

**PRESS CONTACT**

Voleine Amilcar, Director of Public Relations

**Visit the pressroom for more information:**<http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos.asp>**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STAND MAKES ITS WORLD PREMIERE AT BERKELEY REP******Award-winning poet-playwright – and Oakland native – Marcus Gardley debuts new play******Acclaimed director Patricia McGregor to stage production***

**December 30, 2013** – [Berkeley Repertory Theatre](http://www.berkeleyrep.org) proudly announces the world premiere of *The House that will not Stand*, a humorous and gripping historical drama commissioned from award-winning poet-playwright and Oakland native Marcus Gardley. Sensuous, witty, heartbreaking, and uplifting – *The House that will not Stand* unearths a story about free women of color in 1836 New Orleans, where black Creole women entered into common-law marriages with affluent white men. When her wealthy lover mysteriously dies, Beartrice Albans' foundation of wealth hang precariously by a thread. She is left to fend for her three unwed daughters in a world where freedom must be carefully negotiated. Told in a rich and lyrical river of words, this new play was developed through [The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work](#). It's helmed by Patricia McGregor, whose many credits include the celebrated production of *Spunk* at California Shakespeare Theater. *The House that will not Stand* begins previews on Berkeley Rep's intimate Thrust Stage on Friday, January 31, opens on Wednesday, February 5 and runs through Sunday, March 16, 2014.

"Continuing Berkeley Rep's commitment to commissioning new work and nurturing emerging talent through The Ground Floor — our incubator for new work — we're delighted to premiere *The House that will not Stand*, a new play richly penned by Marcus Gardley," says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. "Marcus has been on the cusp of stardom for several years now and has reached a level of acclaim and justly deserved recognition. He partners with noted director Patricia McGregor who has a strong foothold here in the Bay Area from her well-received productions with California Shakespeare Theater. We're eager for audiences to experience the lyrical, enchanting, and lush world that Marcus and Patricia have created in *The House that will not Stand*."

"I'm thrilled to be making my debut at Berkeley Rep in the backyard of my hometown of Oakland," remarks Gardley. "*The House that will not Stand* is a story that is close to my heart and I'm grateful to have participated in The Ground Floor, which provided the creative space and artistic support to develop the play into what it is today. In writing this play, I was very much inspired by New Orleans and a particular time in its history when *plaçage* (the common-law marriages of white men and black Creole women) was a significant part of the culture. A lot of people don't know about this history, and a lot of people do not know that African American women were millionaires. I wanted to expose and evaluate the culture and how African American women functioned in New Orleans society within the class system of that era. What's powerful about the play and this time period is that you see all these questions about freedom coming together and clashing. It raises the notion of 'what is freedom and can anyone be free?' Plays come alive with an audience, and I can't wait for them to bring to life the full richness of this story."

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**RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE**

## THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STANDS DEBUTS AT BERKELEY REP/ 2 OF 6

Referencing Gardley's abundant body of work, *the New York Times* opines, "Mr. Gardley, who graduated from the Yale School of Drama, writes with a ripe lyricism. The richness of his language, which often finds pungent poetry in the African-American vernacular, inevitably brings to mind the work of August Wilson." *The New Yorker* writes, "The 32-year-old playwright's talent is immense...He traffics in lush images and plots that are as mysterious and surprising as forced flowers blossoming in winter...Gardley is an interesting heir to García Lorca, Pirandello, and Tennessee Williams."

*The House that will not Stand* was commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in [The Ground Floor](#): Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work. A co-production with Yale Repertory Theatre, the production plays the intimate Thrust Stage before moving to its New Haven venue in April 2014.

