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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR MARY ZIMMERMAN'S *ARGONAUTIKA*

West Coast premiere of exhilarating show features ensemble of 14 accomplished actors

OCTOBER 22, 2007 – Today, MacArthur genius **Mary Zimmerman** announced the heroes, gods, and goddesses she has selected to perform the West Coast premiere of *Argonautika* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Based on *The Voyage of Jason and the Argonauts*, it's another exhilarating show from the director who won a Tony Award for *Metamorphoses* and national acclaim for the Metropolitan Opera's luscious new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Playing in Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre, *Argonautika* begins previews on **November 2**, opens **November 7**, and closes **December 16**.

"For me, the cast is a mix of old and new," **Zimmerman remarks**. "I've worked with many of them before, and there are several new people I'm thrilled to get to know. The show is a great adventure – a voyage in itself – so I hope the audience will feel like it's on the boat too, joining these fine actors for an ancient journey."

"One of Mary's greatest strengths as a director is her ability to select a group of actors and develop them into a true ensemble during rehearsals," says **Tony Taccone**, the Theatre's artistic director. "She has a uniquely collaborative approach to her work, which draws on the talents of each individual while always keeping the focus on the tale they're telling. She is a fantastic storyteller, and all of us – the actors, our staff, and our audience – are in for quite a ride."

In *Argonautika*, Zimmerman joins Jason on his quest for the Golden Fleece – an epic journey of love and loss, hubris and honor, danger and adventure. Jason confronts giants, kings, sirens, nymphs, centaurs, sea monsters, and one treacherously heartsick sorceress. In her latest perilous voyage, Zimmerman shows us that love is the bane of all mankind – and yet it's all that we know of heaven on this earth. *Argonautika* made its world premiere last year at Lookingglass Theatre Company. A co-production with the McCarter Theatre Center and The Shakespeare Theatre Company, the show will travel to Princeton and Washington, DC in 2008. **See *Argonautika* in Berkeley before it sails for the East Coast!**

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As the captain of this ship, Zimmerman has carefully chosen her acting crew:

- **Justin Blanchard** (Hylas/Dymas) made his Broadway debut in *Journey's End*, which received the 2007 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play. His regional credits include *As You Like It* for Hangar Theatre and *A Christmas Carol, Hamlet*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* for Trinity Repertory Company.
- **Allen Gilmore** (Pelias/ensemble) reprises his role from the Chicago premiere of *Argonautika*. In the U.S., his credits include The Acting Company, Court Theatre, Intiman Theatre, and Pittsburgh Irish Classical Theater (PICT). In Canada, he played the lead in *Othello* at the Atlantic Theatre Festival, the Citadel Theatre, and the National Arts Centre.
- **Sofia Jean Gomez** (Athena) appeared in Zimmerman's *Mirror of the Invisible World* at Goodman Theatre. Her other credits include *Safe in Hell* at Yale Repertory Theatre, *Syncopation* at Stages Repertory Theatre, and *The Time of Your Life* at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey.
- **Casey Jackson** (Pollux/ensemble) has performed in many local shows, including *As You Like It* with Marin Shakespeare Company, *Gretel and Hansel* with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, *Othello* with Impact Theatre, and *Three Seconds in the Key* with SF Playhouse.
- **Chris Kipiniak** (Castor/ensemble) appeared in Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* at Berkeley Rep, Hartford Stage, Lookingglass, the Mark Taper Forum, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Second Stage Theatre, and on Broadway. His other New York credits include *Kit Marlowe* at The Public Theatre, *Silence* with the Roundtable Ensemble, and *Stalled* at the Kraine Theatre. Kipiniak is also a freelance writer for Marvel Comics.
- **Tessa Klein** (Aphrodite/ensemble) performed in the Irish Repertory Theatre's off-Broadway production of *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Her regional credits include *The Aristocrats, Hamlet, Major Barbara*, and *She Stoops to Conquer* with PICT; *The Trojan Women* with Alabama Shakespeare Festival; and *Sleeping Arrangements* with Theatre J.
- **Ronete Levenson** (Andromeda/Eros) made her professional debut as a teenager, playing Anne in *The Diary of Anne Frank* for New York Youth Theater. Her recent credits include several shows at Lookingglass and a staged reading of David Adjmi's *Stunning* at New York Theater Workshop.

