FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES COMPPELLING NEW SHOW
TO COMPLETE 2014-15 SEASON

New script developed through The Ground Floor added to powerful and provocative lineup

APRIL 30, 2014 – Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre is proud to announce that it has completed its 2014–15 subscription programming with the addition of X’s and O’s (A Gridiron Love Story) written by KJ Sanchez. Memory, myth, and football meet head on in this hard-hitting world premiere directed by Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. Working with collaborator Jenny Mercein, Sanchez delivers a gripping docudrama dramatically based on brutally honest and heartrending interviews with football players, their families, and their fans about traumatic brain injuries and their impact on the game. The play takes an unflinching look at the lives and loves around this singularly American sport—and the lingering questions it asks of us all. This dynamic world premiere is commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed through The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work. It begins previews on Berkeley Rep’s intimate Thrust Stage on Friday, January 16, 2015, opens Friday, January 23, 2015, and runs through Sunday, March 1, 2015.

“This is an exceptional season,” remarks Taccone. “It’s a powerhouse lineup of playwrights and directors filled with work more grand in scale than we have supported in previous years. We’re delighted to add KJ Sanchez’s X’s and O’s (A Gridiron Love Story) to the 47th season. She is an amazing theatre-maker and documentarian who came to us with an idea to explore head trauma in football. The play has the great advantage of being developed and nurtured at The Ground Floor — our incubator for new work. It’s going to be a theatrical event — a living, and breathing, three dimensional event — that will reveal something about the heart of American society and the heart of American entertainment.”

As playwright, KJ Sanchez’s work has appeared at Asolo Rep, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Two River Theater, Center Stage in Baltimore, Round House Theatre, Cornerstone Theater Company, and off Broadway at Urban Stages. Her previous play ReEntry, a moving portrayal of Marines preparing for and returning from combat, was an explosive off-Broadway hit. She is the founder/CEO of American Records. Jenny Mercein is an actor, teacher, director, and writer based in New York City, and the daughter of a Super Bowl-winning former professional player.

X’s and O’s (A Gridiron Love Story) joins six provocative and compelling productions already announced for 2014–15 subscription programming, which opens in September with the world premiere of An Audience with Meow Meow. Kneehigh’s Emma Rice (Tristan & Yseult and The Wild Bride) is back to direct this electrifying world premiere starring international singing sensation and über-diva Meow Meow.

(MORE)
The “post-post-modern” phenomenon creates a musical world premiere of gargantuan proportions for Berkeley Rep’s audiences, featuring sizzling songs, sequins and satire, blow-torch wit, and divine mayhem. In October, get ready for Party People, a hyperkinetic mix of live video, hip hop, jazz, rock, gospel, blues, Latin rhythms, and spoken word presented by the explosive theatre ensemble UNIVERSES. Berkeley Rep’s Associate Director Liesl Tommy teams up with UNIVERSES to deliver a high-wattage fusion of story and song to unlock the legacy of the Black Panthers and Young Lords. In November, two-time Tony and Academy Award nominee Kathleen Turner makes her Berkeley Rep debut in the acclaimed Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins, directed by renowned director David Esbjornson. Turner is all smarts and sass as the brassy, sharp-witted journalist and best-selling author, recounting her political rants and personal reflections with a liberal dose of piss and vinegar. In March, audience favorite Steven Epp and celebrated director Dominique Serrand reunite for Molière’s satire on religious hypocrisy, Tartuffe. This modern interpretation of Molière’s most popular play – featuring a hypnotic Epp as the deceitful hypocrite – is as intense and incisive as the day it was written, and just as entertaining. MacArthur “Genius” Award winner Tarell Alvin McCraney and preeminent director Tina Landau team up in April for the West Coast premiere of Head of Passes, a poignant and poetic new play about the journey of family and faith, trial and tribulation. The season concludes in May with Richard Bean’s internationally acclaimed smash hit One Man, Two Guvnors. More than a sassy update of Carlo Goldoni’s classic knee-slapper, A Servant of Two Masters, the play is a brilliantly delicious mash-up of splendid comedy, British pantomime, and music-hall revues. Directed by David Ivers — artistic director of the Utah Shakespeare Festival — One Man, Two Guvnors is a riotous blast complete with a colorful cast of characters in a topsy-turvy world of love triangles and mistaken identities.

The 2014–15 season is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors for the 10th straight year. Berkeley Rep is also proud to have the Strauch Kulhanjian Family on board as a season sponsor.

Get the best seats for these shows at the consistently lowest prices by subscribing to Berkeley Rep. The Full Season package guarantees tickets for An Audience with Meow Meow, Party People, Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins, X’s and O’s (A Gridiron Love Story), Tartuffe, Head of Passes, and One Man, Two Guvnors. Alternatively, you can "choose your own season" by selecting three or more plays that appeal to your palate. In addition to significant savings, subscribers receive valuable advantages such as the ability to reschedule performances for free, discounts when purchasing tickets for friends, and the opportunity to secure seats before the general public for special events like No Man’s Land. Renew or subscribe now for only $125 for five plays and $175 for seven plays. Even steeper discounts are available for seniors, students, persons under 30, and pre-K-12 educators.
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 – the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. For more information, call (510) 647-2949 or visit: berkeleyrep.org.

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2014-15 SEASON SCHEDULE

AN AUDIENCE WITH MEOW MEOW
Main Season – Roda Theatre
World premiere
By Meow Meow
Directed by Emma Rice
September 5 – October 19, 2014
Opening night: Friday, September 12, 2014

PARTY PEOPLE
Limited Season – Thrust Stage
By UNIVERSES (Steven Sapp, Mildred Ruiz-Sapp, and William Ruiz, aka Ninja)
Developed and directed by Liesl Tommy
October 17 – November 16, 2014
Opening night: Friday, October 24, 2014

RED HOT PATRIOT: THE KICK-ASS WIT OF MOLLY IVINS
Main Season – Roda Theatre
By Margaret Engel and Allison Engel
Directed by David Esbjornson
Opening night: Friday, November 28, 2014

X’S AND O’S (A GRIDIRON LOVE STORY)
Main Season – Thrust Stage
By KJ Sanchez with Jenny Mercein
Directed by Tony Taccone
January 16 – March 1, 2015
Opening night: Friday, January 23, 2015

TARTUFFE
Limited Season – Roda Theatre
By Molière
Adapted by David Ball
Directed by Dominique Serrand
March 13 – April 12, 2015
Opening night: Friday, March 20, 2015

HEAD OF PASSES
Main Season – Thrust Stage
West Coast premiere
By Tarell Alvin McCraney
Directed by Tina Landau
April 10 – May 24, 2015
Opening night: Friday, April 17, 2015

ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS
Main Season – Roda Theatre
West Coast premiere
By Richard Bean
Directed by David Ivers
Friday May 8 –June 21, 2015
Opening night: Friday, May 15, 2015

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