THE BERKELEY REP MAGAZINE
2016–17 · ISSUE 4

HAND TO GOD

USEFUL AS TOILET PAPER

BANKSY'S GOT NOTHIN ON ME!

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SEXY ANGEL

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Beverages in cans or cups with lids are allowed.

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Many patrons are sensitive to the use of perfumes and other scents.

Phones / electronics / recordings
Please make sure your cell phone or watch alarm will not beep. Use of recording equipment or taking of photographs in the theatre is strictly prohibited.

Please do not touch the set or props
You are welcome to take a closer look, but please don't step onto the stage.

Bringing youth to the Theatre
Many Berkeley Rep productions are recommended for students high school age and above. Please inquire before bringing young children to the theatre. All attendees must be ticketed: please, no babes in arms.

No re-entry
If you leave during the performance, we may not be able to reseat you until an appropriate break. You may watch the remainder of the act on a lobby or bar screen.
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When I last wrote to you, the world was a different place. While we were all concerned about the presidential election, only a few of us anticipated the outcome. Even while creating It Can’t Happen Here, which speculated on the consequences of a populist political triumph, we held onto the collective belief that hate would, in the end, give way to civility, and that the nation would continue to move forward with a modest progressive agenda. Never have I been so saddened by the prescience of one of our plays. As you all know, the results of the election sent shock waves throughout the world, a seismic shift that, for many of us, altered some of our fundamental assumptions about the state of our country. The lens through which we view the world is simply not the same. Everything has been affected, most notably our collective internal life.

You can feel this at every performance at our theatre. People are listening differently: the general interest in our shared social experience has been replaced with a hyper-awareness of the issues that divide us. The language used in any given play to talk about class, race, identity, morality, ethics...has taken on a host of new meanings. We are more aware of each other, and, it feels to me at least, the need to be together as a conscious community has never been higher. The opening line of our last play, 946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips, brazenly declared that there would be singing in dark times. I would add that there will also be dancing...and laughter. Not just the gentle laughter of recognition or poking fun at some passing absurdity, but wild, raucous laughter. Laughter laced with danger, which has the capacity to release rage and even vengeance.

Our demons are closer to the surface, and a certain kind of comedy can give them full voice. As so it is with Hand to God, the subversive play by Robert Askins that comes at us full throttle. A play that features a raging puppet with an insatiable appetite to upend the world, whose every word creates chaos, and who elicits hysterical laughter while gleefully wreaking utter havoc...I can’t think of a comedy that’s more appropriate for this moment. And who better to navigate the comic turbulence than David Ivers, a man who lives for this kind of work. It’s pure pleasure to have him back with us, wielding his directorial magic with a team of intrepid collaborators. So here we go, fellow travelers...To quote the Grand Masters of the Inquisition just before burning people at the stake: “Let the dogs' beards be made!”

Sincerely,

Tony Taccone
Kidd Pivot and Electric Company Theatre

*Betroffenheit*

A collaboration between two of Canada's most renowned and imaginative companies, choreographer Crystal Pite's Kidd Pivot and playwright/performer Jonathon Young's Electric Company Theatre, *Betroffenheit* is a gripping and emotionally visceral exploration of psychological trauma.

“Rare and staggering”
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William Shakespeare’s

*Twelfth Night*

Created by Filter Theatre in Association with the Royal Shakespeare Company

Sean Holmes, director

Britain’s acclaimed Filter Theatre, “a company blessed with wit, style, and a touch of magic” *(The Daily Telegraph, London)* presents Shakespeare’s masterwork of romance, satire, and mistaken identity.

“Puts the fun back into *Twelfth Night* and allows us to become participants in a feast of misrule”
—The Guardian

March 22–26
ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE

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This is an interesting time to be a teen. Long gone are the days when 16 year olds had paper routes, babysat, or bagged groceries. Those with the financial means now fill their summers with internships, and those without resources are often footloose and unemployed.

One of the things that has gotten lost with the lack of job opportunities for kids is the opportunity to imagine what different kinds of work can look and feel like. They have a limited understanding of what actual work entails, and their images of work, gleaned from television and film, often bear little relation to reality. This is as true of careers in the arts as in any other profession. And as a result, we have so many young people who intend to be "stars" or imagine only that they will be the next Meryl Streep or the next Beyoncé, with so little understanding of what opportunities await them. And with such abstract notions of what constitutes a career, it is difficult for this younger generation to imagine how to train for and be prepared for a life of work.

That is just one of the reasons we put so much energy into providing career planning for the 400+ members of our Teen Council. We’ve realized that we can meaningfully expand their understanding of what work in the arts means while also broadening their imaginations about what skills they will need to hone if they are going to be effective and employable.

Members of our Teen Council are given opportunities to learn side by side with working professionals. They are exposed to the wide diversity of career options available to them through our live and online seminars. And each season, we help to send a handful of council members to the Theatre Communications Group’s national conference, where they can listen, be inspired by, and engage with hundreds of working professionals.

Over the years, some of our teen alumni have gone on to work in the theatres across the country. Others have found new careers that they could not have imagined at age 16. However, what we hear from all of them, is that the exposure to and close proximity to a work environment, and their access to people who are passionate about their work, helped them chart a path to meaningful adult lives.

Our Teen Council enlists your support for this year’s trip to the TCG Conference. To learn more, visit bit.ly/support-tcg-teens. If you choose to support them, who knows?, you may be investing in the next Meryl Streep.

Warmly,

Susan Medak
Robert Askins, a native of Cypress, Texas, was a mostly unknown, emerging playwright on the off-Broadway scene in NYC before he shot to prominence with *Hand to God* in 2011. Since then, the play has had a wonderfully long life (see The Origin Story). Askins and Literary Manager Sarah Rose Leonard have known each other since 2010, when she ran a writers’ group that he was in. They hopped on the phone in December to discuss the concept of goodness, his evolution as a writer, and of course, rage.

**What are you up to right now?**
Oh man, um, got a thing with HBO. Got a couple new plays in the works. Couple musicals.

**What is the thing with HBO?**
It’s a TV show based on a secret society that I was in at Baylor University. We did pranks and published the campus satire magazine and were masked and anonymous because the administration was so conservative. We sort of waged a war against the president of the university. There was a constant push and pull between having secret parties with Jell-O flying and calling out the administration for removing birth control from the campus health centers.

**Sometimes we produce**
a play that is already riding a wave of success, simply because it is irresistable. *Hand to God*, the dark comedy by Robert Askins, felt like a no-brainer for our season: it is smart, irreverent, and made us fall over laughing. The play has had a remarkable and rare journey to becoming the most produced play in America this season.

*Hand to God* premiered in 2011 off off Broadway at Ensemble Studio Theatre (est), where Askins was a member of their young writers collective, Youngblood. That initial, small production, directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel, sold out, and so est brought it back in 2012. Then, in 2014 the off-Broadway mcc Theater remounted the est production with original cast members Steven Boyer and Geneva Carr, whom Askins wrote the roles of Jason and Margery for, respectively. Boyer earned a Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play, and the production won an Off Broadway Alliance Award for Best Play. In an underdog move, the play transferred to Broadway in 2015, where it was nominated for five Tony Awards. Their ad campaign was wonderfully self-conscious about the move uptown: “No Movie Stars. No London Transfer. No Film Adaptation. Pray For Us.” Funnily enough, *Hand to God* went on to have a commercial run in London.