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- **Atley Loughridge** (Medea) made her professional debut last year in the world premiere of *Argonautika*. She continued working with Zimmerman in *Cymbeline* at Northwestern University and *Mirror of the Invisible World* at the Goodman. She also wrote and directed *The Forgotten Warrior* for the 2006 Montreal Fringe Festival.
- **Andy Murray** (Meleager/ensemble) has appeared in Berkeley Rep's productions of *Fall*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Pillowman*. Locally, he's also performed with American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz.
- **Søren Oliver** (Hercules/ensemble) celebrated the opening of Berkeley Rep's Thrust Stage in 1980 by portraying Andrea in Michael Leibert's production of *Galileo*. He also performed in Berkeley Rep's 1996 production of Zimmerman's *Journey to the West*. Oliver's other credits include Aurora Theatre Company, Cal Shakes, the Denver Center Theatre Company, the Magic, San Jose Rep, and the Utah Shakespearean Festival.
- **Jesse J. Perez** (Idmon/ensemble) has many credits for the stage and screen, including the off-Broadway productions of *In the Penal Colony* at Classic Stage Company, *Recent Tragic Events* at Playwrights Horizons, *The Triple Happiness* at Second Stage, and *Up Against the Wind* at NYTW. He has also worked at American Repertory Theatre, Court Theatre, the Goodman, the McCarter, Portland Center Stage, and Yale Rep.
- **Christa Scott-Reed** (Hera/ensemble) returns to Berkeley Rep after performing with Kathleen Chalfant in *Honour*. Her off-Broadway credits include *The Bald Soprano* and *The Lesson* at Atlantic Theater Company, *Burn This* at Signature Theatre Company, *Marion Bridge* at Urban Stages, *Museum* and *Pullman Car Hiawatha* at Keen Company, *Some Girls* at MCC Theater, and *The Voyage Inheritance* at the Mint Theater Company.
- **Paul Oakley Stovall** (Amyeus/ensemble) previously appeared at Berkeley Rep in Zimmerman's *Journey to the West* and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, which he also performed at Lincoln Center and Second Stage. Among his countless credits are two notable recent films: Robert Altman's *The Company* and John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus*.
- **Jake Suffian** (Jason) received a Helen Hayes nomination for his portrayal of Shane Mungitt in *Take Me Out*. His favorite roles include Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and Sebastian in *The Tempest*. He has also appeared on *ABC Primetime*, *One Life to Live*, and *Rescue Me* – as well as the upcoming film *Header*.

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Mary Zimmerman earned the 2002 Tony Award for her breathtaking production of *Metamorphoses*. Every time the MacArthur genius brings a show to Berkeley Rep, audiences embrace it: *Journey to the West*, *Metamorphoses*, and *The Secret in the Wings* all made their West Coast debuts here, and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* also opened to acclaim. These plays – and others that she’s adapted and directed such as *The Arabian Nights*, *Eleven Rooms of Proust*, *The Odyssey*, and *Silk* – have enjoyed celebrated runs at About Face Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), the Goodman, the Huntington Theatre Company, Lookingglass, the McCarter, Seattle Rep, Second Stage, and the Taper. Based in Chicago, Zimmerman has won ten Joseph Jefferson Awards – the city’s top theatrical honors – including prizes for best production and best direction. She is a member of Lookingglass, an artistic associate of Seattle Rep, the Manilow Resident Director at the Goodman, and a professor of performance studies at Northwestern University. Zimmerman has also applied her signature style to classics such as *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *The Trojan Women* at the Goodman; *Henry VIII* and *Measure for Measure* at the New York Shakespeare Festival; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Huntington; and *Pericles* at The Shakespeare Theatre. In 2002, she created a new opera with Philip Glass called *Galileo Galilei* which was presented at the Goodman, BAM, and the Barbican in London – and she just directed *Lucia di Lammermoor* to open the 2007/08 Season at New York’s Metropolitan Opera.

The **Chicago Sun-Times** called *Argonautika* “a production of great beauty, wild imagination, goofy humor, and emotional heat. The show is classic Zimmerman – a seamless meeting of actors, designers, and episodic text... the crowning installment in a long series of her works.” When the **Chicago Tribune** named its Top 10 Plays of the Year, *Argonautika* led the list. Declaring it “a masterpiece,” the *Tribune* says, “Mary Zimmerman – that most legitimate of theatrical artists – certainly hasn’t gone Hollywood with her all-new, typically smart, fresh, endlessly imaginative and thoroughly enjoyable *Argonautika*... a sizzling theatrical adventure, full of mythical flourish and dramatic excitement, but also replete with Zimmerman’s ability to take one step back from the fanciful story and ponder its deeper truths.” And **Variety** dubs it “a spare, lucid, elegant show... it’s so remarkably ambitious, enjoyable and meaningful overall that pointing out small weaknesses would be pointless.”

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Zimmerman has recruited a fearless team of designers to launch *Argonautika*: **Daniel Ostling** (scenic design), **Ana Kuzmanic** (costume design), **John Culbert** (lighting design), **Andre Pluess** and **Ben Sussman** (sound design), and **Michael Montenegro** (puppet design). The executive producers of *Argonautika* are Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family. The production sponsor is American Express, and the official sponsors of Berkeley Rep's 40th season are BART and Wells Fargo.

