

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kevin Kopjak | Prismatic Communications | [kevin@prismaticcommunications.com](mailto:kevin@prismaticcommunications.com)**BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE ANNOUNCES THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM  
FOR THE WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL, *THE LUNCHBOX***

**Based on Ritesh Batra’s internationally acclaimed film, this new musical adaptation brings the beloved story of unexpected connection and second chances to the stage.**

**Berkeley Rep’s Roda Theatre  
May 17–June 28, 2026**

BERKELEY, CA (March 19, 2026) — **Berkeley Repertory Theatre Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer** and **Managing Director Tom Parrish** announced today the cast and creative team for the world premiere musical, *The Lunchbox*, performing at **Berkeley Rep’s Roda Theatre** from **Sunday, May 17 through Sunday, June 28, 2026**. Press night will be held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026. Single tickets (\$25–\$135) are available online at [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org) or by phone at 510 647-2949 (Tue–Sun, 12pm–7pm).

Rediscover the beauty of human connection in *The Lunchbox* — a new musical adaptation of **Ritesh Batra’s** internationally acclaimed film filled with heart, humor, and hope. In bustling Mumbai, a lunchbox delivery meant for one man lands in the hands of another, sparking an unlikely bond between a young wife longing to be seen and a widower nearing retirement. As notes pass back and forth with each meal, their words blossom into a romance that might save them both. Directed by Tony Award-winner **Rachel Chavkin** (*Hadestown; Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*) and featuring a sweeping, intimate score by **the Lazours**, *The Lunchbox* is a tale of love, yearning, and new beginnings — one that will leave you with the courage to take a chance.

“I was transported by Ritesh’s beautiful movie, and it’s a privilege to help this amazing team bring this story to the stage,” said **Pfaelzer**. “Rachel, Ritesh, the Lazours, Reshma, and this extraordinarily accomplished group of designers, musicians and actors are crafting a musical both intimate and gorgeously theatrical, and I can’t wait for Bay Area audiences to fall under its spell.”

“I am so deeply moved by this show, which has a delicacy and depth of humanity I’ve almost never experienced in a musical,” said **Chavkin**. “The Lazours’ music, enhanced by profound orchestrations created by Daniel and Patrick Lazour, Nathan Koci, Carnatic violinist Arun Ramamurthy, and percussionist Rohan Krishnamurthy, are divine. And Ritesh Batra has somehow managed to amplify his already glorious film, maintaining its intimacy while opening it to even more emotionality and contemporary resonances. I can’t wait.”

"I am honored to bring *The Lunchbox* to Berkeley Rep," adds **Batra**. "The musical is a true adaptation of the movie: it embraces the medium. It's both intimate and grand, and I can't wait to share it with the Bay Area."

"We are thrilled to be premiering *The Lunchbox* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre," said **the Lazours**. "This musical has been a journey of the heart, and we are honored to contribute our voices to this extraordinary love story. Johanna Pfaelzer and her team have made Berkeley one of the best places in the world for developing new musicals. It has been a privilege not only to write such a deeply personal score, but to hear it interpreted by the great musical theatre performers of our age."

Featuring **Manu Narayan** (*Company* on Broadway; *The Love Guru*) and **Kuhoo Verma** (*Heathers*, off-Broadway; *Monsoon Wedding* at Berkeley Rep), the cast of ***The Lunchbox*** also includes (in alphabetical order): **Hashini Amarasinghe**, **Savidu Geevaratne**, **Akshara Gunda**, **Shaarada Trayi Karthik**, **Benjamin Mathew**, **Vaibu Mohan**, **Shiv Nadkarni**, **Anisha Nagarajan**, **Nasir Panjwani**, **Yash Ramanujam**, **Sushma Saha**, **Kinshuk Sen**, **Caryna Shah**, **Aathaven Tharmarajah**, **Vishal Vaidya**, and **Levin Valayil**.

The creative team for *The Lunchbox* includes **Ritesh Batra** (Book and Co-Lyrics), **the Lazours** (Music and Co-Lyrics), **Rachel Chavkin** (Director), **Reshma Gajjar** (Choreographer), **Mimi Lien** (Scenic Design), **Arjun Bhasin** (Costume Design), **Bradley King** (Lighting Design), **Justin Stasiw** (Sound Design), **Charles LaPointe** (Wig, Hair & Makeup Design), **Nathan Koci** (Music Supervisor), **Arun Ramamurthy** (Co-Arrangements), **Rohan Krishnamurthy** (Co-Arrangements), **Sheela Ramesh** (Music Director), **Kristian Charbonier and Adam Caldwell**, **The Telsey Office** (Casting), **Mahira Kakkar** (Dialect Coach), **Becky Fleming** (Production Stage Manager), **Shana Ferguson** (Stage Manager), and **Kathleen Gallardo** (Assistant Stage Manager). *The Lunchbox* is produced in association with **Mark Lunsford** and **Nik Dodani**.

Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of its Season Presenting Sponsors, including **Peet's Coffee** and **The Shubert Foundation** as well as **Stephen & Susan Chamberlin**, **Yogen & Peggy Dalal**, **Bruce Golden & Michelle Mercer**, **Marcia Grand**, **Frances Hellman & Warren Breslau**, **Jonathan Logan & John Piane**, **Arjay R. and Frances F. Miller Foundation**, **the Strauch Kulhanjian Family**, and **Gail & Arne Wagner**. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to acknowledge support at our season sponsor level from **The Hearst Foundations**, **The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**, and **Oakland San Francisco Bay Airport (OAK)** as well as **Wayne Jordan & Quinn Delaney**, **Sudha Pennathur & Edward Messerly**, **Jack & Betty Schafer**, and **Kelli & Steffan Tomlinson**.

*The Lunchbox* is made possible in part with the support of **Berkeley Rep's South Asian Leadership Council**: season presenting sponsors **Yogen & Peggy Dalal**, season sponsors **Sudha Pennathur & Edward Messerly**, lead sponsors **Anjali & Sundar Pichai**, as well as associate sponsors the **Dhanam Foundation**, **Omar Khan & Kamini Ramani**, and **Rohini Sadarangani**. Berkeley Rep also acknowledges the generous support of *The Lunchbox* at the sponsor level from the **Laurents/Hatcher Foundation** and **Mechanics Bank**, and at the associate sponsor level from **PNC Bank**.

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## **ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 6 million people have enjoyed more than 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 90 world premieres. Berkeley Rep

shows have gone on to win eight Tony Awards, nine Obie Awards, 11 Drama Desk Awards, a Grammy Award, a Pulitzer Prize, 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.

Through its annual seven-play season, together with up to four special event presentations, Berkeley Rep invites audiences to enjoy an eclectic range of theatrical experiences featuring diverse artistic voices, themes, and perspectives. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. Serving some 20,000 people a year, Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre ensures broad access to dynamic arts educational activities, especially for Bay Area youth, and provides immersive training for current and future theatre makers. In 2021, Berkeley Rep launched In Dialogue, a program that places its theatre-making skills and resources in service of the community. Using storytelling as an anchor, In Dialogue is developing long-term collaborations with local, socially centered organizations, as well as educating and activating our audiences around organizations whose work aligns with the themes of our productions.

Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities — which include the 600-seat Roda Theatre, 400-seat Peet's Theatre, Medak Center, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city.

Learn more at [berkeleyrep.org](https://www.berkeleyrep.org).