**Is it okay that you’re revealing the secret society?**
I don’t care!

**Great. Complete anarchy. Which brings us to *Hand to God*. It was only your second play to get produced and it catapulted to success quite fast. How did it feel to get thrust into the spotlight?**
It was hard. Like who doesn’t move to New York with the notion of making it?! The difficulty was operating the industry inside all of the excitement. Nobody ever tells you how to meet with a Broadway producer. Nobody tells you how to select agents and when to say “that’s a bad idea.” The whole temperature of the industry changes when you go from not-for-profit to commercial.

But I didn’t want to go to Broadway, I wanted to be David Mamet or Sam Shepard. *Hand to God* was an experiment in comedy, whereas the stuff I’d been writing up to then were strange, dark westerns. And *Hand to God* is not, not dark.

**No, it’s really dark!**
But it’s got jokes. I think that modulation was everything. Adding the wackiness and the zaniness. But it wasn’t calculated, it was a natural evolution to me asking, “What if it’s a puppet? What if all these hyper-masculine, out-of-date ideas about the masculine are put in the mouth of a puppet and then it just did the thing?”

**How has your relationship to the play changed over the years?**
It’s interesting, you see the play a *million* times, a million times, and the music is in your head. I have the original cast members’ line readings as punctuation in the way I hear the lines. It’s both delightful and scary hearing new performances of it.

And sometimes it gets nostalgic because this play represents a moment in my life. How amazing that a guy is stuck in the amber of these words, but also, what a blessed moment of ignorance was the young, angry man writing this play.

**The Origin Story**

When we pick plays we never know if other theatres are choosing them too. In this case the stars aligned to allow 13 theatres across the country produce *Hand to God* over the course of the 2016–17 season. The biggest question we had after we found out that we had the rights to the play was, “Who would give this play the verve and humor it demands?” Director David Ivers was the obvious choice — his interpretation of *One Man, Two Guvnors* in 2015 gave us nonstop giggles. We are excited to partner with David to give this crazy gem of a play a new production for Bay Area audiences.
Who were you then as a writer?

My dark westerns had been getting funnier and funnier. There’s a weird thing where you transition from trying to write like somebody else to writing like yourself. I’m a big Sam Shepard fan, but I don’t know his version of the West. I don’t know Horton Foote’s version of Texas. Those are not the versions of the South that I experienced. Trying to fit one’s own life into somebody else’s understanding, that mode of playwriting is a young person’s issue. You start by imitating. There was something about listening to the humor get louder and louder until...and I’m a weird dude. Finally I was like, “Alright, let’s get weird. Let’s get really fucking weird.”

What inspired you to write Hand to God?

It came about by seeing Steven Boyer and Geneva Carr [original cast members] together at a party and I was two beers in and it was just obvious, seeing those actors together, what the play was. It was, she’s his mother and starts fucking his friend.

Timothy is partially based on a kid who was my best friend, who had a terrible relationship with his mother. He never had sex with my mother, thank god. We hung out but he was a fucking dick. He was really unpleasant. And all the girls just loved it. He had a shitty skater’s haircut and wore all black and was cool for no reason.

And my dad died when I was 16. In a lot of ways Tyrone is a metaphor for substance abuse as much as he is rage. Because you know you get a little drunk and you can say whatever the fuck you want; you can adopt tactics which are not necessarily native to you.

What made you want to use a puppet?

I hate puppets. I was held back between kindergarten and first grade and the school therapist took a whole bunch of us into a room and we would do a little puppet show that was supposed to help us process our emotions. It was a puppet dolphin named Duso and you have to sing to Duso to get him to come out.

That sounds horrible.

Yeah, you had to sing, “Hey Duso, come on out,” and I fucking hated it. I hated it. I hated it. When I was a young person growing up in the suburbs in heavily Christian Texas, it was like, “STOP LYING TO ME. You are trying to give me a world that does not exist. It is not cartoons and Disney movies. It is not your neutered version of the Bible. The Bible is full of rape and genocide.” Like Ecclesiastes is in part the genesis of existentialism. It says over and over, “all is vain and vexation of spirit.” The darkness is there in American culture and in your religious culture. And just down the fucking road. Will you people stop it? You cannot hide a better world into existence. You know, and we’re in this fucking country, like this fucking Trump backlash is a lot because liberals won’t look at the fact that the darkness doesn’t go away.

What do you think it says about America that this is the most produced play in the year that Trump got elected?

Tyrone’s an asshole. Tyrone is an asshole who’s like wrecking shop. That’s our president elect. But is this a pre-revolutionary feeling? Or is it the rise of Hitler? Because if it’s pre-French Revolution, it’s an interesting moment that can serve as a pressure gasket before a tear. A large portion of this country has been fucked. Even if people aren’t paying attention to it, something is happening. And the dickhead is saying it. Like even if the dickhead is wrong, the emotional content is not inaccurate. If it like, if it draws attention the wound, then it’s valuable. But if we bleed out, then it’s disastrous.

And our storytelling has to get more rowdy ‘cause it’s a fucking rowdy time. Let us stop pretending that we understand the world that we are in. The well-ordered stories of the past are insufficient to explain the now!

There is much discussion about “goodness” in the play: how to be good, can we be good. Why do you think it is so important to these characters to be good?

Well. There are three passages that I return to over and over again. One is from Ecclesiastes, a speech in Measure for Measure, and T.S. Eliot’s poem, “Gerontion”...

[from Measure for Measure]:

Be absolute for death; either death or life
Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep: a breath thou art,
Servile to all the skyey influences,
That dost this habitation, where thou keepst,
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death’s fool;
For him thou labour’st by thy flight to shun
And yet runn’st toward him still. Thou art not noble;

It goes on for a while.

Wait, why do you have that memorized?!

I was working at a Greek restaurant in midtown and there were long periods before the rushes came on, so I would memorize things. And all of them are about how insufficient our understanding of good and evil are. How death meets the rich man as the poor man, the villain as the hero. None of them are interested in the afterlife, and I’m not really interested in that either. So then how does one generate a virtue? My father was nice and my father is dead. And he is dead before his time. How? He was nice and frustrated. He was nice and miserable. He had nothing. He was nice and nothing. What is the profit in that? I see people who get what they want and they are predatory. They are evil. So then what is this goodness that you’re asking of me? If all ends are even, what is the virtue in virtue?

What keeps you from burning out on the play as you see it in its various iterations?

