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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**BERKELEY REP WELCOMES 15 FELLOWS FOR THE 2016-17 SEASON
Nonprofit's prestigious program trains the next generation of theatre leaders**

July 25, 2016 -- Today Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced that 15 young professionals have been awarded fellowships for the 2016-17 season. Graduates of esteemed universities across the country compete for positions in this program—a year-long deep dive into the operations of the award-winning theatre. Spanning many artistic and administrative disciplines, fellowships provide opportunities for industry hopefuls to hone their talent and launch professional careers in the arts. In addition, fellows participate in career development seminars, build professional contacts, and even serve as mentors themselves for Berkeley Rep's annual Teen One-Acts Festival.

"We are so thrilled to announce another terrific selection of fellows and future visionaries," says Managing Director **Susan Medak**. "As always, the fellows come from diverse backgrounds, which is one of the best attributes of this program. They are an important part of our mission, and it's our job to create an atmosphere where they can learn, grow, and use this opportunity to launch their careers."

In this program, which is sponsored by American Express, fellows train alongside a team of artists, administrators, and designers to accomplish professional goals. Starting in July 2016 and concluding in June 2017, the fellowship provides invaluable experience to these young self-starters and allows increased access into employment in professional theatre. Many alumni of this program continue to work as theatre administrators and practitioners, employed full time by organizations across the country, including Berkeley Rep.

Fellowships for the 2016--17 season have been awarded to the following:

- **Yoshinori Asai**, a native of Osaka, Japan and graduate of San Jose State University, will serve as the scenic art fellow under the mentorship of Charge Scenic Artist Lisa Lázár.
- **Laura Baucom**, a native of Charlotte, NC and graduate of University of North Carolina Wilmington, will serve as the stage management fellow under the mentorship of Production Stage Manager Michael Suenkel.
- **Mariah Brougher**, a native of Seattle, WA and graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, will serve as the Harry Weininger Sound Fellow under the mentorship of Sound Supervisor James Ballen.
- **Michael Curry**, a native of Pittsburgh, PA and graduate of Morehouse College, will serve as the education fellow under the mentorship of Director of the School of Theatre Rachel Hull.
- **Lauren Goldfarb**, a native of Manassas, VA and graduate of the College of William & Mary, will serve as the marketing/digital communications fellow under the mentorship of Director of Marketing, Communications, and Patron Engagement, Polly Winograd Ikonen.
- **Josh Hemmo**, a native of Tucson, AZ and graduate of University of Arizona, will work as the lighting/electrics fellow under the mentorship of Master Electrician Fred Geffken.
- **Chika Ike**, a native of South Bend, IN and graduate of Indiana University, will serve as the Bret C. Harte Directing Fellow under the mentorship of Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone.

- **Noah Kramer**, a native of Oakland, CA and graduate of UC Santa Cruz, will serve as the properties fellow under the mentorship of Properties Supervisor Jill Green.
- **Cynthia Peñaloza**, a native of San Diego, CA and graduate of San Diego State University, will serve as the graphic design fellow under the mentorship of Art Director Nora Merezicky.
- **Ankita Raturi**, a native of New Delhi, India and graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts, will serve as the Peter F. Sloss Literary/Dramaturgy Fellow under the mentorship of Director of The Ground Floor/Resident Dramaturg Madeleine Oldham.
- **Zoey Russo**, a native of Brooklyn, NY and graduate of CUNY Hunter College, will serve as the production management fellow under the mentorship of Production Manager Peter Dean.
- **Julia Starr**, a native of Washington, DC and graduate of Stanford University, will serve as the development/fundraising fellow under the mentorship of Director of Development Lynn Eve Komaromi.
- **Morgan Steele**, a native of Los Angeles, CA and graduate of UC Berkeley, will serve as the company management fellow under the mentorship of Company Manager Jean-Paul Gressieux.
- **Kennedy Warner**, a native of Davis, CA and graduate of Mount Holyoke College, will serve as the costume fellow under the mentorship of Costume Director Maggi Yule.
- **Lauren Williams**, a native of Portland, OR and graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, will serve as the scenic construction fellow under the mentorship of Technical Director Jim Smith.

Fellows will serve in integral capacities in this season's compelling productions: The 2016-17 season begins in September with the world premiere of ***It Can't Happen Here***, adapted by Berkeley Rep's Michael Leibert Artistic Director, Tony Taccone, and Bennett S. Cohen from Sinclair Lewis' 1935 eerily prescient novel of the same name. Written in 1935 during the rise of fascism in Europe, the satirical ***It Can't Happen Here*** follows the ascent of a demagogue who becomes president of the United States by promising to return the country to greatness. In October, ***The Last Tiger in Haiti***, written by Jeff Augustin and co-produced with La Jolla Playhouse, tells the story of five kids in modern-day Haiti, entangled in a dark history of servitude. They spin spellbinding folktales, vying for the title of best storyteller—and dreaming of their freedom. In December, Emma Rice and Kneehigh Theatre, the theatrical alchemists who brought us *Tristan & Yseult* and *The Wild Bride*, return with ***946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips***, a tender new coming-of-age tale that uncovers the secrets behind World War II's D-Day landings. In February, the Tony Award-nominated, spectacularly foul-mouthed smash hit, ***Hand to God***, written by Robert Askins, makes its West Coast premiere on the Berkeley Rep stage. When the devil, in the guise of a sock puppet named Tyrone, infiltrates a Christian Puppet Ministry in Cypress, Texas, he shocks the congregation with his outrageous insinuations, exposing their deepest secrets—and teaching us all about love, grief, and what it means to be human. In March, Lisa Loomer's ***Roe***, co-produced by Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage, investigates the events behind *Roe v. Wade*—the fiercely-debated, landmark 1973 case that legalized abortion. *Roe* unveils the divergent personal journeys of lawyer Sarah Weddington and plaintiff Norma McCorvey (“Jane Roe”) and reflects the polarization of beliefs in America while illuminating the heart and passion each person has for their cause. In May, the anticipated new musical, ***Monsoon Wedding***, makes its world premiere. With a book by Sabrina Dhawan, music by Vishal Bhardwaj, lyrics by Susan Birkenhead, and direction by award-winning film director Mira Nair, the perfect storm starts brewing when family members from around the world descend on Delhi for a nonstop four-day celebration of an arranged marriage between a modern upper-middle-class Indian family's only daughter and an American guy she's never met. To close the season, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' ***An Octoroon*** makes its West Coast premiere. A modern twist on Dion Boucicault's 1859 melodrama, *An Octoroon* provides a comedic, refreshing, and sometimes jarring commentary on culture, power, and race.

The 2016-17 season is supported by BART, Wells Fargo and Peet's Coffee, who have generously renewed their commitments as Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors.

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 nearly 400 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 Peet's Theatre, 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