

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kevin Kopjak | Prismatic Communications | kevin@prismaticcommunications.com**BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR
BERKELEY NATIVE EISA DAVIS'
BULRUSHER**

A co-production with McCarter Theatre Center, *Bulrusher* is a lyrical coming-of-age story that takes place in a small town in Mendocino County

Berkeley Rep's Peet's Theatre
October 27 – December 3, 2023

BERKELEY, CA (September 14, 2023)—Today, **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** announced the cast and creative team for Berkeley native **Eisa Davis'** lyrical coming-of-age story, *Bulrusher*. Directed by Nicole A. Watson, *Bulrusher* performs at Berkeley Rep's **Peet's Theatre** (2025 Addison St., Berkeley) **October 27 – December 3, 2023**. Press night will be held on Wednesday, November 1, 2023. Single tickets (\$22.50–\$134) are on sale now and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org/shows/bulrusher/ or by phone at **510-647-2949** (Tue–Sun, 12–7 p.m.). *Ticket prices are subject to change without notice.*

A co-production with **McCarter Theatre Center**, *Bulrusher* follows a multiracial girl found as an infant floating in a basket on the Navarro River in Mendocino County. It's 1955, and Bulrusher is 18 and restless, with a gift for clairvoyance that makes her feel like a stranger even amongst the eccentric, dialect speaking folks of her predominantly white enclave of Boonville. When a mysterious young Black woman from Birmingham comes to town, Bulrusher discovers new facets of her identity — and uncovers her place in the world. A Pulitzer Prize finalist called “captivating and lushly poetic” by the *LA Times*, *Bulrusher* is infused with rhythmic language, passion, and down-home humor.

“In programming this season, it was important to me that we include stories that represent some of the particular magic, and specific challenges, of the Bay Area,” said **Berkeley Repertory Theatre Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer**. “Eisa’s gorgeous play is lyrical and passionate, mysterious and vital. The community she represents in 1955 Boonville is deeply human, equally complicated, and rendered with wit, warmth, and curiosity. I’m so proud to bring Eisa’s inimitable voice home to the Bay.”

“I’ve written 13 full-length pieces for the stage, but *Bulrusher* is the one that has had the broadest reach in the 20 years since I first wrote it,” said **Davis**. “What a beautiful gift to return home to Berkeley Rep with *Bulrusher*, and what a dream come true to have a play of my own grace the stages where I have enjoyed and been in productions since I was a child. There’s a bang-up slate of artists this season gathered by the incredible leadership team here, and I am so honored to invite the whole Bay Area in all its gorgeous variety to join us for *Bulrusher*’s celebration of nature, language, love, and self-discovery.”

The cast for *Bulrusher* includes (in alphabetical order) **Cyndii Johnson** (Vera), **Rob Kellogg** (Boy), **Jamie LaVerdiere** (Schoolch), **Shyla Lefner** (Madame), **Jordan Tyson** (Bulrusher), and **George Bennett Watson** (Logger).

The creative team for *Bulrusher* includes **Eisa Davis** (Playwright), **Nicole A. Watson** (Director), **Lawrence E. Moten III** (Scenic Design), **Valerie St. Pierre Smith** (Costume Design), **Sherrice Mojgani** (Lighting Design), **Kate Marvin** (Sound Design and Additional Compositions), **Katherine Freer** (Projection Design), **Tommy Kurzman** (Wig, Hair, and Makeup Design), **Eisa Davis** (Original Music), **Paloma McGregor** (Movement Director), **Rocío Mendez** (Fights and Intimacy), **Nathan C. Crocker** (Dialect and Vocal Coach), **Faye Price** (Dramaturg), **Destiny Lily** (Casting Director), **Elisa Guthertz** (Stage Manager), and **Christina Hogan** (Assistant Stage Manager).

Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of **BART** and **Peet's Coffee**, Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to recognize the support at the season sponsor level from **Stephen and Susan Chamberlin**; **Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer**; **Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau**; **Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney**; **Gisele and Kenneth F. Miller**; **Jack and Betty Schafer**; **The Strauch Kulhanjian Family**; and **Gail and Arne Wagner**.

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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 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. 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. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities — which also include the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.