It’s the feeling in the room every time. People lose their shit. And that’s what I want. I want them to be excited and to be transported and I want their expectations to be subverted. The machinery that is me lights up when I see other people light up.
Tyrone, the sock puppet star of *Hand to God*, belongs to a large international family of trickster puppets, some of which can trace their ancestry to the fifth century BCE. These characters range from Karagöz in Turkey, Karagiosis in Greece, Petrushka in Russia, to Kasperle in Germany. They are marked by their unabashed rejection of societal norms and often, an embrace of violent behavior. Puppets are ideal for enacting violence partially because they can: their bodies can break, their heads can flip, their destruction can be undone. They also are able to express emotions that aren’t acceptable in human society, such as unbridled anger and sexual perversity. Tricksters demonstrate an excess of human capability: they rape, steal, burn, beat, kill. Bil Baird, the legendary puppeteer who is responsible for “The Lonely Goatherd” in the film version of *The Sound of Music*, said in his masterful book *The Art of the Puppet*, “A puppet’s indecent outrages are more acceptable than a human being’s.” Baird knew this well: Orson Welles commissioned him to make puppets representing the seven deadly sins for his version of Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*.

It is believed that the earliest origins of the trickster puppet belong to religion. Throughout history, the Church flip-flopped on whether puppets were good or bad. In the medieval period, it switched from thinking that puppets were idolatrous to using them to advocate religious images. In Italy, marionettes were invented to tell biblical tales. (The word “marionette” originated from the Virgin Mary, a common character in the skits.) In England, live actors mixed with life-sized puppets, which played special effects characters such as “souls” that sprang from dying villains and the Holy Ghost. Eileen Blumenthal writes in *Puppetry: A World History* that “by the sixteenth century, with this mainly live-actor tradition in decline, versions [of bible stories] played entirely by puppets had developed” and that simultaneously, “secular skits and farces continued in the face of (or behind the back of) the disapproving Church.” These skits often utilized characters who mocked Christianity and society at large. They proved to be the lifeblood of the entertainment scene — puppet shows were the only live entertainment allowed to continue operating when the theatres were shuttered in 1600s England. Actors and theatre owners complained, arguing that puppets were more depraved than live actors. Apparently a mayor did try to banish a puppet show from a town fair during this time, but he died the next year and the show returned, irreverence intact and starring the mayor as a puppet.

The most famous trickster puppet sprang from the character Pulcinella, a stock commedia dell’arte character. Stock commedia characters have a certain cluster of exaggerated characteristics that drive their actions. Pulcinella is a jerk: violent, mean-spirited, feral. He represents the social under-
class and pointedly discards the mute politeness that a man of higher status “should” possess. This seemingly crude character represented freedom to many at the invention: he didn’t bow down to authority, political or interpersonal. In England the live-actor Pulcinella evolved into the hand puppet Punch, perhaps the most recognized puppet in Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas.

Punch is known for bludgeoning his victims with a great big stick, whether provoked or not. Eileen Blumenthal calls Punch “a devil-may-care serial killer” and notes that he is the “most sociopathic version” of the trickster figure. His costar in violence is his wife Judy, who, to our general satisfaction, whacks him back. Typical elements of a Punch and Judy show include: Punch mishandling their baby, Punch and Judy bashing each other, a policeman coming for Punch only to be taken out by Punch’s stick, and Punch impaling the magistrate, all interspersed with song and jokes. After the killing spree, sometimes Punch faces the Devil and kills him too. Remarkably, despite the outrageous nature of the violence, horror inevitably gives way to squeals of laughter. Charles Dickens lovingly referenced the show in his novels, and in 1849 he wrote a friend, “In my opinion the Street Punch is one of those extravagant reliefs from the realities of life which would lose its hold upon the people if it were made moral and instructive.” Indeed, audiences have long rooted for Punch. In the 19th century an English performer tried presenting a moral version of the skit and audiences hated it. Punch and Judy shows still exist to this day and have been featured in popular entertainment ranging from the Marx Brothers’ Monkey Business to Disney’s The Little Mermaid to Pink Floyd’s The Wall.

Hand puppets also succeeded in critiquing society through subtler forms, leaving violence aside but remaining tricksters at their heart. Kukla and Ollie from the children’s TV show Kukla, Fran and Ollie, which ran from 1947 to 1957, concerned themselves with moral quandaries and political topics, but also had a slapstick side. This duality in subject matter caused it to have both a child and an adult fan base. Jacqui Shine writes in Slate that the show counted John Steinbeck, Tallulah Bankhead, Orson Welles, and Thornton Wilder as some of its four million fans, and that Edward Albee based the protagonist of his one-act The Sandbox on one of its characters. Kukla, Fran and Ollie was mostly ad-libbed and revolved around the dozen puppets (all animated by Burr Tillstrom, the show’s creator) and one human (Fran Allison) who were members of the fictional theatre company the Kuklapolitan Players. Plots usually revolved around the company’s season: they staged versions of classic works and performed original songs. The puppets often gave voice to dissenting views on current events. In one episode Kukla and Ollie read an actual New Yorker review of their show in which the reviewer said it operated “on so high an intellectual level that my ear loses contact with my brain.” The puppets argued and ended up wrestling; Ollie suggested that maybe the reviewer would like that kind of humor better.

Jim Henson, the creator of The Muppets and a Sesame Street contributor, riffed on Kukla, Fran and Ollie when he created his puppets. Many of Henson’s creations are marked by what Frank Oz (the puppeteer behind Miss Piggy, Bert, Grover, and Cookie Monster, among others) calls “affectionate anarchy:” puppets eat their drum sets, devour handfuls of cookies, shoot themselves out of cannons, perform extensive slapstick numbers, and also offer a side portion of moral advice. This sense of anarchy and soul-searching is echoed in the musical Avenue Q, which uses puppet power to talk about race, sex, and the severe discomfort of growing up in brash, comical tones that read as vulgar to some and hilarious to others.

Which brings us to Tyrone, our truth-spewing, seriously violent star. A sock puppet is as basic as it gets (except for perhaps a mustache drawn on the hand): it’s what you make with your kids on a rainy day. They are used in Christian puppet ministries across America to perform stories from the Bible. They sing gospel competitively in church social circles. They are used as a therapy tool to get children to speak to their emotions. The sock puppet is the democratization of the hand puppet: everyone can make one, everyone can relate to one. It is the puppet of the common man. Hand to God playwright Robert Askins suggests that Tyrone is a masculine voice that we all know well: he is the bully, the aggressive streak, the anger that bubbles up. Perhaps Tyrone is Pulcinella’s great-great grandson: his expression of violence has morphed through the ages, but it is still there nevertheless. And it needs to get out.

Puppets are ideal for enacting violence partially because they can: their bodies can break, their heads can flip, their destruction can be undone.
You started working in theatre as a classical actor. How did you find your way to directing?

I was lucky, as an actor, to be employed in resident companies, which kept me constantly in touch with the process. I was at the Denver Center for 10 years and when you open a show there, the following Thursday you’re in rehearsal for the next one. I became much more passionate about the process and less so the performance, the product. Working with so many directors and dramaturgs and really amazing people designing plays, I started to feel like that was the next stage of my growth. And I am so grateful for that career as an actor; talk about hands-on training!

