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PULITZER-WINNER LAWRENCE WRIGHT PREMIERES FALLACI AT BERKELEY REP

The renowned journalist and dramatist debuts a new script directed by Oskar Eustis

JANUARY 23, 2013 – Even as his latest book attracts international attention, Pulitzer Prize-winner Lawrence Wright premieres his new play at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. A reporter renowned for his work with The New Yorker – and the bestselling author behind The Looming Tower and Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief – Wright is also the playwright who penned My Trip to al Qaeda and The Human Scale. Now he debuts a fictional play about the last days of legendary journalist Oriana Fallaci. Don’t miss this sizzling new script, which is directed by Oskar Eustis, stars Concetta Tomei and Marjan Neshat, and features an incredible team of designers. The 65th world premiere presented by Berkeley Rep, Fallaci begins previews in the Roda Theatre on March 8, opens March 13, and runs through April 21.

“Oriana Fallaci was a hero of mine,” Wright remarks. “She was dazzling and fearless and she made journalism seem like the most exciting job on earth – no doubt, one of the reasons I went into that profession. But after 9/11, she turned her formidable intellect on Islam, a subject that I was also exploring at the time, with my book The Looming Tower. The argument that you see between Oriana and Miryam onstage mirrors the quarrel I have in my mind with my former idol, who still has the power to explode comfortable dogmas. It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to present this play at Berkeley Rep, which has been so supportive in the development of a play that is bound to engender controversy and arouse strong opinions. But that's part of the joy of working in the theatre, one of the last refuges for the honest, brutal dialogue we so badly need.”

“Whether reporting from a war zone or aggressively confronting the world’s most powerful leaders, Fallaci continually thrust herself into the very vortex of human history,” says Tony Taccone, artistic director of Berkeley Rep. “She became a darling of the left and one of the first rock stars of modern journalism – until the inflammatory books she wrote about Islam surprised everyone and made her a hero to the right. Now, armed with a tremendous amount of hard information about her, Lawrence Wright has applied his substantial talents as a journalist and dramatist to invent a story that gets beneath the facts. Producing Larry’s play has also allowed me to exploit the skills of my good friend and colleague, Oskar Eustis. It is a great pleasure to welcome them to Berkeley Rep with this terrific cast and creative team.”

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The executive producers of *Fallaci* are Bill Falik and Diana Cohen and Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau. The Bernard Osher Foundation serves as production sponsor. The season producers are Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Marjorie Randolph, Jack and Betty Schafer, and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family. For the eighth straight year, BART and Wells Fargo serve as the official sponsors of Berkeley Rep’s season — and now the *San Francisco Chronicle* has signed on as a season sponsor as well.

With *Fallaci*, Wright turns the spotlight on a fellow reporter and her fascinating contradictions. Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci was larger than life. Her childhood courage resisting the Nazis fueled her work as a war correspondent with an antiauthoritarian zeal that perfectly matched the ’60s and ’70s. She gained fame by grilling Kissinger, Castro, Khomeini, Qadaffi, and other public figures who squirmed under her ferocious questioning. In this world premiere, a young woman interviews the fiery author at the end of her life, when she became a darling of the right. What begins as a discussion of journalism ends with two women exchanging life-changing lessons about destiny and empathy.

“...” notes the *New York Times*. “Obviously this comes in handy in his regular line of work, but it is just as useful in his secondary vocation, as a public raconteur trying to elucidate thorny topical issues from the unlikely pulpit of an Off Broadway stage.” “Like that cool professor whose courses always fill up first, Wright is the kind of conveyer of wisdom who doesn’t so much lecture as seduce,” says the *Washington Post*.

**Lawrence Wright** is an award-winning journalist, author, screenwriter, and playwright who has written four previous plays. He has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1992, where he won two National Magazine Awards for reporting. He is the author of eight books, including *The Looming Tower* (2006), which won the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction, and most recently *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief*, which was released last week. His first play, *Cracker Jack*, was produced at the Paramount Theater in Austin, TX (1984). *Sonny's Last Shot* received two productions in Austin, at the Arts on Real Theater (2003) and the State Theater (2005). Wright performed his one-man play *My Trip to al-Qaeda* at the Culture Project in New York (2007), and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and New York’s Town Hall (2008). Oskar Eustis directed Wright’s second one-man show, *The Human Scale*, for The Public Theater in New York (2010) and at the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv (2011). Wright has written two movies, *The Siege* (1998) and *Noriega: God’s Favorite* (2000). His next play, *Camp David*, will premiere this autumn at Arena Stage in the nation’s capital.