In honor of its 40th birthday, Berkeley Rep has introduced new prices that invite everyone to celebrate. **Tickets to *Argonautika* start as low as \$27** – and discounts are available for groups, seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age. Buy tickets to three or more shows, and save even more. **Subscriptions start as low as \$84**, a savings of up to 33% on every ticket.

Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre is located at 2015 Addison Street, one block from Berkeley's downtown BART station and close to AC Transit bus lines. The box office is next door at 2025 Addison Street. For tickets or information, call **510.647.2949** or toll-free at **888-4-BRT-Tix** – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

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Born in a storefront on College Avenue, **Berkeley Rep** has moved to the forefront of American theatre – and is still telling unforgettable stories. Founded in 1968 by Michael Leibert, the Theatre quickly earned respect for presenting the finest plays with top-flight actors. In 1980, with the support of the local community, Berkeley Rep built the 400-seat Thrust Stage where its reputation steadily grew over the next two decades. It gained renown for an adventurous combination of work, presenting important new dramatic voices alongside refreshing adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. The company celebrated by unveiling a new 600-seat proscenium stage in 2001, the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. It also opened the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the permanent home for a 22-year tradition of outreach and education programs. The addition of these two buildings transformed a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex, the linchpin of a bustling Downtown Arts District which has helped revitalize Berkeley. In four decades, nearly four million people have enjoyed 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including more than 40 world premieres. The Theatre now welcomes an annual audience of 180,000, serves 20,000 students, and hosts dozens of community groups, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 400 artists, artisans, and administrators. In the last two years, four shows seen at Berkeley Rep have gone on to New York: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice*, and *Passing Strange*. Now a series of gifted guests arrives with amazing stage presents for Berkeley Rep's 40th birthday.

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WHO: Written and directed by Mary Zimmerman
Adapted from *The Voyage of Jason and the Argonauts*
Designed by Daniel Ostling (sets), Ana Kuzmanic (costumes), John Culbert (lights), Andre Pluess and Ben Sussman (sound), and Michael Montenegro (puppets)
Featuring Justin Blanchard, Allen Gilmore, Sofia Jean Gomez, Casey Jackson, Chris Kipiniak, Tessa Klein, Ronete Levenson, Atley Loughridge, Andy Murray, Søren Oliver, Jesse J. Perez, Christa Scott-Reed, Paul Oakley Stovall, and Jake Suffian

WHAT: *Argonautika* – Tony-winner Mary Zimmerman takes us on an exhilarating theatrical adventure with Jason and the Argonauts

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Roda Theatre
2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley

WHEN: Previews on 11/2 - 11/6 – Performances on 11/7 - 12/16/2007

- Tuesdays & Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays & Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
- No performances on Thanksgiving, Thursday 11/22
- No matinees during previews or on 11/8, 11/17, 12/1 & 12/6

SUN	MON	TUE ♦	WED	THU ♦	FRI	SAT
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16 2,7						

◆ 7PM DOCENT TALKS (EVERY TUE & THU)
● PREVIEWS
T TARGET® TEEN NIGHT
★ OPENING NIGHT
▲ NIGHT/OUT
■ BOOK CLUB
■ POST-SHOW DISCUSSION
:: TASTING

Special Events –
Target® Teen Night: Friday 11/2 @ 6:30 PM
30 Below (party for the under-30 crowd): Friday 11/2 @ 8:00 PM
Opening night: Wednesday 11/7 @ 8:00 PM
night/OUT (LGBT event): Thursday 11/8 @ 8:00 PM
Free tastings: Fridays 11/9, 11/30 & 12/7 and Saturdays 11/10 & 12/8 @ 7:00 PM
Book club: Friday 11/16 @ 6:30 PM
Student matinee: Wednesday 11/28 @ noon
Post-play discussions: Thursday 11/29, Tuesday 12/4, and Friday 12/14 @ 8:00 PM
Docent presentations: Tuesdays 11/6, 11/13, 11/20, 11/27, 12/4 & 12/11 @ 7:00 PM; Thursdays 11/8, 11/15, 11/29, 12/6 & 12/13 @ 7:00 PM; and Friday 11/23 @ 7:00 PM

HOW MUCH:

	Section B	Section A	Premium
Previews.....	\$27	\$33	\$37
Tue 8 PM / Wed 7 PM / Thu 2 PM / Sat 2 PM	\$33	\$45	\$50
Thu 8 PM / Sun 2 PM / Sun 7 PM	\$37	\$49	\$55
Friday @ 8 PM	\$43	\$55	\$61
Saturday @ 8 PM.....	\$49	\$61	\$69

Discounts: • ½ price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
• \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
• Groups of 10 or more, contact 510.647.2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

TIX & INFO: 510.647.2949 – toll-free 888-4-BRT-Tix – berkeleyrep.org