You develop new plays at Utah Shakespeare Festival, alongside producing classics. What draws you to new work?

New work is starting to light me up in thrilling and unexpected ways (talk about being late to the party). I’m a bit OCD about structure in plays. This is a direct result of spending the majority of my career with the classics. The classics teach us about technique and modes of practice and give us a bit of dramaturgical prowess. They provide us with tools to unlock meaning by examining how plot, character, action add up. Now...utilizing those tools to look at the scope and soundness of new work is thrilling. I’m learning new forms of structure, which allows me to identify how a play might be orchestrated differently. So, I suppose I’m drawn to the learning. It’s humbling to work with a playwright who is aware they are breaking from tradition while simultaneously embracing the context of how we receive plays. It’s so thrilling to do a play or hear a play or read a new play for the first time. And something about the chance to be the first or the second voice without the expectations frees the artist. I don’t have that expectation of how we’re going to do “to be or not to be” gnawing away at me. This is really exciting for the actor, artist, technician, audience member, front of house, and institution all at the same time. We become a classless society in the hearing of new work because everyone has to receive it so vulnerably close to its inception. We have no expectation of what came “before.” And for a guy like me who’s spent a lot of time with dead playwrights, that is powerful, eye-opening, humbling, and impactful stuff.

What attracts you specifically to Hand to God?

The relationship between Jason and his mom is really heartbreaking. When I found that in the script I was immediately drawn in. It wasn’t just “oh look at us, we’re being so rebellious and producing this play that’s so ‘fuck off’ and an editorial on religion and institutionalized systems of belief.” It has a heartbeat. Pages later, I found myself laughing out loud. People in the play say things that we all say and hope no one hears, and Robert Askins is absolutely unapologetic. He demands of us to acknowledge that if we know ourselves, then we know these people. You know this guy in the classroom, you know this young woman. The characters are hanging on so tightly to their systems of belief and every one of them gives in to some version of evil. It’s subversive, delicious, has a structure that is heightened and superior and terrifies me for all the right reasons.

Is there a character you strongly relate to in the play?

I’m a dad so I’m really sympathetic to the kids, especially Jason/Tyrone. But the cynical side in me absolutely loves the pastor. The hypocrisy that is so prevalent in our country that permeates virtually every public, private, political, or religious institution is in play here as the pastor negotiates a host of hypocrisies. Equally, you can draw a line and say, “I see what’s happening—Tyrone is having an effect on everyone.” And all of that is very beautifully and classically drawn, in this totally fucked up container.
There’s a lot of hilarious physicality that goes into that container, especially with the puppets. How do you collaborate with actors to draw out the funny?

I don’t know if you can ever work on the “let’s be funny.” It’s what everyone says: you’ve got to work towards the truth. If you want the laugh, ask for the tea. Don’t shake the tea when you get it, just ask for the tea and get the tea and you’ll get the laugh. But there is a mask to physical comedy, there is a precision about it and yet I always hope it’s like jazz. The hope is that, on a particular day, with a particular comic moment, we say, “Yesterday we played this in the key of C, today let’s play it in the key of G and see what happens.” And in that way, everyone is involved in the making of the music until we settle on the written (highly repeatable) score.

“The relationship between Jason and his mom is really heartbreaking. When I found that in the script I was immediately drawn in. It has a heartbeat. Pages later, I found myself laughing out loud.”
—DAVID IVERS

Are your two sons going to see the show, or is this one a little bit too PG-13?

I think it’s too PG-13. I’d mostly bring them to anything, because I get to be involved in the discussion of “what did you see?” But in this, there’s an element of violence and sexual predator stuff that I don’t think they have a context or a lens for yet. So I think I have to be a good parent. They’re 5 and 8—if they were 13 or 11, we might bring them and have the conversation, but I think that they’re just too young at this point. They both love Michael Doherty (Jason), who I’ve worked with before. They think he’s the funniest man in the whole world. I’m sure when they come visit, when we’re running maybe the swing section that’s just mellow, they’ll come on in and watch and they’ll feel awesome that they got to see.

Why do you think sock puppets in particular work so well for this story?

The sock puppet is probably the most universal, most innocent, most accessible way that any person, at any time, can make an alter ego. Everyone’s got socks for the most part. We’re also aware the whole time that it’s being manipulated by someone. The idea that the devil can actually get inside that hand and that person and take over that puppet is petrifying because we’re all aware of the conceit.

You put the puppet on the hand of someone who is the most vulnerable, which is this kid. He’s already got some issues socially: he’s lost his father, and is in a broken situation, in a basement in Cypress, Texas. And this isn’t some poor, southern town. Cypress is a suburb of a major city; there’s a high median income. If it’s white trash, small-town Texas, a liberal audience can write it off as “those people” and we’re just not going to do that.

(Left to right) David Ivers, Laura Odeh, and Michael Doherty in rehearsal for Hand to God
PHOTO BY JOEL DOCKENDORF
SEASON SPONSORS
By Lisa Loomer
Directed by Bill Rauch
Co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage

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By Lisa Loomer
Directed by Bill Rauch
Co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage

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Berkeley Rep
Berkeley Repertory Theatre presents
the West Coast premiere of

HAND TO GOD

BY
Robert Askins

DIRECTED BY
David Ivers

FEBRUARY 3–MARCH 19, 2017
PEET’S THEATRE · MAIN SEASON

This show includes a 15-minute intermission.

Hand to God is made possible
thanks to the generous support of

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Lynne Carmichael
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CAST
Jason/Tyrone  Michael Doherty
Pastor Greg  David Kelly
Timothy  Michael McIntire
Margery  Laura Odeh
Jessica  Carolina Sanchez

PRODUCTION STAFF
Scenic Design  Jo Winiarski
Costume Design  Meg Neville
Lighting Design  Alexander V. Nichols
Sound Design  Joe Payne
Puppet Design  Amanda Villalobos
Casting  Amy Potozkin, CSA
Stage Manager  Michael Suenkel
Assistant Stage Manager  Chris Waters

The actors and stage managers are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Hand to God was developed by the Ensemble Studio Theatre/Youngblood Program at Southampton Arts in July 2011 and received its world premiere production at the Ensemble Studio Theatre in October 2011.

Off-Broadway premiere at the MCC Theater March 10, 2014
Artistic Directors: Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey & William Cantler
Executive Director: Blake West

Hand to God is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Off-Broadway premiere at the MCC Theater March 10, 2014
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Michael Doherty
JASON/TYRONE
Michael is making his Berkeley Rep debut. His off-Broadway credits include Dublin by Lamplight (59E59/Nina Simonds Theatre Company). His regional credits include Ragtime, Man of La Mancha, A Christmas Carol (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), Peter and the Starcatcher (Connecticut Repertory Theatre), Charley’s Aunt and Taming of the Shrew (Utah Shakespeare Festival), Assistance (the Wilma Theater), Next to Normal and The History Boys (Ardent Theatre Company), Mr. Hart and Mr. Brown (People’s Light), Moon Over Buffalo (Gulfshore Playhouse), The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Theatre Horizon — Barrymore Award for Supporting Actor), and many more. His TV pilot, Los jarochos, won Best Writing at the 2013 Independent TV Festival. Michael received his BFA from University of the Arts.

