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## BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2024/25 SEVEN-SHOW SUBSCRIPTION SEASON

\*\*\* Season Subscriptions On Sale Now! \*\*\*

BERKELEY, CA (April 16, 2024)—**Berkeley Repertory Theatre Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer** and **Managing Director Tom Parrish** announced today the seven productions that will make up the organization's 2024/25 season—***MEXODUS***, a hip-hop, live-looping musical from Brian Quijada and Nygel D. Robinson about the Underground Railroad that went south into Mexico; ***THE MATCHBOX MAGIC FLUTE***, Mary Zimmerman's new theatrical adaptation of Mozart's beloved opera; direct from Broadway, Jocelyn Bioh's acclaimed comedy, ***JAJA'S AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING***; the world premiere of ***THE THING ABOUT JELLYFISH***, based on the *New York Times* bestselling novel by Ali Benjamin and adapted for the stage by Keith Bunin; Olivier Award-winner Conor McPherson's stunning adaptation of Anton Chekhov's ***UNCLE VANYA***, starring **Hugh Bonneville**; Tectonic Theater Project's critically acclaimed new play, ***HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES***; and the world premiere of Jiehae Park's lyrical ***the aves***. Casting and full creative teams to be announced a later date.

"I am delighted to include in the coming season artists who are long-time Berkeley Rep favorites including Mary Zimmerman, Moises Kaufman, and Jocelyn Bioh, and to introduce our community to the extraordinary talents of Brian Quijada, Nygel D. Robinson, Jiehae Park, and Keith Bunin," says **Pfaelzer**. "And of course it will be a thrill to welcome Simon Godwin and Hugh Bonneville as they share Chekhov's prescient masterpiece, *Uncle Vanya*. These artists are telling stories both timely and timeless, allowing us to use theater to interrogate some of the most pressing issues of this moment, and also to escape into worlds both imaginative and fantastical. It feels fitting and necessary that the season will give us the shared opportunity to travel from the enchanted forest of Mozart's Magic Flute to Nazi-occupied Poland; from Harlem's 125<sup>th</sup> Street to the Mexico/Texas border, and countless places along the way. I look forward to the journey in the company of this incredibly engaged community."

“Building on this incredible season and our strong momentum right now, the 2024/25 season beautifully centers and elevates our values of storytelling, rigor, innovation, equity, discovery, and sustainability,” says **Parrish**. “As a leading regional theatre with a national and international reach, Berkeley Rep continues to meet the moment with ambition and relevance not only on stage, but offstage as well through our School of Theatre, In Dialogue community engagement programming, and The Ground Floor, which is providing bespoke support and development for what is new and next in the American theatre.”

Kicking off the 2024/25 season, Berkeley Rep will present the West Coast premiere of the hip-hop remix, **MEXODUS (September 13–October 20, 2024)**. History meets hip-hop in **MEXODUS**, an electrifying live-looping musical, composed in real-time by multi-talented writer/performers **Brian Quijada** and **Nygel D. Robinson**. **MEXODUS** explores the often-untold stories of the Underground Railroad that led south into Mexico. Don't miss this groundbreaking, theatrical experience of resilience and resistance, celebrating the power of Black and Brown solidarity. **MEXODUS** will be directed by **Berkeley Rep Associate Artistic Director David Mendizábal**. **Performances of MEXODUS will take place at Berkeley Rep's Peet's Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.**

Theatrical powerhouse **Mary Zimmerman** (*Metamorphoses, The Arabian Nights, The White Snake*) triumphantly returns to Berkeley Rep with the West Coast premiere of **THE MATCHBOX MAGIC FLUTE (October 18–December 8, 2024)**, a mesmerizing adaptation of Mozart's iconic *Magic Flute*, using only 10 singers and five musicians. Join Tamino on a daring quest to rescue the captive princess Pamina. Encounter dragons, birdmen, and trials by fire in this enchanting microcosm of wonder where magic and music intertwine. Hailed as “a box of treasures, a haze of marvels, a banquet of dreams, the very word delight,” by *The Chicago Reader*, **THE MATCHBOX MAGIC FLUTE** will transport you to realms of imagination and wonder. Produced in association with Goodman Theatre. **Performances of THE MATCHBOX MAGIC FLUTE will take place at Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024.**

