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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LOCAL TEENS SHOWCASE TALENT IN BERKELEY REP'S TEEN ONE-ACTS FESTIVAL

### Two winning plays produced by Bay Area youth

FEBRUARY 13, 2014 – As Berkeley Repertory Theatre premieres receive such accolades as one of “10 reasons for theater lovers to leave New York in 2014” in *Time* magazine, fresh and promising talent also emerges from local teenaged playwrights from the nonprofit’s annual [Teen One-Acts Festival](#), produced by its School of Theatre. This year’s iteration will showcase the world premiere of plays by two local high-school students in productions **directed, designed, and performed entirely by local high-school students.**

This year’s selected plays come from playwrights **Rocko Bauman**, a junior at Berkeley High School, for *Bell* and **Chloe Christina Smith**, a freshman at Oakland School of the Arts, for *Death and the Grottie*. Mirroring Berkeley Rep’s commitment to develop new artists, the annual Teen One-Acts Festival provides local teens with the opportunity to express their creativity and learn important skills by working in a collaborative, collegial environment under the guidance of professional mentors.

“The caliber of work the teens produce is remarkable,” notes **Rachel Fink**, director of Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre. “Their commitment and vision throughout the process is inspiring and we’re able to see them grow as artists and individuals. This year’s festival not only showcases the talent of our local teens, but its powerful work comes with a level of wit, depth, and creativity not to be missed.”

**Rocko Bauman**, unveils *Bell*, a 1930’s psychological thriller in which a mysterious mother and daughter arrive at the luxurious Sunset Tower Hotel. Upon their visit, bellboy Tom suddenly becomes entangled in their troubled lives. While coming to their aid, a captivating bond is formed. But Tom’s newfound acquaintances jeopardize more than he anticipated. As Tom risks losing his job and longtime friend to cover their tracks, his sense of devotion is tested. But how far does his loyalty extend and to whom? Director **Eli Miller-Leonard of Berkeley**, a junior at Berkeley High, brings this suspenseful story to the stage.

In *Death and the Grottie* by **Chloe Christina Smith**, Allen Collins leads a life of monotonous routines -- or perhaps he doesn’t lead a life at all. What will urge him to escape the mundane? Maybe it’s a knock on the door, a visit from a familiar neighbor, or an unexpected reminder that nothing lasts forever. With time dwindling and a list of unfulfilled dreams, Allen is forced to discover the meaning of eternity, before eternity discovers him. **Eleanor Maples of Lafayette**, a junior at Oakland School of the Arts, directs this poignant play about the complexities of life.

The ensemble for each show is comprised of talented local teens:

- *Bell* features **Abram Blitz of Berkeley**, a freshman at Oakland School for the Arts; **Elia Chuaqui of El Cerrito**, a senior at El Cerrito High School; **Charlotte Dubach-Reinhold of Berkeley**, a junior at Berkeley High; **David Kaus of Berkeley**, a junior at Berkeley High; **Dylan McCombs of Oakland**, a junior at Miramonte High School; **Emilio Ruiz-Vega of Concord**, a senior at Clayton Valley High School; and **Ella Zalon of Oakland**, a freshman at Oakland School for the Arts.

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- The cast for *Death and the Grottie* includes **Olivia Eggers of Berkeley**, a junior at Berkeley High; **Colin Mooney of Moaraga**, a junior at Miramonte High; **Maya Para of Castro Valley**, a junior at Castro Valley High; and **Alexander Panagos of Berkeley**, a junior at Berkeley High.

The creative team for *Bell* includes stage management by **Tait Adams of Alameda**, a senior at Encinal High School; **Maya Simon of Emeryville**, a freshman at Oakland School of the Arts, designing costumes; lighting design by **Richard Fong of Hercules**, a junior at Saint Mary's High School; and sound design by **Jessica Steele of Berkeley**, a junior at Berkeley High.

*Death and the Grottie's* creative team includes **Berkeley residents** and Berkeley High juniors, **Carson Earnest**, stage managing; **Asé Bakari**, designing scenery; **Jet Harper**, designing costumes; sound design by **Margaret Reager**; and lighting design by **Richard Fong of Hercules**, a junior at Saint Mary's High.

To guide them toward a polished and professional final product, the **teens have been paired with mentors from Berkeley Rep's fellowship program**. This year's mentors include Annalise Baird, Sam Basger, Emily Fassler, Jacob Harvey, Jack Horwitch, Sarah Jacquez, Franzesca Mayer, Sofie Miller, Gabriella Mingoia, Ashley Nguyen, Jared Oates, Claudia Peterson, Telma Sheppard, Rachael Surbaugh, Gena Whitman, and Alexandra Williams-Fleck.

This year's plays take the stage at 8:00 PM on **March 28 and 29** and 2:00 PM on **March 30**. All performances take place at Berkeley Central's Osher Studio in Downtown Berkeley. To purchase advance tickets, visit [berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil](http://berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil) between March 3 and March 26. After March 26 tickets are only available at the door. Tickets are \$10 for students, \$15 for adults.

The **Berkeley Rep Teen Council** is a youth theatre group organized by teens for teens. Its goal is to foster the theatre audiences and theatre professionals of tomorrow by opening channels of communication between teens, theatre professionals, and the community at large while building a base for lifelong learning. Through a variety of interactive programs, the Teen Council provides an opportunity for youth to participate in all aspects of the dramatic process: on stage, backstage, and in front of the stage through its affiliation with the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Currently, the Council has more than 300 members including youth from numerous local high schools. For more information, call (510) 647-2984, visit [berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil](http://berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil), or e-mail [teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org](mailto:teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org).

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**ATTENTION, CALENDAR EDITORS:**

- WHO: Local teens write, direct, perform, and produce new work
- WHAT: The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Teen One-Acts Festival featuring two short plays:  
*Bell* by Rocko Bauman and *Death and the Grottie* by Chloe Christina Smith
- WHEN: Friday, March 28 @ 8:00 PM  
Saturday, March 29 @ 8:00 PM  
Sunday, March 30 @ 2:00 PM
- WHERE: Berkeley Central's Osher Studio,  
2055 Center St @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley, CA 97404

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HOW MUCH: Tickets are \$10 for students, \$15 for adults  
Advanced tickets can be purchased after March 3 at  
[berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil](http://berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil)

INFO: (510) 647-2984 or [berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil](http://berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil)

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