David Kelly
PASTOR GREG
David previously appeared at Berkeley Rep in It Can’t Happen Here, Fuente Ovejuna, and Haroun and the Sea of Stories. In 25 seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, he appeared in Imaginary Invalid, Pirates of Penzance, My Fair Lady, Henry V, Hamlet, Three Musketeers, Richard II, Coriolanus, Baltimore Waltz, Pravda, Three Sisters, Much Ado About Nothing, Comedy of Errors, Death of a Salesman, Timon of Athens, Humble Boy, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Noises Off, Servant of Two Masters, and Cyrano de Bergerac, among others. He also appeared in Harvey at the Guthrie Theatre, Lovers and Executioners at South Coast Repertory, American Night at La Jolla Playhouse, Welcome Home, Jenny Sutter at the Kennedy Center, and Guys and Dolls at the Wallis Annenberg Center. David is an instructor at Southern Oregon University.

Michael McIntyre
TIMOTHY
Michael is making his Berkeley Rep debut. He most recently appeared at the American Conservatory Theater in A Little Night Music; Ah, Wilderness!; A Christmas Carol; and in its MFA Conservatory production of The Rocky Horror Show. Other regional credits include A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, The Boys Next Door, and Big River (Maples Repertory Theatre), Sunday in the Park with George (Musical Theater Heritage), and The Kentucky Cycle (Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre). His film credits include Saints Rest, Matched, and If Night Comes. Michael recently received his MFA in acting from ACT.

Laura Odeh
MARGERY
Laura is delighted to be making her debut at Berkeley Rep. She has appeared on Broadway in The Rivals (Lincoln Center Theatre). Her off-Broadway credits include The Aristocrats, Gaslight, and Mrs. Warren’s Profession (the Irish Repertory Theatre, A Body of Water (Primary Stages), and King Lear (the Public Theater). Regional productions include Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley (Marin Theatre Company), King Lear (Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC), 33 Variations (La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage), and The Cherry Orchard (Yale Repertory Theatre). Her television and film credits include The Other Woman; Synedcoche, NY: The Unusuals; and Guiding Light. She has worked with such directors as Robert Falls, James Lapine, Mark Lamos, Bill Rauch, Moisés Kaufman, Charlie Kaufman, and Don Roos. Laura received her MFA from NYU Graduate Acting and is a proud member of Actors’ Equity.

Carolina Sanchez
JESSICA
Carolina most recently appeared at Berkeley Rep in It Can’t Happen Here (Sissy). Her off-Broadway credits include Iowa (Amanda) at Playwrights Horizons. Her regional credits include Milk Like Sugar (Margie) at the Huntington Theatre Company, workshops of the musical Murder at the Gates written by Steven Sater (Audrey), and the national tour of West Side Story (Rosalia/Maria U.S.). Carolina is a recent graduate of Westminster College of the Arts with a bachelor’s degree in music.

Robert Askins
PLAYWRIGHT
Robert was born in Cypress, Texas. His hit dark comedy Hand to God opened on Broadway in April 2015, following two critically acclaimed runs at Ensemble Studio Theatre and mcc Theater, where it was named a New York Times Critics’ Pick and called “the most entertaining show of 2014.” His play Permission made its world premiere off Broadway in spring 2015 at MCC Theater. His play Fish Display was part of the 2012 Ojai Playwrights Conference, and Permission was part of the 2014 conference. Rob has received two ETT/Sloan grants, the Helen Merrill Emerging Playwrights Award, and an Arch and Bruce Davis Award for Playwriting. Rob is an Ithaca and Youngblood alum and a graduate of Baylor University. He’s currently at work on two feature film projects.

David Ivers
DIRECTOR
David previously directed One Man, Two Guvnors for Berkeley Rep. He is in his seventh season as artistic director of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, where he has been creating productions as director/actor since 1992. In recent seasons, he has directed Twelfth Night, Twelve Angry Men, Romeo and Juliet, Cyrano De Bergerac, and others. Additionally, he spent 10 years as a resident artist with the Denver Center Theatre Company, collaborating on over 40 productions as director/actor. Also, David helmed The Taming of the Shrew and a premiere adaptation of The Cocoanuts for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Other regional work includes productions at Pioneer Theatre Company, Nevada Conservatory Theatre, the Alabama and Idaho Shakespeare Festivals, Portland Center Stage, Portland Rep, Artists Repertory Theatre, and Tacoma Actors Guild. David’s upcoming projects include productions at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, and the Guthrie Theater.

Jo Winiarski
SCENIC DESIGNER
Jo is a set designer and art director. Hand to God is her first production at Berkeley Rep. Her off-Broadway credits include: The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey; Love, Loss, and What I Wore; multiple shows with the Pearl Theatre Company; The Jewish American Princess of Comedy; and I Love You Because. Other New York theatre companies she has designed for include Abingdon Theatre Company, New Georges, the New Group, Keen Company, Clubbed Thumb, Relentless Theatre Company, and the Roundabout Ensemble. Jo’s regional design credits include 12 seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival (having designed over 35 shows), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Geva Theatre Center, the Hangar Theatre, and Virginia Stage Company. Jo is the art director on Late Night with Seth Meyers. She received an Emmy nomination for A Colbert Christmas: The Greatest Gift of All.

TYRONE: BEST ACTOR EVER. ALL THE AWARDS. MFA FROM SKOOL OF HARD KNOCKS.
Meg Neville
CO S T U M E D E S I G N E R
Meg’s recent Berkeley Rep credits include It Can’t Happen Here; Macbeth; One Man, Two Guvnors; Party People; and X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story). She also worked on Tribes; The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures; Pericles, Prince of Tyre; and more. Her productions at Oregon Shakespeare Festival include Long Day’s Journey Into Night (2015), The Cocoanuts (2014), Taming of the Shrew (2013), and Ghost Light (2011). Meg is an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, where she has designed numerous productions including Lady Windermere’s Fan, An Ideal Husband, Mrs. Warren’s Profession, and lots of Shakespeare. Other Bay Area theatre credits include Marin Theatre Company, the Cutting Ball Theater, American Conservatory Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Joe Goode Performance Group, and Magic Theatre. She has also worked at Second Stage Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Center Stage in Baltimore, South Coast Repertory, Atlantic Theater Company, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Chicago Opera Theater, NY Stage and Film, Hartford Stage, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Portland Stage Company, and Dallas Theater Center. Meg is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and Brown University and resides in San Francisco with her husband and three children.

