Idiot*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Ghetto Klown*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Passing Strange*, and *Wishful Drinking*.

Come see tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. Subscriptions are now on sale for the upcoming season, and individual tickets go on sale August 21. For details, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

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