FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO WEEKS ONLY: BERKELEY REP PRESENTS GEORGE GERSHWIN ALONE

S’wonderful Broadway show about beloved composer plays only 18 performances in June

FEBRUARY 5, 2013 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre proudly announces a limited engagement of George Gershwin Alone, a play with music that invites audiences to enjoy an evening with a great composer. This celebrated production plays two weeks only – June 8 through June 23 – on the intimate Thrust Stage. Tickets for these 18 performances go on sale today to Berkeley Rep's subscribers; the public can access seats beginning on Sunday, February 10. This special presentation features music by George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin with a book by Hershey Felder. Starring Hershey Felder as George Gershwin, it has been staged by acclaimed director Joel Zwick.

In George Gershwin Alone, the irresistible music of America's favorite composer comes alive – along with exciting insights into his brief and brilliant life. Hershey Felder brings his hit show to Berkeley Rep after successful runs on Broadway, in London’s West End, and in cities across the country. An accomplished pianist and performer, Felder was given full access to the Gershwin archive to create this tribute to the genius behind Rhapsody in Blue and Porgy and Bess. Gershwin wrote more than 1,000 timeless tunes such as “I Got Rhythm,” “Summertime,” and “They Can’t Take That Away from Me.” See George Gershwin Alone, and be captivated by the man and his music.

“Charming!” exclaims the Washington Post. “The evening is a deeply heartfelt valentine wrapped up in songs and stories, which Felder offers as a gift to his audience. There’s not a sour note in the show... Walk out with some of the most memorable contributions to the great American songbook dancing through your head.”

“Joyful!” declares the Boston Globe. “George Gershwin Alone plays like one of the composer’s memorable melodies: direct, uncomplicated, and delightful. In this solo show about the man and his music, Felder shifts easily from storytelling to performing at the piano... and sends a happy audience home.”

(MORE)
George Gershwin was born in Brooklyn to Russian-Jewish immigrants. Together, he and his brother Ira wrote standards such as “Embraceable You,” “Fascinating Rhythm,” “I Got Rhythm,” “The Man I Love,” “Someone to Watch Over Me,” “S’Wonderful,” and “They Can’t Take That Away from Me.” George Gershwin famously “made a Lady out of Jazz” with Rhapsody in Blue, and his groundbreaking opera, Porgy and Bess, is considered an American classic. All told, he wrote more than 1,000 songs for the stage and screen as well as works for the opera house and the symphony orchestra. In 1937, at the age of 38, Gershwin died of an undiagnosed brain tumor, never knowing how famous and beloved he and his work would become.

“Fascinating!” proclaims NPR. “The show and Felder are masterful… A concert artist, composer, and actor, Felder has researched Gershwin with the vigor of a Harvard thesis student. He spent five years poring over original manuscripts, reading through personal correspondence, and listening to audio recordings. He’s interviewed family members and biographers. The result is an insightful and fully engaging look at one of the country’s most revered composers… a warm, poignant tribute.”

“Furiously dramatic!” raves the New York Times. “Hershey Felder’s stage biography makes a great case for his subject as the American Mozart… To be reminded of the sheer volume and variety of Gershwin’s great work, from Rhapsody in Blue, An American in Paris and Porgy and Bess to more than 1,000 popular songs, many for the theater and the movies, makes your jaw hang loose.”

“Blissful!” says the Chicago Sun-Times. “Melts the audience like a giant campfire marshmallow… Not since the 1960s, when Leonard Bernstein played himself and talked to a family audience in his televised Young People’s Concerts, has such a bristlingly smart, engaging, polymorphously talented man held his audience in such total thrall to the glories and hidden mysteries of both popular and classical music… You’ll never hear this music in quite the same way again.”

Hershey Felder is known for more than 4,000 live performances of his composer plays – Beethoven, As I Knew Him; George Gershwin Alone; Maestro Bernstein; Monsieur Chopin; and now An American Story – on Broadway, in London’s West End, in Europe, and in Asia, as well as at major theatres throughout the United States. A Steinway Concert Artist and actor, and winner
of the Los Angeles Ovation Awards for Best Musical and Best Actor for *George Gershwin Alone*, Felder is a composer in his own right. His compositions include *Aliyah, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra; An American Story* for actor and orchestra; *Etudes Thematiques for Piano; Fairytale*, a musical; *Les Anges de Paris, Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra; Song Settings; and Suite for Violin and Piano*. The WFMT network of Chicago produced live worldwide broadcasts of *George Gershwin Alone* in 2005 and 2010, as well as national broadcasts of *Monsieur Chopin* in 2006 and *An American Story* in 2011. As adaptor and director, Felder premiered Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* at the Geffen Playhouse in April 2012. He has been a scholar in residence at Harvard University's department of music and is married to Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada.

**Joel Zwick** is best known for directing the Oscar-nominated comedy *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. He began his theatrical career at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, as artistic director of the La MaMa Plexus. He has directed on Broadway, off Broadway, for national tours, and on London’s West End. His choreography for *Dance with Me* earned him a Tony Award nomination, and he acted in the original New York production of *MacBird*. Zwick is recognized as one of Hollywood’s most prolific television directors with more than 550 episodes to his credit, including 21 pilots that went on to become regular series. His TV work includes *Brothers, Bosom Buddies, Family Matters, Full House, Good Luck Charlie, Hangin’ With Mr. Cooper, I’m in the Band, It’s a Living, The Jamie Foxx Show, Joanie Loves Chachi, Laverne & Shirley, Mork & Mindy, Perfect Strangers, Step by Step, Two and a Half Men, Two of a Kind, The Wayan Brothers, and Webster*. His recent films include *Fat Albert* and *Elvis Has Left the Building*. Zwick taught at Brooklyn College, Queens College, the University of Southern California, Wheaton College, and Yale University.

The creative team for *George Gershwin Alone* includes four talented designers: **Yael Pardess** (scenic design), **Michael Gilliam** (lighting design), **Jon Gottlieb** (sound design), and **Kenneth Cole** (wardrobe design).

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. The season producers are Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Marjorie Randolph, Jack and Betty Schafer, and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family.

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“Absolutely fascinating,” insists the Hollywood Reporter. “You can sum up Hershey Felder’s 90-minute solo performance of George Gershwin Alone in one lyrical Gershwin word – S’wonderful.”

Tickets for this enchanting show start at only $29 – half that for anyone under 30 years of age. Additional savings are available for groups, seniors, and students – meaning discounted seats can be obtained for as little as $14.50. The Thrust Stage is located at 2025 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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GEORGE GERSHWIN ALONE
FACT SHEET

WHO: Music by George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin
Book by Hershey Felder
With Hershey Felder as George Gershwin
Directed by Joel Zwick
Designed by Yael Pardess (scenic design), Michael Gilliam (lighting design), Jon Gottlieb (sound design), and Kenneth Cole (wardrobe design)

WHAT: George Gershwin Alone
The irresistible music of America’s favorite composer comes alive in this s’wonderfu l tribute – along with thrilling insights into his brief and brilliant life. Hershey Felder brings his hit show to Berkeley Rep after delighting audiences on Broadway, on London’s West End, and in cities across the country.

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Thrust Stage, 2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: June 8 – June 23, 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
• No matinees on 6/8 and 6/9

Special Events:
Low-cost preview: Saturday 6/8 @ 8:00 PM
Opening night: Sunday 6/9 @ 7:00 PM

HOW MUCH: $29 - $77 (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