

**For photos, interviews, etc., contact:**  
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations  
(510) 647-2917, [tkane@berkeleyrep.org](mailto:tkane@berkeleyrep.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR GREEN DAY'S *AMERICAN IDIOT*  
19 performers set to rock the world premiere**

AUGUST 3, 2009 – Today Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced the cast for its world premiere of *American Idiot*. Based on the Grammy Award-winning album of the same name, the show features the music of **Green Day** and the lyrics of its frontman **Billie Joe Armstrong**. *American Idiot* is being staged by Tony Award-winning director **Michael Mayer**, who also collaborated with Armstrong on the story. Tony-winning actor **John Gallagher, Jr.** plays Johnny, leading an ensemble of 19 young performers that also includes **Matt Caplan** as Tunny, **Michael Esper** as Will, and **Tony Vincent** as St. Jimmy with **Mary Faber** as Heather, **Rebecca Naomi Jones** as Whatsername, and **Christina Sajous** as Extraordinary Girl. Berkeley Rep presents the show in association with **Tom Hulce** and **Ira Pittelman**, the lead producers of *Spring Awakening*.

*American Idiot* runs from **September 4 through October 11**, opening Berkeley Rep's 2009/10 season in the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. Tickets are available now as part of a subscription to the season, which includes six other hot new shows. The remaining seats go on sale to the public on August 7 at [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org), starting at only \$32 – half that for those under 30 years of age.

"We've been working with the cast on this show for the past several months," **Armstrong remarks**, "so we've seen first-hand what amazing actors they are. We continue to be impressed with how they are handling and interpreting the material. Their talent has truly brought the album to life in a really incredible way."

"This wildly gifted company is investing every fiber of themselves in this material," **Mayer comments**. "They're bringing depth and passion to their characters, and singing the shit out of the songs. Watching them inhabit the kinetic dynamism of Steven Hoggett's brilliant choreography takes my breath away. It's a rare honor to be blessed with such devoted and spectacularly imaginative performers."

"From the moment they arrived at Berkeley Rep, it has been exhilarating to watch these actors throw themselves into this project, and to see the energy build as they collaborate with our staff,"

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RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

adds **Tony Taccone**, the Theatre's artistic director. "We are pumped up about *American Idiot* and can't wait to share it with our audience."

Green Day won two Grammys – Best Rock Album and Record of the Year – for its multi-platinum *American Idiot*, which sold more than 12 million copies worldwide. Now the band brings that explosive album to the stage with the director of *Spring Awakening*, which nabbed eight Tony Awards in 2007. With an onstage band, *American Idiot* follows working-class characters from the suburbs to the city to the Middle East. In an exhilarating journey borne along by Green Day's electrifying songs, they seek redemption in a world filled with frustration. This high-octane show includes every song from the album, as well as several songs from Green Day's new CD, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Breakdown*. The world premiere takes off at Berkeley Rep, the Tony-winning playhouse that launched last year's provocative rock musical *Passing Strange*.

*American Idiot* earned effusive praise from the press upon its release. It is "a fearless and politically astute rock album, a richly melodic song suite that gives voice to the disenfranchised suburban underclass of Americans," declares **Rolling Stone**. "The ambitious *American Idiot* joins an elite list of albums, such as The Who's *Tommy*, Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, and The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, that successfully weave a narrative through music," asserts **Amp**. "For an album that bemoans the state of the union, it is irresistibly buoyant," adds **Time**. "You will hear a story about Jesus of Suburbia, his dangerous friend St. Jimmy, and a heroic girl called Whatsername, who are struggling to express their individuality in a mass-media culture."

The cast showcases seven respected performers. **Matt Caplan** (Tunny), a guitarist who has released three CDs, appeared on Broadway in *Rent* and *South Pacific*, on TV in Fox's *New Amsterdam*, and on film in *Across the Universe* and *Painting Abby Long*. **Michael Esper** (Will) made his Broadway debut last fall in *A Man for All Seasons*. His many other credits include the recent premiere of *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* by Tony Kushner. **Mary Faber** (Heather) performed on Broadway in *Avenue Q*. She has also been seen off Broadway at the Lucille Lortel Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, and the York Theatre Company, and in improv and sketch comedy shows at Ars Nova, The Second City: NYC, and the Upright Citizens Brigade. **John Gallagher, Jr.** (Johnny) earned a Tony Award for his portrayal of Moritz in *Spring Awakening*. His other credits include *Rabbit Hole* on Broadway; *Current Events*, *Farragut North*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, and *Port Authority* off Broadway;

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CAST OF *AMERICAN IDIOT* AT BERKELEY REP / 3 OF 5

and films such as Woody Allen's *Whatever Works* and Kenneth Lonergan's *Margaret*. **Rebecca Naomi Jones** (Whatsername) performed in *Passing Strange* at Berkeley Rep, off Broadway, on Broadway, and on film. Previously, she toured with *Caroline, or Change*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; and *Rent*; her recent credits include *This Beautiful City* and *Wig Out!* at Vineyard Theatre. **Christina Sajous** (Extraordinary Girl) appeared in the national tour of *Rent*. Her New York credits include *King Lear* with the Classical Theater of Harlem and *Wild Party* at Culture Project. In concert, she has been a featured artist with Patti Labelle, Musiq Soulchild, and Chrisette Michelle. **Tony Vincent** (St. Jimmy) has performed on Broadway in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Rent*, and in London and Las Vegas in *We Will Rock You*. He has performed as the frontman for the rock band Queen on several occasions, including Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee and Party in the Park.