Alexander V. Nichols
L I G H T I N G D E S I G N E R
Alex has designed more than 30 productions for Berkeley Rep. His Broadway credits include Wishful Drinking, Hugh Jackman—Back On Broadway, and Nice Work If You Can Get It. His off-Broadway productions include In Masks Outrageous and Austere, Los Big Names, Horizon, Bridge & Tunnel, Taking Over, Through the Night, and In the Wake. Alex has worked at regional theatres throughout the country, including American Conservatory Theater, Mark Taper Forum, National Theatre of Taiwan, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and La Jolla Playhouse, among others. His dance credits include resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet; lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre; and resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company since 1989. His designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance, Hong Kong Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, ooc’s SF, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Alex’s other projects include the museum installation Circle of Memory, a collaboration with Eleanor Coppola, presented in Stockholm, Sweden, and the video and visual design for Life: A Journey Through Time, a collaboration with Frans Lanting and Philip Glass, presented at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

Joe Payne
S O U N D D E S I G N E R
Joe is currently assistant professor of Sound and Digital Media at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville, after 10 years as resident sound designer for Pioneer Theatre Company, and teaching sound design for the University of Utah and Illinois State University. He has been the sound designer for the Utah Shakespeare Festival for the last 16 years, and has designed throughout the country, including Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Syracuse Stage, Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Virginia Stage Company, and Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. Joe is a member of USA local 829 and tsdca.

Amanda Villalobos
P U P P E T D E S I G N E R
Amanda is a puppet designer, fabricator, and performer based in New York. She has had the pleasure of working with many artists and companies including Theodora Skipitares, Lee Breuer, Basil Twist, Half Straddle, Elevator Repair Service, and Sibyl Kempson. Amanda designed the puppets for Amelie, A New Musical, which premiered at Berkeley Rep and opens on Broadway this spring. Other design credits include Fondly, Collette Richland at New York Theatre Workshop and Ghost Rings at New York Live Arts. Amanda’s performances include the Broadway production of The Pee-wee Herman Show at the Stephen Sondheim
Danielle O’Dea
**FIGHT DIRECTOR**
Danielle is a New York City and Bay Area-based stunt performer and fight director. This is her second show with Berkeley Rep. Her Broadway credits include associate fight direction at the Atlantic Theatre Company on *An Enemy of the People*, and at the Cort Theatre on *Grace*. Her off-Broadway credits include work on *Bethany* at New York City Center, *Medieval Play* at Signature Theatre, *Gabriel* at the Atlantic Theatre Company, and *That Face* at Manhattan Theatre Club. Some of her Bay Area credits include choreography at American Conservatory Theater, TheatreWorks, San Francisco Opera, New Conservatory Theatre Company, and more. Her stunt performance and choreography can also be seen in the video games *XCOM 2* and *Mafia 3* from 2K Games. Danielle is a BFA graduate from New York University, and has been with the Society of American Fight Directors for 10 years.

Amy Potozkin, CSA
**DIRECTOR OF CASTING/ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE**
This is Amy’s 27th season at Berkeley Rep. Through the years she has also had the pleasure of casting plays for ACT (Seattle), Arizona Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, B Street Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Marin Theatre Company, the Marsh, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Social Impact Productions Inc., and Traveling Jewish Theatre. Amy cast roles for various independent films, including *Conceiving Ada*, starring Tilda Swinton; *Haiku Tunnel and Love & Taxes*, both by Josh Kornbluth; and Beyond Redemption by Britta Sjogren. Amy received her MFA from Brandeis University, where she was also an artist in residence. She has been an audition coach to hundreds of actors and a presentation/communication coach to many businesspeople. Amy taught acting at Mills College and audition technique at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, and has led workshops at numerous other venues in the Bay Area. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, she was an intern at Playwrights Horizons in New York. Amy is a member of CSA, the Casting Society of America, and was nominated for Artios Awards for Excellence in Casting for *The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*.

Michael Suenkel
**PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER**
Michael began his association with Berkeley Rep as the stage management intern for the 1984–85 season and is now in his 23rd year as production stage manager. Some of his
favorite shows include 36 Views, Endgame, Eurydice, Hydriotaphia, and Mad Forest. He has also worked with the Barbican in London, the Huntington Theatre Company, the Juste Pour Rire Festival in Montreal, La Jolla Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theater, the Public Theater and Second Stage Theater in New York, and Yale Repertory Theatre. For the Magic Theatre, he stage managed Albert Takazauckas’ Breaking the Code and Sam Shepard’s The Late Henry Moss.

**Chris Waters**
**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER**

Chris most recently staged managed Safe House at Aurora Theatre Company. Some of his favorite credits include Othello, Much Ado About Nothing, and King Lear (California Shakespeare Theater); Talley’s Folly and Rapture, Blister, Burn (Aurora Theatre); James and the Giant Peach (Bay Area Children’s Theater/ Shanghaï Children’s Art Theatre); Orlando (TheatreFIRST); pen/man/ship (Magic Theatre); and A House Tour of the Infamous Porter Family Mansion with Tour Guide Weston Ludlow (2 Space), starring Danny Scheie. Chris holds an MA in theatre management from University of California, Santa Cruz.

**Tony Taccone**
**MICHAEL LEIBERT**
**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

During Tony’s tenure as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award–winning nonprofit has earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In those 19 years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 23 shows to New York, two to London, and one to Hong Kong. Tony has staged more than 40 plays in Berkeley, including new work from Julia Cho, John Leguizamo, Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Itamar Moses, and Lemony Snicket. He directed the shows that transferred to London, Continental Divide and Tiny Kushner, and two that landed on Broadway as well: Bridge and Tunnel and Wishful Drinking. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, Tony served as artistic director of Eureka Theatre, which produced the American premieres of plays by Dario Fo, Caryl Churchill, and David Edgar before focusing on a new generation of American writers. While at the Eureka, Tony commissioned Tony Kushner’s legendary Angels in America and co-directed its world premiere. He has collaborated with Kushner on eight plays at Berkeley Rep, including The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. Tony’s regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Center Theatre Group, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Huntington Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Public Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, he debuted Ghost Light, Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup, and Game On, written with Dan Hoyle. In 2012, Tony received the Margo Jones Award for “demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre.”
Susan Medak  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Susan has served as Berkeley Rep’s managing director since 1990, leading the administration and operations of the Theatre. She has served as president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and treasurer of Theatre Communications Group, organizations that represent the interests of nonprofit theatres across the nation. Susan chaired panels for the Massachusetts Arts Council and has also served on program panels for Arts Midwest, the Joyce Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Close to home, Susan serves on the board of the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA). She is the founding chair of the Berkeley Arts in Education Steering Committee for Berkeley Unified School District and the Berkeley Cultural Trust. She was awarded the 2012 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Medal by the Berkeley Community Fund. Susan serves on the faculty of Yale School of Drama and is a proud member of the Mont Blanc Ladies’ Literary Guild and Trekking Society. During her time in Berkeley, Susan has been instrumental in the construction of the Roda Theatre, the Nevo Education Center, the renovation of the Peet’s Theatre, and in the acquisition of both the Osher Studio and the Harrison Street campus.