Direct from a twice-extended run on Broadway, Berkeley Rep will next present the West Coast premiere of **Jocelyn Bioh's** new comedy, **JAJA'S AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING (November 8–December 15, 2024)**. Step into the vibrant world of Jaja's African Hair Braiding, a beloved Harlem hotspot where West African immigrant braiders work their magic on the locals' locks. Amidst the lively buzz of a scorching summer, love ignites, dreams soar, and secrets unravel. But beneath the surface lies a current of uncertainty,

pushing this close-knit community to confront the challenges of being outsiders in their own neighborhood. From the pen of acclaimed Ghanaian American playwright **Jocelyn Bioh** (*Goddess, School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*) and directed by Obie winner **Whitney White**, **JAJA'S AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING** is "a play that is equally affecting as it is hilarious," hails *Entertainment Weekly*. **JAJA'S AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING** is a co-production with Arena Stage and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, in association with Madison Wells Live & LaChanze. **Performances of JAJA'S AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING will take place at Berkeley Rep's Peet's Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.**

Kicking off the new year, Berkeley Rep will present the world premiere of **THE THING ABOUT JELLYFISH (January 31–March 9, 2025)**, based on the *New York Times* bestselling novel by **Ali Benjamin** and adapted for stage by **Keith Bunin**. During the last week of summer vacation, 12-year-old Suzy Swanson learns that her best friend Franny has drowned. Desperate to make sense of Franny's death, Suzy immerses herself in her own imagination, where she can circumnavigate the globe, plunge into the terrifying depths of the ocean, explore the collapsed stars of the most distant galaxies, and perhaps even solve the mysteries of the universe. **THE THING ABOUT JELLYFISH** is a visually stunning and deeply emotional coming-of-age tale about love, loss, friendship, and the profound expansiveness of the human spirit. **THE THING ABOUT JELLYFISH** will be directed by **Tyne Rafaeli**. Produced in association with Madison Wells Live. **Performances of THE THING ABOUT JELLYFISH will take place at Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, February 5, 2025.**

Next, Berkeley Rep will present Olivier Award-winner **Conor McPherson's** stunning adaptation of Anton Chekhov's masterpiece, **UNCLE VANYA (February 14–March 23, 2025)**. When the distinguished elderly owner of a rural estate returns with a new, young wife, chaos erupts. Tensions run high, marriages reach their limits, confessions—and vodka—flow freely, and weapons are drawn. **Hugh Bonneville** (*Downton Abbey, Paddington*) plays Uncle Vanya in this heartbreaking comedy about the eternal battle between futility and change. **UNCLE VANYA** is a co-production with **Shakespeare Theatre Company** and will be directed by Shakespeare Theatre Company's Artistic Director **Simon Godwin**. **Performances of UNCLE VANYA will take place at Berkeley Rep's Peet's Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2025.**

In spring 2025, Berkeley Rep will present **Tectonic Theater Project's HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES (April 5–May 11, 2025)**, written by **Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich** and conceived and directed by **Moisés Kaufman**. In 2007, a mysterious album featuring Nazi-era photographs arrived at the desk of a U.S.

Holocaust Memorial Museum archivist. As curators unraveled the shocking truth behind the images, the album soon made headlines and ignited a debate that reverberated far beyond the museum walls. Based on real events, ***HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES*** tells the story of these historical photographs—what they reveal about the perpetrators of the Holocaust, and our own humanity. Produced by special arrangement with Tectonic Theater Project, Brian & Dayna Lee, and Sonia Friedman Productions. **Performances of *HERE THERE ARE BLUEBERRIES* will take place at Berkeley Rep’s Roda Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, April 9, 2025.**

Closing out the 2024/25 season, Berkeley Rep will present the world premiere of **Jiehae Park’s *the aves* (May 2–June 8, 2025)**. In the summer, an old man and an old woman sit on a park bench, talk about the birds, and bet on the rain...but things aren't as simple as they may seem. With humor, surrealism, and tenderness, the singular imagination and innovative style of acclaimed playwright Jiehae Park turn the ordinary into the extraordinary as the seasons shift, meditating on themes of human connection, memory, and growing older. ***the aves*** will be directed by **Knud Adams**, coming off his Broadway directing debut. **Performances of *the aves* will take place at Berkeley Rep’s Peet’s Theatre. Press night will be held on Wednesday, May 7, 2025.**

Full Season (7-play) subscriptions start at \$224 and are available now by visiting [berkeleyrep.org/sub](https://berkeleyrep.org/sub). Berkeley Rep Full Season subscribers save up to 33% off individual ticket prices, and also receive priority access to special limited-engagement events, free ticket exchanges, discounts on additional tickets and School of Theatre classes, and more! Individual tickets for each production will go on sale to the general public at a later date. All prices, dates, artists, and venues are subject to change.

For the 2024/25 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of **BART** and **Peet’s Coffee**, Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also pleased to recognize the following contributors for their generous season support: **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 more than 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 85 world premieres. Berkeley Rep

shows have gone on to win 8 Tony Awards, 9 Obie Awards, 11 Drama Desk Awards, 1 Grammy Award, 1 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](http://berkeleyrep.org).