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To learn more about the Create Campaign visit:
berkeleyrep.org/create

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**BERKELEY REP LAUNCHES THE *CREATE CAMPAIGN* TO INVEST
IN THEATRE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION**

Award-winning Theatre embarks on journey to raise funds to support development of new work and signature Thrust Stage

July 31, 2014 – [Berkeley Repertory Theatre](#) has grown from a modest beginning in a storefront on College Avenue to one of the premier theatres in the country. The 46-year-old Theatre with an international reputation has served more than 4 million people, amassed numerous awards including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, presented nearly 400 productions, transferred 29 shows to New York, and premiered over 67 new plays. This year alone Berkeley Rep successfully served 23,000 young people through its School of Theatre, making a huge impact on the community. **Now, the Theatre turns the page on a new chapter with the launch of the Create Campaign, a \$50 million comprehensive campaign to strengthen the relationship between artists, audiences, and the community, and to transform Berkeley Rep into one of the foremost centers for new play development in the country.** At the core of the three-year campaign are two major initiatives: the \$14 million expansion of the Theatre's Harrison Street campus into a center for artistic innovation, and a \$6 million renovation of the Thrust Stage, Berkeley Rep's signature performance space. The campaign will also bolster the Theatre's annual fund and capital reserve fund, and will invest in its staff. With the Create Campaign, Berkeley Rep is poised to re-invest in its commitment to make transformative, bold, and ambitious theatre for generations to come.

"This is a community that has always understood that it takes a village to support something important. In the 1970s the community came together and helped us build the Thrust Stage. In the 1990s the community enabled us to build the Roda Theatre," says **Susan Medak, Berkeley Rep's managing director**. "We're now at another one of those crossroads. We're asking the community to help us be good stewards of our facilities, commit to our core programs, and invest in our people."

"The Create Campaign is the external manifestation of the internal life of the Theatre," adds **Tony Taccone, Michael Leibert Artistic Director**. "It's about creating an architectural expression of our ambitions, of our dreams, and our aspirations. The physical plan is just the central body by which we house our ideas. The Campaign is the culmination of our thinking and our dream for the Theatre."

Creating a center for artistic innovation

Since its inception, Berkeley Rep has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the creation of new work and new ideas. The Create Campaign will help the Theatre realize the next chapter in its evolution of new play development. By 2017 the Theatre will complete the expansion of its 62,000-square-foot Harrison Street campus into an incubator for artistic innovation.

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The expansion will build out the Theatre's Harrison Street campus to create a dynamic artists-in-residence community. The new facility will be the home of [The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work](#), and will include artist housing and rehearsal halls where emerging and established artists can create and develop new work. When complete, the Harrison Street facility will also serve as resource for the larger community. Construction will begin once the \$14 million needed for development is raised.

"The Harrison Street campus is a 62,000-square-foot adventure," **says Taccone**. "We're creating a laboratory, a place where new work can be nurtured, developed, and enhanced. This is a place that is realizing the ambition of something beyond itself. It's trying to create connectivity and scale, and a place where your biggest idea will not be censored."

Investing in theatre for the 21st century: Reinventing the Thrust Stage

Berkeley Rep supports artists from the creation process all the way to performance. Through the Create Campaign, the Theatre will revamp the interior and exterior of its beloved and signature Thrust Stage. The nearly 35-year-old, 400-seat stage has seen well over 15,000 performances, but has not kept up with advances in the field. Renovations will focus on technical upgrades while carefully retaining the hallmark intimacy for which the Thrust is celebrated. These upgrades will include the addition of Meyer Sound's state-of-the-art Constellation system, new energy-efficient lighting and plumbing, refurbished seats, and enhanced accessibility, including additional handrails and wheelchair seating. The Thrust Stage will be closed the summer of 2015 for construction, with performances scheduled to take place in Berkeley Rep's Osher Studio and Roda Theatre as well as other locations.

"Theatre is ultimately about the audience experience," **remarks Taccone**. "The connection between the audience and the actor is so profound in the Thrust that it becomes the defining event. We are here to generate and create the most powerful artistic events that we can possibly imagine and utilizing the Thrust Stage is the most obvious and direct way we can do that. We're committed to that, and it's just one of the issues that the Create Campaign will address."

The box office and Narsai M. David Courtyard will also undergo a host of improvements to enhance community engagement and foster audience participation. This fall construction will begin with the relocation of the box office to a more central location to accommodate the Theatre's three performance venues — the Thrust Stage, Roda Theatre, and Osher Studio across the street at Berkeley Central. Patrons can expect the revamped box office to open in early 2015. To enhance the patron experience, the Theatre will transform its courtyard into a covered atrium, making it available year-round to the community. Additional enhancements include the addition of a patron lounge and updated ADA-accessible restroom facilities.

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During the quiet phase of the Campaign, the Theatre, led by a nine-member steering committee and the board, raised more than \$21 million including a gift of Meyer Sound's Constellation Acoustic System to support the technological upgrades for the Thrust Stage. The Create Campaign is also being championed by an honorary committee comprised of luminaries and prolific artists, including actress **Kathleen Chalfant**; award-winning actor, playwright, and director **Colman Domingo**; British playwright **David Edgar**; American chef, restaurateur, activist, and author **Alice Waters**; Pulitzer Prize-winning American author and screenwriter **Lawrence Wright**; playwright, director, and Tectonic Theater Project founder **Moisés Kaufman**; and former Berkeley Rep managing director **Mitzi Sales**.

Berkeley Rep invites the public to learn more about the Create Campaign and the myriad ways to contribute to the next exciting chapter of the Theatre's history. This fall the Theatre will provide behind-the-scenes access to the development plans for the Harrison Street campus and downtown theatres through a series of tours. For those who wish to play a pivotal role in helping Berkeley Rep reach its campaign goal, naming opportunities are available, including an engraved name plate displayed on a seat in the Thrust, name recognition on the new Donor Wall, or a personalized dedication on a square paver in the Narsai M. David Courtyard. **Visit the Create Campaign website for further information on how to get involved: berkeleyrep.org/create**

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international 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. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities – which include the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.

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