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BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2023/24 SEASON

Seven-play subscription season includes a wickedly funny thriller, a gleefully feminist satire, a lyrical coming-of-age story, a ruthless comedy, a breathtaking epic immigration drama, a dazzling world-premiere musical, and a 21st-century sequel to John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

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

BERKELEY, CA (April 12, 2023)—**Berkeley Repertory Theatre Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer** and **Managing Director Tom Parrish** announced today the seven productions that will make up the company's 2023/24 season—the West Coast premiere of David Cale's funny and wicked thriller, **HARRY CLARKE**; Selina Fillinger's gleefully feminist satire, **POTUS: OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE**; Berkeley native Eisa Davis' lyrical coming-of-age story, **BULRUSHER**; Leslye Headland's ruthless comedy, **CULT OF LOVE**; the West Coast premiere of Lloyd Suh's breathtaking epic immigration drama, **THE FAR COUNTRY**; the dazzling world-premiere musical, **GALILEO**; and Octavio Solis' 21st-century sequel to John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, **MOTHER ROAD**. Performance dates, casting, and full creative teams to be announced at a later date.

"In putting together this season, I wanted to celebrate the experiences that are unique to in-person theatregoing — to continue to create those life-giving opportunities to share laughter, a gasp, a moment that lifts you to your feet alongside fellow audience members," said **Pfaelzer**. "These seven plays, each exquisitely crafted by artists who are deeply invested in the specific delights of live performance, reflect Berkeley Rep's commitment to stories that have both local and global impact. *Bulrusher*, *The Far Country*, and *Mother Road* are specifically Californian stories, and I feel compelled to make sure they are shared here in the Bay Area, but their themes of identity, lineage, and the profound desire of an individual to chart a new path — in the face of significant challenges — are not bound by geography and will resonate for those who know Boonville, or Angel Island, or the agricultural fields of California's Central Valley, as well as those who will have the pleasure of learning the secrets of those locations for the first time. Simultaneously, Berkeley Rep has long made significant

contributions to the national and international theatre field, and I'm so proud to see artists like Michael Mayer once again choose Berkeley Rep as the home for the world premiere of epic stories like *Galileo*. And where better to wrestle with the tensions inherent between science and religion, fact and faith, than here in Berkeley?"

"During my first months as managing director at Berkeley Rep, it has been a joy getting to know this community and audience, which is growing and growing as we continue to rebuild from the pandemic," said Parrish. "We are beginning again to see the sold-out shows we were accustomed to in the pre-pandemic era, and we are looking forward to building on that momentum with this phenomenal 2023/24 season line-up that takes us to ever higher heights of theatrical storytelling and innovation, educational and community impact, and national and international reach. True to our mission, this ambitious slate of productions will entertain and challenge, provoke civic engagement, and inspire audiences to experience the world in new and surprising ways."

Kicking off the 2023/24 season, Berkeley Rep will present the West Coast premiere of Obie Award-winning writer **David Cale's HARRY CLARKE (September/October 2023)**. This wickedly funny thriller features the exploits of Philip, an awkward Midwestern man leading an outrageous double life as the cocky Londoner Harry Clarke. He moves to New York City and, posing as the seductive Harry, charms his way into a wealthy family. Soon his impetuous and dangerous behavior threatens to unravel more than his persona. A tour-de-force solo performance, *Harry Clarke* is a spellbinding story and a meditation on the construction of identity. A "delicious conceit," says *The New York Times*. **Performances of Harry Clarke will take place at Berkeley Rep's Peet's Theatre.**

Just in time for the Presidential primaries, Berkeley Rep will present **Selina Fillinger's** gleefully feminist satire, **POTUS: OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE (October/November 2023)**. When the President unwittingly spins a PR nightmare into a global crisis, the seven brilliant and beleaguered women he relies upon most risk life, liberty, and the pursuit of sanity to keep the commander-in-chief out of trouble. (Any resemblance to past White House shenanigans is purely coincidental.) *Entertainment Weekly* says, "The likelihood that you will laugh until your face hurts is one of near certainty." **Performances of POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive will take place at Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre.**

