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## BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE LAUNCHES NEW AUDIO DESCRIPTION SERVICES TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY

**Provided by Gravity Access Services, Audio Description provides essential access to the visual elements of performances**

BERKELEY, CA (July 18, 2024)—Today, **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** announced the launch of **Audio Description (AD)**, an accessibility service that enhances the theatre experience for patrons who are blind or have low vision. This initiative advances Berkeley Rep's ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Coinciding with World Blindness Awareness Month, Audio Description services will launch in October and will be available for the last Saturday matinee of each 2024/25 mainstage season production's regularly scheduled performance run. An Audio Description subscription series is available by visiting [berkeleyrep.org/sub](https://berkeleyrep.org/sub) or calling the Berkeley Rep Box Office at 510-647-2949 (Tue–Sun, 12–7 p.m.).

"At Berkeley Rep, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where the arts are accessible to all," said **Berkeley Rep Managing Director Tom Parrish**. "We are thrilled to add Audio Description services to our accessibility initiatives, bringing each performance to life with vivid verbal descriptions and ensuring that the magic of theatre is more accessible to patrons who are blind or have low vision."

Provided by **Gravity Access Services**, Audio Description provides essential access to the visual elements of performances, such as action, costumes, settings, gestures, facial expressions, objects, and other visually communicative elements. By delivering a live audio track through wireless headsets, patrons can enjoy a vivid and inclusive theatre experience. Through Audio Description, significant visual details of a performance are provided in a clear and engaging manner allowing patrons who are blind or have low vision to fully engage with the story as it unfolds on stage.

In addition to Audio Description services, Berkeley Rep offers closed captioning at select performances in partnership with **CCTheater**. This service provides text captions of the theatrical performance on individual patrons' smartphones.

For more information on Berkeley Rep's accessibility initiatives—including a schedule of Audio Description-equipped and CCTheater performances—visit [berkeleyrep.org/access](https://berkeleyrep.org/access) or contact the Berkeley Rep Box Office at 510-647-2949 (Tue–Sun, 12–7 p.m.).

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## **ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 6 million people have enjoyed more than 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 85 world premieres. Berkeley Rep shows have gone on to win 8 Tony Awards, 9 Obie Awards, 11 Drama Desk Awards, 1 Grammy Award, 1 Pulitzer Prize, 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. Through its annual seven-play season, together with up to four special event presentations, Berkeley Rep invites audiences to enjoy an eclectic range of theatrical experiences featuring diverse artistic voices, themes, and perspectives. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. Serving some 20,000 people a year, Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre ensures broad access to dynamic arts educational activities, especially for Bay Area youth, and provides immersive training for current and future theatre makers. In 2021, Berkeley Rep launched In Dialogue, a program that places its theatre-making skills and resources in service of the community. Using storytelling as an anchor, In Dialogue is developing long-term collaborations with local, socially centered organizations, as well as educating and activating our audiences around organizations whose work aligns with the themes of our productions. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities—which include the 600-seat Roda Theatre, 400-seat Peet's Theatre, Medak Center, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley—are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at [berkeleyrep.org](https://berkeleyrep.org).