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**FOUR-TIME TONY AWARD NOMINEE RAÚL ESPARZA
TO STAR IN THE DAZZLING WORLD-PREMIERE MUSICAL *GALILEO*
AT BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE**

Directed by Tony Award winner Michael Mayer, *Galileo* follows the father of observational astronomy whose controversial discoveries changed the understanding of the universe

Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre
May 5 – June 16, 2024

BERKELEY, CA (December 6, 2023)—Today, **Berkeley Repertory Theatre Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer** and **Managing Director Tom Parrish** announced that four-time Tony Award nominee **Raúl Esparza** (Broadway's *Company*, *Taboo*, *The Homecoming*, *Speed-the-Plow*, and *Law & Order*) will star in the dazzling world-premiere musical ***Galileo***, performing at Berkeley Rep's **Roda Theatre** (2015 Addison St., Berkeley) **May 5–June 16, 2024**. Press night will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2024. The full cast of *Galileo* will be announced at a later date. Tickets are currently only guaranteed for 2023/24 season subscribers. Single tickets for *Galileo* will go on sale on January 10, 2024.

When maverick scientist Galileo Galilei makes celestial observations that challenge humanity's understanding of its place in the universe, he's summoned to Rome to defend his discoveries before the most powerful religious institution in the world, which is facing a rebellion of its own. *Galileo* is an explosive collision of science and faith, truth and power.

Helmed by Tony Award winner **Michael Mayer** (*Spring Awakening*, *American Idiot*, *Swept Away*), *Galileo* is written by two-time Emmy winner **Danny Strong** (*Dopesick*, *Empire*, *The Butler*) and features an original rock score and lyrics by **Michael Weiner** (Broadway's *First Date*) and **Zoe Sarnak** (Jonathan Larson Award winner), with choreography by **David Neumann**.

"I am delighted to welcome Raúl to Berkeley Rep for the first time in person — though some of our audience will remember him from our digital musical film series *The Waves in Quarantine* in 2021," said **Pfaelzer**. "*Galileo* is a role built for Raúl, and I can't wait to see him give voice to the ambition, intellect, and yearning of this powerful character.

Since making his Broadway debut in *Cabaret* in 1999, Raúl has taken the theatre world by storm. He first drew attention with his performance as Riff Raff in the revival of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, which won him the Theatre World Award. The following year, he appeared off-Broadway in *tick, tick... BOOM!*, which garnered a Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Actor in a Musical. Additional theatre credits include *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Leap of Faith*, *Arcadia*, *Twelfth Night*, *Speed-the-Plow*, *The Homecoming*, *Company*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Children And Art*, *Hair*, *The Normal Heart*, *Taboo*, *Chess*, *Comedians*, *Rooms*, *Short Talks on the Universe*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *Assassins*, and *Evita*.

Esparza is the second performer in theatre history to receive Tony nominations in all four acting categories that a performer can be eligible for. His Tony Award nominations include Best Featured Actor in a Musical for *Taboo* (2004), Best Actor in a Musical for *Company* (2007), Best Featured Actor in a Play for *The Homecoming* (2008), and Best Actor in a Play for *Speed-the-Plow* (2009).

Esparza can most recently be seen in *Candy*, starring Jessica Biel and Melanie Lynskey, about the true story of killer Candy Montgomery and her victim, Betty Gore. In addition, he was recently seen in *Glimpse*, directed by Theresa Rebeck and starring Janet McTeer, Carrie Preston, and Michael Emerson who are in competition for the same job as their lives are turned upside down while under surveillance.

Esparza recently starred in the mini-series *A Murder at the End of the World*, alongside Daniel Olson and Britain Seibert, following a Gen Z amateur sleuth that attempts to solve a murder at a secluded retreat.

Esparza notably appeared in 20th Century Fox's animated comedy *Ferdinand*, portraying the voice of Moreno. Additional film credits include James Lapine's *Custody*, Sean Durkin's *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, Jonathan Ullman's *Trouble in the Heights*, Wes Craven's *My Soul to Take*, and Sidney Lumet's *Find Me Guilty*.

Esparza's TV credits include his notable role as Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Rafael Barba in *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. He joined the cast in 2012 and stayed as a recurring actor from Season 14 through Season 19. His other television credits include Hulu's limited series *Dopesick*, ABC's *Pushing Daisies*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Law & Order*, *The Path*, *Medium*, *Georgetown*, *A Gifted Man*, *666 Park Avenue*, and *Hannibal*.

The multifaceted Esparza rounds out his accomplishments on stage and screens with his success in the voiceover world. His voiceover credits include *BoJack Horseman*, *Dora and Friends: Into the City!*, and *ELIÁN*. He has also narrated a number of audio books including Stephen King's *Under the Dome*, Elle Newmark's *The Book of Unholy Mischief*, Nancy Farmer's *The House of Scorpion* and *The Lord of Opium*, and Patrick Lee's *Runner* and *Signal*.

The creative team for *Galileo* includes **Brian Usifer** (Music Supervisor and Orchestrator), **Roberto Sinha** (Music Director), **Rachel Hauck** (Scenic Design), **Anita Yavich** (Costume Design), **Kevin Adams** (Lighting Design), **John Shivers** (Sound Design), **Jason Thompson and Kaitlyn Pietras** (Projections), **Rick Steiger** (Production Stage Manager), and **Jim Carnahan, CSA and Jason Thinger, CSA** (Casting).

Galileo is presented by special arrangement with **Jordan Roth and Key to the City Productions**

Galileo is made possible by Sponsors **Jill & Steve Fugaro, Jack Klingelhofer, and Erin McCune.**

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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 5.5 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.