**Marcus Gardley is a poet-playwright who is the recent 2012 James Baldwin Fellow.** Gardley is also the winner of the 2011 PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater Award for a Playwright in Midcareer and a Mellon Foundation grantee for a playwriting residency with Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago. His play *Dance of the Holy Ghost* is currently running at Center Stage in Baltimore to critical acclaim, and *The Road Weeps, the Well Runs Dry* — his epic trilogy about the migration of African American and Indigenous people from Florida to Oklahoma — is having a national tour. His play *Every Tongue Confess* just closed in Atlanta at Horizon Theatre Company after premiering at Arena Stage starring Phylicia Rashād and directed by Kenny Leon. It was nominated for the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics New Play Award, the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play, and was the recipient of the Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award. Gardley's musical *On the Levee* premiered in 2010 at Lincoln Center Theater and was nominated for 11 AUDELCO Awards including outstanding playwright. He is the recipient of the 2011 Aetna New Voices Fellowship at Hartford Stage, the Helen Merrill Award, a Kellsering Honor, the Gerbode Emerging Playwright Award, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre Award, a Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation grant, the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Scholarship, and the ASCAP Foundation Cole Porter Award. He also participated in the NEA/TCG Theatre Residency Program for Playwrights. Gardley holds an MFA in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama and is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America and the Lark Play Development Center. He is a professor of theatre and performance studies at Brown University.

**Patricia McGregor is a Harlem-based director, writer, and deviser of new work.** Recent credits include *The Mountaintop* at Philadelphia Theatre Company, *A Winter's Tale* and *Spunk* at California Shakespeare Theater, and the world premiere of *Hurt Village* at Signature Theatre Company. As associate director of *Fela!* on Broadway, she coached Patti LaBelle in the role of Funmilayo. Other directing credits include *Holding it Down* with Grammy Award nominee Vijay Iyer and Mike Ladd at Harlem Stage; *In the Cypher* at the Drilling Company; *Girl Shake Loose Her Skin* with Sonia Sanchez, Zakiyyah Alexander, and Imani Uzuri; as well as *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Four Electric Ghosts*, *Cloud Tectonics*, *Eleemosynary*, *The French Play*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Sidewalk Opera*, *Dancing in the Dark*, *The Covering Skyline*, and *In the Meantime*. She has worked on Broadway and at venues including New York's Shakespeare in the Park, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Second Stage Theatre, The Public Theater, the Kitchen, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Lincoln Center Institute, Exit Art, and Nuyorican Poetry Cafe. She co-founded Angela's Pulse with her sister, choreographer Paloma McGregor. Angela's Pulse creates vital choreoplays and fosters collaboration among artists, educators, organizers, academics, and other diverse communities in order to illuminate untold stories, infuse meaning into the audience experience, and animate progress through the arts. McGregor attended the Yale School of Drama where she was a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellow and artistic director of the Yale Cabaret.

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**Paloma McGregor is a Harlem-based movement artist, journalist, and community builder.** Recent choreography credits include *A Civil War Christmas* at Center Stage, *A Winter's Tale* and *Spunk* at California Shakespeare Theater, *Four Electric Ghosts* at the Kitchen, *Children of Killers* at Castillo Theatre, *For a Barbarian Woman* at Fordham University, *Indomitable: James Brown* at SummerStage, and *Blood Dazzler* at Harlem Stage. She co-founded Angela's Pulse with her sister, director Patricia McGregor, to create collaborative performance work rooted in building community, telling untold stories, and animating progress. They are currently collaborating with Marcus Gardley and composer Justin Ellington on a new musical about the Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia*. McGregor is also developing *Building a Better Fishtrap*, an iterative performance project about water, memory, and home, inspired by the stories of her father, an 88-year-old fisherman. She is an artist in residence at New York University's Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, has written extensively about dance and civic engagement, and created *Dancing While Black* to support the work of black dance artists. After leaving a career as a newspaper journalist, McGregor toured internationally for six years with Urban Bush Women dance company and has performed work by choreographers Liz Lerman, Cassie Meador, Christal Brown, Jill Sigman, Camille A. Brown, and others.

