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**EMMY AWARD WINNER AND *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR
W. KAMAU BELL RETURNS TO HIS STAND-UP COMEDY ROOTS WITH
BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE RESIDENCY**

In *W. Kamau Bell Gets His Act Together*, Bell will experiment with new material, comment on the day's news, and share new stories about his life and family all in front of an intimate audience

**Berkeley Rep's Bakery Studio at Berkeley Rep School of Theatre
January 20 – March 16, 2024**

BERKELEY, CA (December 20, 2023)—Today, **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** announced that Emmy Award winner and *New York Times* bestselling author **W. Kamau Bell** will return to his stand-up comedy roots after a five-year hiatus with *W. Kamau Bell Gets His Act Together*, a two-month Ground Floor residency at **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**. Every Saturday from **January 20 – March 16, 2024** (except February 3), Bell will take the stage at **Berkeley Rep's Bakery Studio at Berkeley Rep School of Theatre** (2071 Addison St., Berkeley) to experiment with fresh material, comment on the day's news, talk to the audience, and share new stories about his life and family, while he tries not to freak out about the upcoming election. The goal is that Bell gets a new tour to take around the country...and the hope is that whatever is left of America's democracy survives into 2025. *W. Kamau Bell Gets His Act Together* is developed with Martha Rynberg. General admission tickets for *W. Kamau Bell Gets His Act Together* are \$25 and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org or by phone at **510-647-2949** (Tue–Sun, 12–7 p.m.).

Said **Berkeley Rep Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer**: “Kamau is one of the great storytellers of our time, and the chance to get to support his process as he crafts a new piece that speaks to and about this particular moment is a privilege and a thrill.”

“I couldn't be more excited to get back into stand-up at Berkeley Rep,” says **W. Kamau Bell**. “For years I have attended incredibly powerful shows there, from Anna Deavere Smith's *Notes From The Field* to *Passing Strange* to *An Octoroon*. And I was blown away and a little scared when they let me know they wanted to partner with me on *W. Kamau Bell Gets His Act Together*, a show that currently only exists in my mind and on the notes app on my phone. And the fact we are doing it in such a small and intimate space takes me back to my black box theatre days where my career finally came together. Also performing there means I might actually finally live out my dream of being Mike Birbiglia when I grow up.”

While he's most recently been recognized as the host of CNN's Emmy-winning show *United Shades of America* and a Peabody Award-winning director for his docuseries, *We Need to Talk About Cosby*, Bell has always considered himself a stand-up comedian at heart.

In *W. Kamau Bell Gets His Act Together*, the audience becomes a part of shaping the next chapter of Bell's comedic journey. This interactive engagement harkens back to the audience participation that fueled Bell's creation of *The W. Kamau Bell Curve: Ending Racism in About an Hour* in the late aughts and marked his triumphant return from New York with the *Home By Ten* shows in 2014. And who knows? There might even be some surprises and special guests along the way.

W. Kamau Bell is a stand-up comedian, director, producer, husband, and dad. For seven seasons, he was the host and executive producer of the five-time Emmy Award-winning CNN docu-series *United Shades of America*. Bell won a Peabody Award for his Showtime docu-series *We Need To Talk About Cosby*. He is also the co-author of the New York Times bestselling book *Do The Work: An Antiracist Activity Book*. His first book was his memoir with the easy-to-remember title: *The Awkward Thoughts of W. Kamau Bell: Tales of a 6' 4", African American, Heterosexual Cisgender, Left-Leaning, Asthmatic, Black and Proud Blerd, Mama's Boy, Dad, and Stand-Up Comedian*. Recently, Bell directed and produced the Emmy Award winning HBO documentary *1000% Me: Growing Up Mixed*. As a stand-up comic, Bell has recorded two comedy specials. The second one, *Private School Negro*, is available on Netflix. Bell is on the board of directors for DonorsChoose—a nonprofit that helps teachers raise money for class projects, and Live Free —a nonprofit dedicated to ending gun violence, mass incarceration, and mass criminalization. Bell is also the ACLU's Celebrity Ambassador for Racial Justice.

Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of **BART** and **Peet's Coffee**, Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to recognize the support at the season sponsor level from **Stephen and Susan Chamberlin; Yogen and Peggy Dalal; Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer; Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau; Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney; Gisele and Kenneth F. Miller; Jack and Betty Schafer; The Strauch Kulhanjian Family; and Gail and Arne Wagner.**

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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 nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. 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. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities — which also include the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP'S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK

Since its inception in 2012, **the Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work** has become one of the most well-regarded new play development programs in the country, attracting the nation's best emerging and established artists to Berkeley Rep. The Ground Floor provides a comprehensive and ambitious process for new play development by supporting artists with activities including commissions, workshops, readings, world premiere productions, and the annual Summer Residency Lab. Since the program began, Berkeley Rep has offered commissions to 61 artists to create full-length or short works, and 186 projects have been created or refined at our West Berkeley campus. Over 1,000 playwrights, directors, composers, actors, and other artists have assembled at the

Summer Residency Lab to collaborate, share ideas, forge new artistic relationships, and receive bespoke support for their project development. Fourteen plays developed in the Summer Lab have made their way onto a Berkeley Rep stage, and nearly 50 projects have appeared at other theatres across the nation and globe including Jackie Sibblies Drury's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fairview* (Berkeley Rep commission), John Leguizamo's *Latin History for Morons* (Broadway, national tour), Anais Mitchell's Tony Award-winning musical *Hadestown* (National Theatre in London, Broadway, national tour), and Lauren Yee's *Cambodian Rock Band*. Berkeley Rep also has been instrumental in developing nationally lauded productions like *Ain't Too Proud—The Life and Times of The Temptations* and *Paradise Square: A New Musical*. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org/the-ground-floor.