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Oskar Eustis has been artistic director of The Public Theater since 2005. From 1981 through 1986, he served as resident director and dramaturg at the Eureka Theatre in San Francisco, and then as its artistic director. In 1989, he moved to LA's Mark Taper Forum as associate artistic director, where he remained until 1994. Then he became artistic director of Trinity Repertory Company, where he served for 11 years. At Berkeley Rep, Eustis staged the world-premiere production of Rinne Groff's *Compulsion* (2010), the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda’s *Fish Head Soup* (1991), and co-directed *Execution of Justice* (1985). At The Public, he staged the 2008 Shakespeare in the Park production of *Hamlet*, featuring Michael Stuhlbarg and Sam Waterston, and the New York premieres of *Compulsion; The Ruby Sunrise*, also by Groff; and *The Human Scale* by Lawrence Wright. His numerous directing credits at Trinity Rep include the world premiere of Paula Vogel's *The Long Christmas Ride Home* (Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Production), *Homebody/Kabul* (Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Production), *Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches* (Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director), and *Angels in America Part II: Perestroika*. Eustis has also directed world premieres of plays by David Henry Hwang, Emily Mann, Eduardo Machado, Ellen McLaughlin, and Suzan-Lori Parks, among many others. Along with Tony Taccone, he commissioned Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* at the Eureka and directed its world premiere at the Taper. He received the 2009 Tony Award for The Public’s revival of *Hair*.

Concetta Tomei portrays Oriana Fallaci. Her Broadway credits include *Cyrano de Bergerac* (with Kevin Kline), *The Elephant Man* (opposite David Bowie), *Goodbye Fidel*, and *Noises Off*. Her other New York credits include *The Clean House* at Lincoln Center Theater (East Coast premiere); the original cast of Tommy Tune's *Cloud Nine; Fen*, directed by Les Waters; Nora Ephron’s *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*; the original cast of *The Normal Heart* (opposite Brad Davis); *A Private View* at The Public; and *Richard III* (St. Clair Bayfield Award). Tomei has also appeared at Alley Theatre, American Conservatory Theater, and the Taper. Her television credits include *China Beach, Necessary Roughness, Providence, Weeds*, and more than 50 others. Her film credits include *Deep Impact, Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead, The Muse*, and *Out to Sea*. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and Chicago’s Goodman School of Drama (Sarah Siddons Award).

Marjan Neshat plays Miryam. Her recent theatre credits include Aiesha Ghazali in *The Near East*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Masha in *The Seagull* with Dianne Wiest, and Nawal Marwan in *Scorched* with David Strathairn, as well as 365 *Days/365 Plays* at Barrow
Street Theatre/The Public, Girl Blog from Iraq (Best Ensemble nomination, Edinburgh Fringe Festival), Sexual Perversity in Chicago, and The Tempest. She just finished filming a role in the new RoboCop remake. Neshat's other films include Alfie, Coney Island Baby, Cry Funny Happy, First Person Singular, A Jersey Tale, A Season of Madness, Sex and the City 2, and the forthcoming Almost in Love with Alan Cumming. Some of her television credits are Blue Bloods; Funny in Farsi, a pilot for ABC Studios directed by Barry Sonnenfeld; Fringe; New Amsterdam; Rescue Me; Six Degrees; and multiple guest appearances on Law & Order and Law & Order: SVU. Neshat is a member of the Actors Center Workshop Company in New York City.

A team of distinguished designers brings Fallaci’s world to life. Robin Wagner (scenic design) is the recipient of three Tony Awards and has been nominated for seven others. He has designed more than 50 Broadway shows including the original productions of 42nd Street; Angels in America; Chess; A Chorus Line; City of Angels; Crazy for You; Dreamgirls; The Great White Hope; Hair; Jelly’s Last Jam; Jesus Christ Superstar; Lenny; On the Twentieth Century; The Producers; Promises, Promises; and Young Frankenstein. His work has been seen around the world in productions for opera, film, dance, and rock and roll. Jess Goldstein (costume design) won a Tony Award for The Rivals in 2005 and has designed more than 30 other Broadway shows, including The Apple Tree, Black Comedy, Brooklyn Boy, Cymbeline, Enchanted April, Golda’s Balcony, Henry IV (Tony nomination), The Homecoming, Inherit the Wind, Jersey Boys, Judgment At Nuremberg, Julius Caesar, King Lear, The Merchant Of Venice, Next Fall, Love! Valour! Compassion!, Night Must Fall, Proof, The Rainmaker, Sight Unseen, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sweet Sue, Take Me Out, and Tintypes. He has also worked at theatres and operas nationwide. Michael Chybowski (lighting design) designed Berkeley Rep’s productions of The Beaux Stratagem, Compulsion, and Much Ado About Nothing. He has worked at most major regional theatres in the U.S., as well as at the Gate Theatre in Dublin, the Royal Ballet in London, and Théâtre de Carouge in Geneva. Chybowski frequently designs for Mark Morris as well, including the recent Beaux at San Francisco Ballet. He is the recipient of the Obie Award for Sustained Excellence, an American Theatre Wing Design Award, and two Lucille Lortel Awards. Acme Sound Partners (sound designer) has designed more than 30 Broadway shows since 2000 including The Addams Family, Avenue Q, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo (Tony nomination), La Bohème, A Chorus Line (2006), Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, The Drowsy Chaperone, Fences (Tony nomination), Hair (Tony nomination), In the Heights (Tony nomination), Legally Blonde, The Light in the Piazza, Lombardi, The Merchant of Venice, Monty Python’s Spamalot, The Motherfucker with the Hat, Porgy and Bess (Tony nomination), Ragtime, [title of show], and Venus in Fur. The stage manager for this production is Angela Nostrand.