***The House that will not Stand* features a multi-talented ensemble of accomplished actors — many of whom make their Berkeley Rep debut with this production:**

- **Joniece Abbott-Pratt (Odette)** is making her Berkeley Rep debut. Her New York credits include *The Good Negro* at The Public Theater, *Alondra Was Here* at the Wild Project, and *Dirt Rich* at SummerStage. Regionally she has appeared in *Stick Fly* at Arden Theatre Company; *A Raisin in the Sun* at Palm Beach Dramaworks; *Slippery as Sin* at Passage Theatre Company; *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at the Huntington Theatre Company; *Gem of the Ocean* at Hartford Stage; *The Piano Lesson* at Yale Repertory Theatre and Delaware Theatre Company; *The Good Negro* at Dallas Theater Center; *Mama's Gonna Buy You* at the William Inge Theatre Festival; *Stick Fly* and *The Overwhelming* at Contemporary American Theater Festival; *False Creeds* at the Alliance Theatre; *Breath, Boom* at Synchronicity Performance Group; and *The Doll Plays* at Actor's Express. Abbott-Pratt attended Clark Atlanta University and received her MFA from the University of Iowa. Her film credits include the independent feature *The House That Jack Built* (dir. Henry Barrial), and her TV credits include *The Good Wife* and *Made in Jersey*. She received an MFA in acting at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a member of AEA and SAG/AFTRA.
- **Harriett D. Foy (Makeda)** has appeared on Broadway in *The American Plan*, *Mamma Mia!*, and *Once on This Island*. Her off-Broadway credits include *The Total Bent*, *On the Levee* (AUDELCO nomination), and the AUDELCO Award-winning *Crowns*. Foy has performed around the country at Goodspeed Musicals, New York Stage & Film's Powerhouse Theatre season, Arena Stage, Yale Repertory Theatre, and American Conservatory Theater, among others. Her many film and TV credits include *Winter's Tale*, *All Good Things*, *In the Family*, *Orange is the New Black*, *Law & Order*, and *Rescue Me*. Foy received her BFA from Howard University.

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THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STANDS DEBUTS AT BERKELEY REP/ 4 OF 6

- **Lizan Mitchell's (Beartrice)** 2013 theatre credits include *The Trip to Bountiful* at Cleveland Play House, *The Gospel of Loving Kindness* (by Marcus Gardley) at Brown/Trinity Playwrights Repertory Theatre, *This Was the End* at Prelude 13 at CUNY, and Bil Wright's *Celebrating Adrienne Kennedy* at Phoenix Theatre Ensemble. She performed on Broadway in *Electra*, *Having Our Say*, and *So Long on Lonely Street*, and off Broadway in *Rosmersholm*, *For Colored Girls...* (25th anniversary show), *Cell*, and *The Hurricane Katrina Comedy Festival* (New York Fringe Festival Best Play). Her film and television credits include *The Human Stain*, *John Adams* (HBO), *The Preacher's Wife*, *The Good Wife*, *Sesame Street*, *Law & Order*, and *The Golden Boy*. Mitchell has received a Black Theatre Alliance Award, a Helen Hayes Award, an AUDELCO Award for Best Actress, and Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations.
- **Petronia Paley's (La Veuve/Marie Josephine)** New York credits include Volumnia in *Coriolanus* and Gertrude in *Hamlet* with Take Wing and Soar Productions, Clytemnestra in *Electra* (AUDELCO Award) and Madame Ranevskya in *The Cherry Orchard* (AUDELCO nomination) at the Classical Theatre of Harlem, Dr. Iris Preston in *Relativity* at Ensemble Studio Theatre (AUDELCO nomination), *The Trial of One Short-Sighted Black Woman vs. Mammy Louise and Safreeta Mae* at the New Federal Theatre (AUDELCO Award), and more. Paley's regional theatre credits include *A Raisin in the Sun* at Crossroads Theatre Company, *King Lear* at Yale Repertory Theatre, *The Trojan Women* (Helen Hayes nomination), among others. Paley's one-person show *On the Way to Timbuktu* was first produced at EST and received an AUDELCO Award. She has been seen in the films *Transporter*, *2 Days in New York*, *Almost Summer*, and *White Girl*, and her TV credits include *Damages*, *Solomon Northup's Odyssey*, *Guiding Light*, and *Another World*.
- **Flor de Liz Perez (Maude Lynn)** is making her Berkeley Rep debut. She has appeared in countless regional productions including the world premiere of *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England*, directed by Ken Rus Schmoll at Two River Theater Company; and *In the Continuum*, directed by Liesl Tommy, and *Nicholas Nickleby*, directed by Joe Haj/Tom Quaintance, both at PlayMakers Repertory Company. She is an ensemble member/performer with New York's Neo-Futurists in *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, and she is an associate artist with Theatre 167. Perez has also performed in the world premiere of *In the Time of the Butterflies* under the direction of Jose Zayas at Repertorio Español, which won the 2011 HOLA Award for Best Ensemble.
- **Ray Reinhardt (Lazare)** appeared at Berkeley Rep as Con Melody in *A Touch of the Poet* and James Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. In his over 40 years as an actor, Reinhardt has had a wonderful time working at esteemed Bay Area theatres such as American Conservatory Theater (for 25 years in various roles including leads in *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Visit*, *The Miser*, *Sleuth*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*), San Jose Repertory Theatre as Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, Marin Shakespeare Company and San Francisco Shakespeare Festival in the title role of *King Lear*, Aurora Theatre Company as Gregory Solomon in *The Price* and Jacob in *Awake and Sing!*, and SF Playhouse in *The Fantasticks* and *Storefront Church*. He has performed on Broadway in *A Flea in Her Ear* and in *Tiny Alice* with Sir John Gielgud, as well in television and film.