**Theresa Von Klug**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

Before joining Berkeley Rep, Theresa had over 20 years of experience in the New York not-for-profit performing arts sector where she has planned and executed events for dance, theatre, music, television, and film. Her previous positions include the interim general manager for the Public Theater; general manager/line producer for Theatre for a New Audience, where she opened its new state-of-the-art theatre in Brooklyn and filmed a major motion picture of the inaugural production of Julie Taymor’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, released June 2015; production manager at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and New York City Center, including the famous Encores! Great American Musicals in Concert; and field representative/lead negotiator for the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. She holds a MS in Labor Relations and Human Resources Management from Baruch College.

**Peter Dean**  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Peter began his Berkeley Rep career in 2014, and since then some his favorite productions include *Party People*, *X’s and O’s* (*A Football Love Story*), and *Aubergine*. Previously, he served as production manager at the Public Theater, where favorite works include *Here Lies Love, Father Comes Home from the War Parts 1–3*, *Mobile Shakespeare*, and *The Tempest* as well as musical collaborations with Sting, the Roots, and the Eagles. Peter also helped Alex Timbers develop *Rocky the Musical*, *The Last Goodbye*, and the cult classic *Dance Dance Revolution the Musical*. Other favorites include working with Edward Albee to remount *The Sandbox* and *The American Dream* at their original home at the Cherry Lane Theatre, working on *Little Flower of East Orange* directed by the late Philip Seymour Hoffman, and being a part of the development team for *The Ride*, an interactive four-mile traveling performance in the heart of Times Square. Regionally Peter has worked with the Huntington Theatre Company, American Repertory Theater, Commonwealth Shakespeare, Trinity Rep, Hasty Pudding Theatricals, Colorado Ballet, Central City Opera, and the Denver Center Theatre Company. Peter is a graduate of Otterbein University.

**Madeleine Oldham**  
**RESIDENT DRAMATURG/DIRECTOR, THE GROUND FLOOR**

Madeleine is the director of The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work and the Theatre’s resident dramaturg. She oversees commissioning and new play development, and dramaturged the world premiere productions of *Aubergine*, *The House that will not Stand*, *Passing Strange*, and *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, among others. As literary manager and associate dramaturg at Center Stage in Baltimore, she produced the First Look reading series and headed up its young audience initiative. Before moving to Baltimore, she was the literary manager at Seattle Children’s Theatre, where she oversaw an extensive commissioning program. She also acted as assistant and interim literary manager at Intiman Theatre in Seattle. Madeleine served for four years on the executive committee of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and has also worked with act (Seattle), Austin Scriptworks, Crowded Fire, the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center, the Kennedy Center, New Dramatists, Playwrights Center, and Portland Center Stage.

**Lisa Peterson**  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

Lisa is a two-time Obie Award–winning writer and director who is currently the associate director at Berkeley Rep. Previous projects at the Theatre include *It Can’t Happen Here* (2016); *An Iliad* (2012), which Lisa cowrote with Denis O’Hare, and which won Obie and Lortel Awards for Best Solo Performance; *Mother Courage* (2006); *The Fall* (2001); and *Antony & Cleopatra* (1999). For California Shakespeare Theater, Lisa directed *You Never Can Tell*, *King Lear*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Other recent West Coast productions include *Hamlet*, *Henry IV Pt 2*, and *Othello* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); and *Chavez Ravine* (Ovation Award for Best
as well as musical collaborations with Sting, Parts 1–3 Lies Love served as production manager at the Public Love Story), and since then some his favorite productions include Encores! Great American Musicals in Concert; New York City Center, including the famous A Midsummer Night’s Dream motion picture of the inaugural production the-art theatre in Brooklyn and filmed a major Audience, where she opened its new state-of-art manager for the Public Theater; general managers and Human Resources Management from Harvard Business School. She holds a MS in Labor Relations the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and field representative/lead negotiator for Rocky the Musical, the Roots, and the Eagles. Peter also helped Otterbein University. The Theatre Company. Peter is a graduate of Commonwealth Shakespeare, Trinity Rep, Company, American Repertory Theater, has worked with the Huntington Theatre a part of the development team for Little Flower of East Orange (2016); at the Theatre include Madeleine Oldham 2 Coast productions include Hamlet, Lear, and Cleopatra, Denis O’Hare, and which won Obie and Lortel Communications Group, organizations that represent Dramatists, Playwrights Center, and Portland Theatre Center, the Kennedy Center, New Scriptworks, Crowded Fire, the Eugene O’Neill Theatre, and the National Theatre in London. Other favorites include Father Comes Home from the War, Mules, Chavez Ravine, and X’s and O’s (A Football Party People). Previously, he directed The Tempest, and Joan Marcus designed. Lisa Peterson directed by Denis O’Hare, and which won Obie and Lortel. She has worked with the Huntington Theatre and the Arena Stage, O’Neill Playwrights Conference, Ojai Playwrights Conference, and Sundance Theatre Lab. Lisa and Denis are working on a new play about faith and the Bible called The Good Book, and a commission for the McCarter Theatre titled The Song of Rome. Lisa is also writing a new music-theatre piece with Todd Almond called The Idea of Order, co-commissioned by La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Rep, and Seattle Rep.

Jack & Betty Schafer
SEASON SPONSORS
Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack just rotated off the Theatre’s board and is now on the boards of San Francisco Opera and the Straus Historical Society. He is an emeritus trustee of the San Francisco Art Institute and the Oxbow School. Betty is on the board of Earthjustice, the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, and Sponsors of Educational Opportunity. In San Francisco, she is engaged in the launch of “Wise Aging,” a program for adults addressing the challenges of growing older. They have three daughters and eight grandchildren.

Michael & Sue Steinberg
SEASON SPONSORS
Michael and Sue have been interested in the arts since they met and enjoy music, ballet, and live theatre. Michael, who recently retired as chairman and chief executive officer of Macy’s West, served on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees from 1999 to 2006 and currently serves on the board of directors of the Jewish Museum. Sue serves on the board of the World of Children. The Steinbergs have always enjoyed regional theatre and are delighted to sponsor Berkeley Rep this season.

The Strauch Kulhanjian Family
SEASON SPONSORS
Roger Strauch is a former president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and is currently vice president of the board. He is chairman of the Roda Group (rodagroup.com), a venture-development company based in Berkeley, focused on cleantech investments, best known for launching Ask.com and for being an early investor in TerraVia (NASDAQ: tvia, terravia.com), a next-generation food, nutrition, and specialty ingredients company that harnesses the power of algae. Roger is chairman of the board of CoolSystems, a medical technology company, and chairman of the board of trustees for the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute. He is a member of the UC Berkeley Engineering Dean’s college
advisory board; a member of the board of Northside Center, a mental-health services agency based in Harlem, New York City; and a co-founder of the William Saroyan Program in Armenian Studies at Cal. Roger also leads the Mosse Art Restitution Project, which searches for family art illegally confiscated during Germany’s Third Reich. His wife, Julie A. Kulhanjian, is an attending physician at Oakland Children’s Hospital. They have three college-age children.