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Fallaci provides a full bill of special events for curious theatregoers:

- Meet Lawrence Wright at a free talkback and book-signing on Monday, March 4 at 7:00 PM.

- Teen Night begins at 6:30 PM on Friday, March 8 and includes dinner, a presentation by a member of the artistic team, and a performance of the show. Tickets are only $10 for high-school students. For details, call (510) 647-2973 or e-mail teenencouncil@berkeleyrep.org.

- Low-cost previews take place on Friday, March 8; Saturday, March 9; Sunday, March 10; and Tuesday, March 12.

- Opening-night festivities are held on Wednesday, March 13 with a pre-show dinner for donors at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza and a post-show party for the audience in the Roda Theatre.

- Post-show discussions moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM performances on Thursday, March 28; Tuesday, April 2; and Friday, April 12. Post-show discussions with Berkeley Rep's docents take place after all matinees.

- Free 30-minute docent talks begin at 7:00 PM every Tuesday and Thursday evening. Docent talks are also held in three local communities: at the Orinda Library on Tuesday, March 12 at 7:00 PM; at the Lafayette Library on Wednesday, March 13 at 7:00 PM; and at the Moraga Library on Wednesday, March 20 at 2:00 PM.

- And, on select evenings, patrons can whet their palates for the play with free tastings from culinary artisans one hour before curtain: Tres Agaves on Friday and Saturday, March 15-16 and Friday and Saturday, April 5-6, as well as Semifreddi’s on Sunday, March 17 and Sunday, April 7.

See tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep. Seven shows developed here have ended up on Broadway in the last 10 years. Twelve landed off Broadway, two moved to London, two turned into films, and one is headed for Hong Kong! So don’t miss the current season of exhilarating plays at the Theatre… There’s still time to catch the riotous world premiere of Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright. Next The Wild Bride returns for a honeymoon engagement before Berkeley Rep brings the Bard back with a bang in Mark Wing-Davey's production of Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Then Sarah Ruhl and Les Waters reunite in May for the West Coast premiere of Dear Elizabeth.

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Get the best seats for all these shows at the consistently lowest prices by subscribing to Berkeley Rep. Choose three or more plays and guarantee your seats for events that are sure to sell out. Ticket packages begin as low as $81 – and, in addition to significant savings, subscribers receive valuable benefits such as the right to reschedule for free, discounts when purchasing tickets for friends, and the opportunity to secure seats before the general public for special events like The Wild Bride.

Individual tickets to see Fallaci start at only $29. Additional savings are available for groups, seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age – meaning discounted tickets can be obtained for as little as $14.50. The Roda Theatre is located at 2015 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots – and only half a block from BART. For tickets or information, call (510) 647-2949 or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP
Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, 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. Its bustling facilities – which include the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. Come see tomorrow’s plays today at Berkeley Rep.

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FALLACI
FACT SHEET

WHO:
Written by Lawrence Wright
Directed by Oskar Eustis
Designed by Robin Wagner (sets), Jess Goldstein (costumes), Michael Chybowski (lighting), and Acme Sound Partners (sound)
Starring Concetta Tomei and Marjan Neshat

WHAT:
Fallaci – Pulitzer Prize-winner Lawrence Wright premieres a sizzling new play about famous Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci.

WHERE:
Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN:
March 8 – April 21, 2013

• Tuesdays @ 8:00 PM
• Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
• Thursdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
• Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM
• Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM

• Additional matinees at 2:00 PM on Thursdays 3/21 and 4/18
• No matinees on 3/9, 3/10, or 3/23
• No performance on Friday 4/19

Special Events:
Book-signing with Lawrence Wright:
Monday 3/4 @ 7:00 PM

Teen night: Friday 3/8 @ 6:30 PM

Low-cost previews: Friday 3/8, Saturday 3/9 & Tuesday 3/12 @ 8:00 PM and Sunday 3/10 @ 7:00 PM

Opening night: Wednesday 3/13 @ 8:00 PM

Tastings: Fridays 3/15 & 4/5 (Tres Agaves) @ 7:00 PM, Saturdays 3/16 & 4/6 @ 7:00 PM (Tres Agaves), and Sundays 3/17 & 4/7 @ 6:00 PM (Semifreddi’s)

Post-show discussions: Thursday 3/28, Tuesday 4/2, and Friday 4/12 @ 8:00 PM

Docents: talks on Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 7:00 PM; discussions after all matinees

HOW MUCH: $29 - $89 (subject to change)

Discounts:
• Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
• $10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
• Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org


TIX & INFO:  (510) 647-2949 – berkeleyrep.org