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THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STANDS DEBUTS AT BERKELEY REP/ 5 OF 6

- **Tiffany Rachele Stewart (Agnès)** is appearing at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for the first time. She was recently seen in the Alliance Theatre's production of *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*. Her New York credits include *Blood Dazzler* at Harlem Stage, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Lyceum Theatre, and *Obama Drama* at the 45th Street Theatre. Other regional credits include *Conference of the Birds* at the Folger Theatre, and *The African Company Presents Richard III* and *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Stewart has acted for television on *All My Children* and *Royal Pains*. She is also an avid dancer and choreographer; most recently choreographing the world premiere musical *The Unfortunates* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Stewart received her MFA in acting from the Yale School of Drama in 2007.

**The creative team for *The House that will not Stand* includes a stellar roster of creative talent.** **Antje Ellermann (set designer)** returns to Berkeley Rep where she previously designed *9 Parts of Desire*, *The Pillowman*, *TRAGEDY: a tragedy*, and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. Ellermann has been nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award, a Helen Hayes Award, an Ovation Award for *9 Parts of Desire*, and an Emmy Award for *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience* on PBS. **Katherine O'Neill's (costume designer)** New York credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Whale Play* at New Theater House, *In the Cypher* at Nuyorican Poets Café, and *Blood Dazzler* at Harlem Stage. Her designs have been seen around the country in *The Taming of the Shrew* at California Shakespeare Theater, *Death of a Salesman* at Yale Repertory Theatre, *Island of Slaves* and *Love Song* at Orfeo Group, *The Emancipation of Mandy and Miz Ellie* at Company One, *Ti Jean and his Brothers* at Central Square Theater, *A Christmas Story* at New Repertory Theatre, and *Così Fan Tutti* at Commonwealth Opera Company. O'Neil is a visiting professor of design at Amherst College and received her MFA in design from Yale University. **Russell H. Champa (lighting designer)** returns to Berkeley Rep after creating the lighting design for Les Waters' productions of *Dear Elizabeth*, *Eurydice* (also at Second Stage Theatre and Yale Repertory Theatre), *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, and *The Pillowman*. On Broadway, Champa has designed *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* and *God Said "Ha!"* at the Lyceum Theatre. **Keith Obadike's (sound designer and original compositions)** sound design and composition credits include *The Mystery Plays* (Connecticut Critics Circle Award for Sound Design) at Yale Repertory Theatre and Second Stage Theatre, *The Winter's Tale* at Milwaukee Shakespeare, the Lincoln Center Institute production of *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, and *Blood Dazzler* at Harlem Stage. The stage manager for the production of *The House that will not Stand* is **Michael Suenkel**, Berkeley Rep's resident production stage manager.

