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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIREWORKS FESTIVAL AT BERKELEY REP FEATURES SEDARIS, HOYLE & NISKER

A series of sparkling performances on the Thrust Stage lights up the summer

FEBRUARY 18, 2010 – The Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre is thrilled to set off Fireworks, a new festival of colorful and explosive performances that takes off this summer. The Fireworks display includes sparkling solo shows from Dan Hoyle and Wes “Scoop” Nisker, as well as a workshop with David Sedaris which was announced in December and has already sold out its limited run. All performances take place on Berkeley Rep’s intimate Thrust Stage, a favorite home for renowned solo artists like Mike Daisey, Danny Hoch, Sarah Jones, Anna Deavere Smith, and Nilaja Sun.

“Berkeley Rep has a long history of presenting accomplished solo performers on our stage,” said **Tony Taccone**, the Theatre’s artistic director. “It’s the perfect environment for this kind of personal and populist storytelling. I’m pleased to welcome these talented artists to our theatre and to offer our audience an opportunity to enjoy their work.”

Experience the passion and intelligence of incendiary storytelling when Berkeley Rep lights the match on Fireworks. The **schedule** for the festival is as follows:

- June 14 - 20: An Evening with David Sedaris (sold out)
- June 24 - 26: Dan Hoyle’s *The Real Americans*
- June 30 - July 1: Dan Hoyle’s *Tings Dey Happen*
- July 2 - 3: Wes Nisker’s *Crazy Wisdom Saves the World Again*

NPR humorist and bestselling author **David Sedaris** takes the stage at Berkeley Rep to workshop stories from his upcoming book with a live audience. The author of wildly popular works such as *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, *Naked*, and *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, Sedaris has become one of America’s preeminent humor writers. The skill with which he slices through cultural euphemisms and political correctness proves that he is a master of satire and one of the most observant authors addressing the human condition. “Sedaris’s droll assessment of the mundane and the eccentrics who inhabit the world’s crevices make him one of the greatest humorists writing today,” declares the *Chicago Tribune*. Now audiences at Berkeley Rep can participate in the creation of his next hilarious and heartwarming work.

Dan Hoyle immerses himself in a subject, and then crafts a riveting show from the people he meets and the places he visits. “In the spirit of theatrical journalism exemplified by Anna Deavere Smith, Mr. Hoyle is both a first-rate reporter and actor,” raves the *New York Times*. In *Tings Dey Happen*, which he researched as a Fulbright scholar, Hoyle examines the complexities of Nigerian oil politics in a tale fueled by fascinating, real-life characters, including ambassadors, warlords, and prostitutes. The show won the Glickman Award for best new play in the Bay Area and has been performed off Broadway, at colleges across the country, and on a Nigerian tour sponsored by the US State Department. In his latest work, *The Real Americans*, Hoyle leaves the liberal bubble of San Francisco on a 100-day odyssey that explores America’s culture wars. With humor and sympathy, he introduces audiences to the small-town residents he encounters as he searches for a bridge between the Obama Nation and Palin Country. Now he brings both shows, directed by **Charlie Varon**, to Berkeley Rep.

(MORE)

RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

BERKELEY REP LIGHTS THE MATCH ON FIREWORKS FESTIVAL / 2 OF 2

A radio commentator, author, and meditation teacher, **Wes “Scoop” Nisker** calls himself a “recovered cynic” and “the world’s first Buddhist stand-up comedian.” The *New York Times* declares, “He delivers zingers with Borscht Belt timing.” In his books and performances, Nisker tackles the big questions – Where did we come from, and why are we here? – with a smile and a healthy dose of humor. Whether he’s riffing on Einstein, Nietzsche, or Wavy Gravy, Nisker and his “New Age New Deal” pack a big bang which proves that wisdom can be the ultimate high. This summer, with directorial assistance from **Mina Morita**, *Crazy Wisdom Saves the World Again* at Berkeley Rep.

Tickets for Dan Hoyle and Wes “Scoop” Nisker are \$25 each. Seats are half price for anyone under 30 years of age, and Berkeley Rep subscribers save \$5 on every ticket. Seats go **on sale to the general public on Sunday, March 14**; subscribers and donors to Berkeley Rep can take advantage of an exclusive pre-sale period until then. Tickets for David Sedaris, \$35 each, are no longer available.

Berkeley Rep’s Thrust Stage is located at 2025 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots – and only half a block from BART. For tickets or information, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-Tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Born in a storefront, Berkeley Rep has moved to the forefront of American theatre. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 53 world premieres. Known for its core values of innovation and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, Berkeley Rep provides a safe haven for emerging and established artists to explore new ideas. Its vital and versatile facility – which includes the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre – is the linchpin of a bustling arts district that has helped revitalize downtown Berkeley. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. In the last five years alone, the company has helped send five shows to Broadway: *American Idiot*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Passing Strange*, and *Wishful Drinking*. A not-for-profit organization, 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.

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FIREWORKS FESTIVAL FACT SHEET

WHAT: Fireworks, a new festival of colorful and explosive performances at Berkeley Rep

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Thrust Stage, 2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: June 14 – July 3, 2010

An Evening with David Sedaris

- Monday, June 14 @ 8 PM
- Tuesday, June 15 @ 8 PM
- Wednesday, June 16 @ 7 PM
- Thursday, June 17 @ 8 PM
- Friday, June 18 @ 8 PM
- Saturday, June 19 @ 8 PM
- Sunday, June 20 @ 2 PM & 7 PM

Dan Hoyle's *The Real Americans*

- Thursday, June 24 @ 8:00 PM
- Friday, June 25 @ 8:00 PM
- Saturday, June 26 @ 8:00 PM

Dan Hoyle's *Tings Dey Happen*

- Wednesday, June 30 @ 7:00 PM
- Thursday, July 1 @ 8:00 PM

Wes "Scoop" Nisker's *Crazy Wisdom Saves the World Again*

- Friday, July 2 @ 8:00 PM
- Saturday, July 3 @ 2:00 PM

HOW MUCH: \$25 for Dan Hoyle
\$25 for Wes "Scoop" Nisker
\$35 for David Sedaris (sold out)

Tickets are half price for anyone under 30 years of age.
Berkeley Rep subscribers save \$5 on every ticket.

PHOTOS: <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-10ds.asp>

TIX & INFO: (510) 647-2949 – berkeleyrep.org – (888) 4-BRT-Tix (toll-free)

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