These artists are supported by an ensemble of 12 young talents. **Declan Bennet**, a songwriter with two CDs, appeared on Broadway in *Rent* and on the West End in *Taboo*. **Andrew Call** performed on Broadway in *Cry Baby*, *Glory Days*, and *High Fidelity* and off Broadway in *Altar Boyz*. **Gerard Canonico** made his Broadway debut at eight years old as Gavroche in *Les Misérables*; more recently, his credits include *Spring Awakening* on Broadway. **Miguel Cervantes** portrayed Chip on Broadway and in the national tour of *The Putnam County Spelling Bee*; his other credits include *Happiness* at Lincoln Center. **Joshua Henry** performed in *Serenade* off Broadway, *In the Heights* on and off Broadway, and in TV shows such as *Kings* and *Sex and the City*. **Brian Charles Johnson** appeared in the Broadway and off-Broadway productions of *Spring Awakening*, and in workshops of noted shows at Manhattan Theatre Club and Roundabout Theatre Company. **Chase Peacock** has performed for North Carolina Theatre, Paper Mill Playhouse, and the first national tour of *Disney's High School Musical*. **Theo Stockman** was named Best Leading Actor at the International Theatre Festival in Warsaw before appearing in the off-Broadway and Broadway productions of *Hair*. **Ben Thompson** performed in *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the Metropolitan Opera and in national tours of *Big River*, *HSM*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. **Alysha Umphress** has been seen on screen in *Across the Universe*, off Broadway in *Make Me a Song*, and as an opening act for Diana Krall. **Morgan Weed** appeared off Broadway in the world premiere of *Saved* and regionally in world premieres of *Bowery Boys*, *The Boys are Coming Home*, *In the Bubble*, and *Was*. **Libby Winters'** stage credits include the New York Musical Theatre Festival and New York Stage and Film; she also sings and plays guitar for The Fabulous Entourage. The swings are **Lorin Latarro** and **Omar Lopez-Cepero**.

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**Green Day** – vocalist/guitarist **Billie Joe Armstrong**, bassist **Mike Dirnt**, and drummer **Tré Cool** – were loud, snotty, scrappy kids from working-class backgrounds who came of age in the underground punk scene in Berkeley. Even though they had released two records prior (*1039 / Smooth Out Slappy Hours* and *Kerplunk*), they announced their arrival with 1994's *Dookie*, a dynamic blast of exuberant three-chord punk-pop that spoke to bored teenagers everywhere. The album eventually sold 15 million copies, earned the band its first Grammy Award, and inspired a raft of imitators. Over the years, Green Day continued to top the charts with their subsequent studio albums *Insomniac*, *Nimrod*, and *Warning* while entertaining millions of fans with their frenetic live shows. But it was their landmark 2004 album *American Idiot* that launched Green Day into the stratosphere. "Jesus of Suburbia" set the tone by telling a tale of the choice between self-destruction and redemption that resonated with listeners of all ages, nationalities, and political persuasions. *American Idiot* debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* chart. It spawned five hit singles, earned seven Grammy nominations (winning two, including Rock Album of the Year), and raised the bar for modern rock and roll. This year, Green Day released its new album *21<sup>st</sup> Century Breakdown*, which has been certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America, and embarked on a world tour. For more information on Green Day, visit [greenday.com](http://greenday.com).

*American Idiot* features the work of Olivier Award-winning choreographer **Steven Hoggett** with Tony-winning composer **Tom Kitt** providing music supervision, arrangements, and orchestrations. The design team includes Tony-nominee **Christine Jones** (sets), two-time Tony-winner **Kevin Adams** (lights), Baryshnikov fellow **Andrea Lauer** (costumes), and Obie Award-winner **Brian Ronan** (sound), as well as video designer **Darrel Maloney**. The music director is **Carmel Dean** and the associate choreographer is **Lorin Latarro**.

The show is supported by several contributors to Berkeley Rep's Annual Fund. **Bill Falik** and **Diana Cohen**, **John and Helen Meyer**, **Sally Smith** and **Don Burns**, the **Strauch Kulhanjian** Family, and **Felicia Woytak** and **Steve Rasmussen** serve as executive producers. The lead sponsor is **Levi's®**, and the show is also sponsored by the **Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation**.