The 2013-14 season is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also proud to have the *San Francisco Chronicle/SFGate.com* as a second-year season sponsor and the Strauch-Kulhanjian Family on board as season producers. The development of this production has been supported in part by The Mosse Artistic Development Fund and by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. *The House that will not Stand* is also made possible by executive producers Stewart and Rachele Owen, Gail and Arne Wagner, and Barry Lawson Williams and Lalita Tademay.

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*THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STANDS DEBUTS AT BERKELEY REP/ 6 OF 6*

This season Berkeley Rep will partner with the Theatre Development Fund to offer 10 open-captioned performances. This state-of-the-art technology will allow Berkeley Rep to open its doors to a wider community by making performances accessible to patrons with hearing loss. An open-captioned performance for *The House that will not Stand* will occur on Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 2:00 pm.

**ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities – the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city.

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**FACT SHEET**

**THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STAND**

**WHO:** Written by Marcus Gardley  
 Directed by Patricia McGregor  
 Choreographed by Paloma McGregor  
 An ensemble cast featuring Joniece Abbott-Pratt, Harriett D. Foy, Lizan Mitchell, Petronia Paley, Flor de Liz Perez, Ray Reinhardt, and Tiffany Rachelle Stewart  
 Creative team: Antje Ellermann (set design), Katherine O'Neill (costume design), Russell H. Champa (lighting design), and Keith Obadike (sound design and original compositions)

**WHAT:** Berkeley Rep proudly presents the world premiere of a new play commissioned from an Oakland native. Sensuous, witty, heartbreaking, and uplifting — **The House that will not Stand** by Marcus Gardley unearths a story about free women of color in 1836 New Orleans, where black Creole women entered into common-law marriages with wealthy white men.

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

**WHEN: 51 PERFORMANCES: January 31– March 16, 2014**

Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM  
 Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM except @ 8:00PM on 2/5  
 Thursdays @ 8:00 PM and 2:00 & 8:00 PM on 2/13 and 3/13  
 Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM; no matinee on 2/1 and 2/15  
 Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM; no matinee on 2/2  
 No performance on Friday 3/14

**Special Events:**

Low-cost previews: Friday 1/31, Saturday 2/1  
 Tuesday, 2/4 @ 8:00 PM and Sunday 2/2 @ 7:00 PM

Opening Night: Wednesday 2/5 @ 8:00 PM; includes a pre-show dinner for donors at Angelina's Louisiana Kitchen and a post-show party for audiences.

Teen Night: Friday 1/31 @ 6:30 PM

Repartee: FREE docent talks before Tuesday and Thursday evening performances and free discussions after all matinees

Last Call: Sample wine, spirits, and other culinary delights from local vendors—all for FREE! Saturday 2/8 following the evening performance

Post-play discussions: Thursday 2/20, Tuesday 2/25, and Friday 3/7 following the performance

**HOW MUCH: \$29 - \$59** (subject to change) **TIX & INFO:** (510) 647-2949 – [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org)  
 Discounts: Half-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](mailto:groups@berkeleyrep.org)

**PRESS KIT:** <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/presskit-1314hs.asp>

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8 OPENING 8 PREVIEW 8 TEEN NIGHT ♦ REPARTEE  
 8 POST-SHOW DISCUSSION ● OPEN CAPTIONING