Next, Berkeley Rep will present Berkeley-native **Eisa Davis'** lyrical coming-of-age story, **BULRUSHER (November/December 2023)**. A Pulitzer Prize finalist, *Bulrusher* follows a multiracial girl found as an infant floating in a basket on the Navarro River in Mendocino County. It's 1955, and Bulrusher is 18 and restless, with

a gift for clairvoyance that makes her feel like a stranger even amongst the eccentric, dialect speaking folks of her predominantly white enclave of Boonville. When a mysterious Black girl from Birmingham comes to town, Bulrusher discovers new facets of her identity — and uncovers her place in the world. Called “captivating and lushly poetic” by the *LA Times*, *Bulrusher* is infused with rhythmic language, passion, and down-home humor. Directed by **Nicole A. Watson**, *Bulrusher* is a co-production with **McCarter Theatre Center**. **Performances of *Bulrusher* will take place at Berkeley Rep’s Peet’s Theatre.**

Ring in the new year, Berkeley Rep will present the West Coast premiere of **Leslye Headland’s CULT OF LOVE (January/February 2024)**. Jesus is the reason for the season in this ruthless comedy about a Christian family who claim all you need is love. Written by Leslye Headland (*Russian Doll* and *Bachelorette*), the stage is set for another Christmas at the Dahl home, where the four children were raised to love Jesus and each other. Now adults with beliefs of their own, they perform joyous carols and bizarre family rituals, fueled by alcohol and forced cheer — until it all descends into chaos. Fierce and provocative, *Cult of Love* dares to examine the unique brand of Christian family cruelty under all that holiday cheer. *Cult of Love* will be directed by **Trip Cullman**. **Performances of *Cult of Love* will take place at Berkeley Rep’s Roda Theatre.**

In spring 2024, Berkeley Rep will present **Lloyd Suh’s THE FAR COUNTRY (March/April 2024)**. In the wake of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Moon Gyet has arrived at San Francisco Bay’s Angel Island Immigration Station with an invented biography and a new name, both given to him by a man who made the same arduous crossing several years earlier. But passage to San Francisco—and the dream of a better life for future generations—commands a very high price. Spanning two countries and three generations, Lloyd Suh’s breathtaking, epic drama on immigration, identity, and memory has been called “Artful...an act, loving and sorrowful, of reclamation” by *The New York Times* (Critic’s Pick). *The Far Country* will be directed by **Eric Ting**. **Performances of *The Far Country* will take place at Berkeley Rep’s Peet’s Theatre.**

Next, Berkeley Rep will present the dazzling world premiere musical, **GALILEO (May/June 2024)**, helmed by Tony Award winner **Michael Mayer** (*American Idiot*, *Swept Away*, *Spring Awakening*), written by two-time Emmy winner **Danny Strong** (*Dopesick*, *Empire*, *The Butler*), and choreographed by **David Neumann** (*Swept Away*, *Hadestown*). 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. With an original rock score and lyrics by **Michael Weiner** (Broadway’s *First Date*) and **Zoe Sarnak** (Jonathan Larson Award winner), *Galileo* is an explosive collision of science and faith, truth and power. *Galileo* will likely join the constellation of world premieres that traveled from Berkeley Rep to Broadway. *Galileo* is presented by special arrangement

with Jordan Roth and Key to the City Productions. **Performances of *Galileo* will take place at Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre.**

Closing out the 2023/24 season, Berkeley Rep will present **MOTHER ROAD (June/July 2024)**, Octavio Solis' 21st-century tale inspired by John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. William Joad has no heir to bequeath the family farm to — until he learns about Martín Jodes, a young Mexican-American migrant worker descended from Steinbeck's protagonist Tom Joad. In a reversal of the Joads' mythic journey, William and Martín embark on a road trip from California's migrant farm camps back to Oklahoma, where they reckon with their brutal past and forge an unlikely bond. Along their journey on the Mother Road, they gather a chorus of travelers. Witness Solis' soaring poetry, gritty realism, and mythic scope as he captures the intersection of people, cultures, and migration in the American West. *Mother Road* will be directed by Berkeley Rep's Associate Artistic Director **David Mendizábal**. **Performances of *Mother Road* will take place at Berkeley Rep's Peet's Theatre.**

Full Season (7-play) subscriptions start at \$217 and are available now by visiting 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.

For the 2023/24 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, Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau, Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Gisele and Kenneth F. Miller, Jack and Betty Schafer, and The Strauch Kulhanjian Family.**

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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.