Born in a storefront, **Berkeley Rep** has moved to the forefront of American theatre – and is still telling unforgettable stories. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 51 world premieres. In the last four years alone, Berkeley Rep has helped send four shows to Broadway: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator*

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*play*), *Passing Strange*, and *Wishful Drinking*. Founded in 1968, 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 600-seat proscenium stage in 2001, the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. It also opened the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, a permanent home for its long 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. 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.

**For more information** on *American Idiot* and the other shows in Berkeley Rep's 2009/10 Season, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-Tix – or just click [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org).

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# AMERICAN IDIOT FACT SHEET

**WHO:** Music by Green Day  
 Lyrics by Billie Joe Armstrong  
 Book by Billie Joe Armstrong and Michael Mayer  
 Directed by Michael Mayer  
 Featuring the work of Steven Hoggett (choreographer), Tom Kitt (music supervision, arrangements, and orchestrations), Christine Jones (sets), Kevin Adams (lights), Andrea Lauer (costumes), Brian Ronan (sound), Darrel Maloney (video and projections), Carmel Dean (music director), and Lorin Latarro (associate choreographer)  
 Starring Declan Bennett; Andrew Call; Gerard Canonico; Matt Caplan; Miguel Cervantes; Michael Esper; Mary Faber; John Gallagher, Jr; Joshua Henry; Brian Charles Johnson; Rebecca Naomi Jones; Lorin Latarro; Omar Lopez-Cepero; Chase Peacock; Christina Sajous; Theo Stockman; Ben Thompson; Alysha Umphress; Tony Vincent; Morgan Weed; and Libby Winters

**WHAT:** *American Idiot*, the world premiere of a new show that unites the searing songs of Green Day with the director of *Spring Awakening*

**WHERE:** Berkeley Repertory Theatre  
 Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

**WHEN:** **September 4 – October 11, 2009**

- Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM
- No matinees on 9/5, 9/6, 9/12, or 9/13

| SUN         | MON | TUE ■    | WED      | THU ■      | FRI             | SAT         |
|-------------|-----|----------|----------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
|             |     |          |          |            | 4 SEP<br>8P T N | 5<br>8P     |
| 6<br>7P     | 7   | 8<br>8P  | 9<br>7P  | 10<br>8P   | 11<br>8P        | 12<br>8P    |
| 13<br>7P    | 14  | 15<br>8P | 16<br>8P | 17<br>8P N | 18<br>8P T SO   | 19<br>2/8 T |
| 20<br>2/7 T | 21  | 22<br>8  | 23<br>7  | 24<br>8    | 25<br>8P T      | 26<br>2/8 T |
| 27<br>2/7 T | 28  | 29<br>8P | 30<br>7  | 1 OCT<br>8 | 2<br>8P         | 3<br>2/8 T  |
| 4<br>2/7 T  | 5   | 6<br>8   | 7<br>7   | 8<br>8     | 9<br>8          | 10<br>2/8   |
| 11<br>2/7   |     |          |          |            |                 |             |

### Special Events:

- Teen night: Friday 9/4 @ 6:30 PM
- Green night: Tuesday 9/15 @ 8:00 PM
- Press night: Wednesday 9/16 @ 8:00 PM
- night/OUT (LGBT event): Thursday 9/17 @ 8:00 PM
- 30 Below (party for those under 30): Friday 9/18 @ 8:00 PM
- Pre-show docent talks: Tuesdays 9/8, 9/22, 9/29 & 10/6 and Thursdays 9/10, 9/17, 9/24, 10/1 & 10/8 @ 7:00 PM
- Post-play discussions: Thursday 9/17, Friday 9/25, and Tuesday 9/29 @ 8:00 PM
- Free tastings: Fridays 9/18 (Ale Industries), 9/25 (Raymond Vineyards) & 10/2 (Berkeley Farmers' Market) @ 7:00 PM; Saturdays 9/19 (Kokomo Wines), 9/26 (Amanda's Restaurant) & 10/3 (Ale Industries) @ 7:00 PM; and Sundays 9/20 (Venus Restaurant), 9/27 (Angeline's Restaurant) & 10/4 (Meridian Restaurant) @ 6:00 PM

- PREVIEW
- T N TARGET® TEEN NIGHT
- GREEN NIGHT
- PRESS NIGHT
- LGBT NIGHT/OUT
- 30 BELOW
- POST-SHOW DISCUSSION
- TASTING
- DOCENT PRESENTATIONS EVERY TUE & THU 7PM

**HOW MUCH:** **\$16 - \$86**  
 Tickets go on sale at [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org) on Friday, August 7 / Best seats and lowest prices available now as part of a subscription to three or more shows in Berkeley Rep's season

**PHOTOS:** <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-09ai.asp>

**TIX & INFO:** 510.647.2949 – [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org) – 888-4-BRT-Tix (toll-free)