Thalia Dorwick SPONSOR
Thalia became involved with the theatre when, at age 12, she wrote, produced, and starred in a Girl Scout play. Fortunately, she has been only a spectator since then. She is past president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees, and she also directed the Theatre’s docent program for many years. She believes that Berkeley Rep, where she has enjoyed performances for decades, is the best theatre in the Bay Area. She serves as a vice president of the board of trustees of Case Western Reserve University. She has a PhD in Spanish, taught at the university level for many years, and is the co-author of a number of Spanish textbooks. She retired in 2004 as editor-in-chief of McGraw-Hill Higher Education’s Humanities, Social Sciences, and World Languages group. She has relocated to Florida and Pennsylvania and will miss Berkeley Rep’s productions enormously.

David & Vicki Fleishhacker SPONSORS
David and Vicki Fleishhacker’s families trace their California roots back to the Gold Rush. Both are have been involved in amateur theatre for decades. Vicki has long been active and performed with Children’s Theatre Association of San Francisco productions. David appeared in over a dozen musical productions as actor, singer, and lyricist. He has served on many nonprofit boards, including Berkeley Rep and, currently, the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. David’s parents met in amateur theatre, and his father was instrumental in bringing American Conservatory Theater to San Francisco. Other family members have served on the boards of ACT and Magic Theatre.

BART SEASON SPONSOR
Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) is the backbone of the Bay Area transit network and serves more than 100 million passengers annually. BART’s all-electric trains make it one of the greenest and most energy-efficient transit systems in the world. Visit bart.gov/bartable to learn more about great destinations and events that are easy to get to on BART (like Berkeley Rep!). At bart.gov/bartable, you can find discounts, enter sweeps offering fantastic prizes, and find unique and exciting things to do just a BART ride away. While you’re there, be sure to sign up for BARTable This Week, a free, weekly email filled with the latest and greatest BARTable fun!
Peet’s Coffee
SEASON SPONSOR
Peet’s Coffee is proud to be the exclusive coffee of Berkeley Repertory Theatre and salutes Berkeley Rep for its dedication to the highest artistic standards and diverse programming. Peet’s is honored to support Berkeley Rep’s renovation with the new, state-of-the-art Peet’s Theatre. In 1966, Alfred Peet opened his first store on Vine and Walnut in Berkeley and Peet’s has been committed to the Berkeley community ever since. As the pioneer of the craft coffee movement in America, Peet’s is dedicated to small-batch roasting, superior quality beans, freshness and a darker roasting style that produces a rich, flavorful cup. Peet’s is locally roasted in the first LEED® Gold certified roaster in the nation.

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As a top corporate philanthropist in the Bay Area (according to the S.F. Business Times), Wells Fargo recognizes Berkeley Repertory Theatre for its leadership in supporting the performing arts and its programs. Founded in 1852 and headquartered in San Francisco, Wells Fargo provides banking, insurance, investments, mortgage, and consumer and commercial finance. Talk to a Wells Fargo banker today to see how we can help you become more financially successful.

Additional staff

Deck crew
Bradley Hopper
James McGregor
Matt Reynolds

Dialect coach
Jessica Berman

Fight director
Danielle O’Dea

Props artisans
Amelia Burke-Holt
Dara Ly
Samantha Visbal
Rebecca Willis

Puppet construction assistant
Sarah LaFerty

Scenic artists
Lassen Hines
Anna McGahey

Scene shop
Ross Copeland
Jennifer Costley
Carl Martin
Shannon Perry
Colin Suemnicht
Jessica Tralka

Stage carpenter
Gabriel Holman

Wardrobe
Natalie Barshow

Medical consultation for Berkeley Rep provided by Cindy J. Chang MD, UCSF Assoc. Clinical Professor and Steven Fugaro, MD.

NEW ARRIVALS THIS SPRING:
FOR HER:
Brodie sweaters • Cambio pants • Ecrù tops, jackets, and pants
Georg Roth shirts • Majestic tees and jackets • Nanette Lepore dresses
Only Hearts tops and undies • Petit Pois tops • Polos sweaters
Repeat sweaters, tops, and blazers • Ronen Chen tops and dresses
Samantha Sung dresses and coats • White + Warren sweaters
Tracy Reese dresses, skirts, & sweaters
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We sat down with Hamid Hussain to chat about his involvement with Berkeley Rep as a dedicated member of our Corporate Council. Consisting of business leaders like Hamid, the Corporate Council strengthens the Theatre through advocacy and by expanding Berkeley Rep’s relationships with the greater corporate community. Hamid is the senior vice president and region manager of Wells Fargo’s East Bay Regional Commercial Banking Office, which donates 900 volunteer hours to communities in the East Bay every year. As one of the 16,300 beneficiaries of Wells Fargo’s commitment to supporting local businesses and artists, Berkeley Rep is grateful to Hamid and his team for their support.

How did you come to Berkeley Rep?

Wells Fargo is a large supporter of Berkeley Rep and has been for 14 years — long before I became involved. We’re one of the largest single financial supporters of Berkeley Rep year in, year out. Another Wells Fargo executive, Lisa Finer, is on the board, and I joined the Corporate Council to volunteer about three years ago. Being on the Corporate Council gave me an understanding of the intricacies — and challenges — that are involved in putting a play together.

What other nonprofits have you volunteered for?

Wells Fargo takes pride in encouraging every team member to be involved in the community, so we do a lot of different work to give back to all of our community throughout the year, especially in September. This September, we volunteered at the Alameda County Food Bank. I’ve also been on the board and volunteered at both the Ann Martin Center, a community clinic, and the USS Potomac Association, which opens FDR’s Presidential Yacht to the public.

How is volunteering in the arts different?

Being on the Corporate Council is really about connecting with the community through arts. Berkeley Rep draws people to downtown Berkeley and ends up creating a sense of community by supporting local businesses and artists. With the arts, the impact seems to be wider, reaching a larger audience and encouraging healthy dialogue on important issues.

What inspires you most about the work that Berkeley Rep does?

Berkeley Rep puts on interesting and critical plays showing different perspectives that are important for us to all consider. A perfect example is It Can’t Happen Here, which coincidentally and strangely was about the election we were experiencing. Another play, Party People, showed a different perspective on the Civil Rights movement and Black Panthers’ experience. Plays at Berkeley Rep take a new look not only at history but also at different viewpoints from parts of society that one may not normally consider.

You often come to the Theatre with your daughters—what’s a play that’s inspired conversation with them?

They really liked Party People. They had learned about the Civil Rights era in history class, but being transported to that time, seeing it from the viewpoint of the individuals on stage who were portraying complex and conflicted characters gave them a better appreciation for what it might have been like to live through that time. That’s what theatre does — it takes you on journey to a different time and place to understand another person’s circumstances.

It’s also just a way for me to connect with my daughters. They’re teenagers and don’t really like talking with their father [laughs], but it’s fun to hear their perspective on things. It’s a great way for me to spend time with them.
We thank the many institutional partners who enrich our community by championing Berkeley Rep's artistic and community outreach programs. We gratefully recognize these donors to Berkeley Rep's Annual Fund, who made their gifts between October 1, 2015 to December 18, 2016.

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