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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALBANY TEEN ORGANIZES JOURNALISM SUMMIT AT BERKELEY REP

High-school students hold day-long conference on the power of theatre and journalism

AUGUST 6, 2008 – Today Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced an unusual opportunity for Bay Area teens tied to its world premiere of *Yellowjackets*: local youth can attend a free summit on the power of journalism and theatre on **Monday, August 18** from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. **Making an Impact: A Teen Journalism Summit** will take place at the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, located at 2071 Addison Street in downtown Berkeley, and will feature interactive activities with respected reporters.

“Since *Yellowjackets* is set at Berkeley High, and the plot revolves around a prank at the school newspaper, we decided to create an event for student journalists,” explains **Rachel Fink**, director of the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre. “The more we spoke with students, the more we realized they were eager to have a larger conversation – to explore their responsibility as reporters at their schools, and to discover the impact that role can have on the greater community.”

The summit is the brainchild of 19-year-old Albany-native **Genevieve Michel**. Last year, when she was a senior at Albany High School, Michel led Berkeley Rep’s Teen Council; this summer, after her freshman year at New York University, she returned to Berkeley to help plan this event.

“In high school, it’s so easy to lose sight of the big picture – so easy to forget that extracurricular activities teach us tools that we can use for the rest of our lives,” **Michel comments**. “Students attending this summit will spend the day working with journalism professionals – and I hope they’ll leave it with a better sense of how they can use their words and their passion to be a force for change.”

The day-long workshop will examine how journalism and theatre can inspire debate and ultimately create large-scale change within a community. Teens will participate in a morning discussion on the roles of performance and the media, and then break into smaller groups led by professional reporters to brainstorm compelling story angles inspired by the day’s debate. The panelists will include **Kristin Bender** of the *Oakland Tribune*, freelance reporter **Chad Jones**, nationally renowned playwright **Itamar Moses**, Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**, and other respected local journalists.

The summit was inspired by the first play in Berkeley Rep’s upcoming season: *Yellowjackets*, an incisive play set in Berkeley and written by a Berkeley native. Itamar Moses – who once edited the student newspaper at Berkeley High School – returns to his hometown with a script set in the halls of his *alma mater*. When the school paper publishes an insensitive story, students suddenly find themselves embroiled in a volatile controversy – and even their teachers seem unprepared to deal with the repercussions. Tony Taccone directs this compelling collision of race and class set just around the corner from Berkeley Rep. With *Yellowjackets*, he generates the same mix of intense emotion and timely politics that electrified shows like *Continental Divide*, *Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell*, and *Taking Over*. *Yellowjackets* begins previews on the intimate Thrust Stage on August 29, opens September 3, and runs through October 12.

(MORE)

Anyone wishing **to register** for Making an Impact: A Teen Journalism Summit may request a registration form by sending an email to gmichel@berkeleyrep.org. This one-of-a-kind event is free to all participants, and is open to high-school students at all levels; no prior journalistic experience is required. Youth attending the summit also receive a free ticket to see *Yellowjackets* on Friday, September 5.

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The **Berkeley Rep School of Theatre** provides a wide array of programming for individuals of all ages. In addition to classes for youth and adults, the School offers Target © Story Builders, a drama workshop for elementary-school classrooms; the Student Matinee Series for middle- and high-school students; the Playmaking Project for high-school students and incarcerated youth; in-school residencies; teacher training; and a variety of outreach activities that encourage lifelong learning. The School also hosts the Teen Council, which allows youth to participate in all aspects of the dramatic process: on stage, backstage, and in front of the stage. Housed in the Nevo Education Center, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre is supported by the Mosse Foundation for Arts and Education. For complete details – including schedules, faculty bios, course descriptions, and registration information – call 510.647.2972 or visit www.berkeleyrep.org/school.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

WHO: Students entering grades 9-12
WHAT: Making an Impact: A Teen Journalism Summit
WHEN: Monday, August 18, 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM
WHERE: Berkeley Rep School of Theatre / 2071 Addison St @ Shattuck / Downtown Berkeley
HOW MUCH: Free!
INFO: 510.647.2978 / berkeleyrep.org / school@berkeleyrep.org

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