BERKELEY REP’S HIGHLY ANTICIPATED PRODUCTION OF HERSHEY FELDER AS LEONARD BERNSTEIN EXTENDED

Eight performances added due to popular demand

June 4, 2014 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre announces today, due to extraordinary ticket demand, it will extend Hershey Felder’s popular and critically acclaimed one-man show Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro ahead of its debut. Originally scheduled to run through June 22, the show will now run for an additional eight performances through Wednesday, July 3. Audiences will remember Felder’s critically lauded performance last summer in George Gershwin Alone. Now the master entertainer and piano virtuoso is back to deliver a musically infused performance about America’s greatest musical legend. Conductor, composer, pianist, author, teacher, librettist, television star, and composer of West Side Story, Candide, On the Town, and Wonderful Town, Bernstein pushed all boundaries to become the world’s first serious musical media superstar. Felder and longtime collaborator Joel Zwick combine first-person narrative with the compositions of Bernstein and others to draw us deeply into the maestro’s fascinating life, filled with tragedy and triumph and of course, music. Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro previews June 5, opens June 6, and plays through July 3 on the Theatre’s intimate Thrust Stage.

Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro has played at theatres across the country and has critics singing its praises. “It takes a certain chutzpah and considerable talent to impersonate this uniquely charismatic and supremely talented Bernstein,” proclaims the Los Angeles Times. “And Lenny liked nothing better than chutzpah combined with talent. Somewhere, he is looking down on this show no doubt bitching like crazy yet deeply touched that we still, 20 years after his death, care.” “From the first piano notes and hauntingly beautiful singing in his one-man bio show, writer-performer Hershey Felder grips the audience in the palm of his hand and never lets go,” hails the LA Weekly. San Diego Union-Tribune adds, “Like Bernstein, Felder seems to thrive on the impulse to instruct and illuminate. He’s a masterful pianist with a showman’s sense of drama and dynamics... It’s a pleasure to watch.” “Felder uncannily captures the brilliant, effusive, mercurial, overbearing, exuberantly needy, tortured, multi-talented Bernstein to perfection” proclaims the Chicago Sun-Times. “You will walk out of the theater realizing you’ve barely breathed for the duration of this astonishing musical and theatrical transmigration of souls.”

Hershey Felder (Leonard Bernstein/Playwright) created and performed George Gershwin Alone, which played at Berkeley Rep, on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre, at West End’s Duchess Theatre, and a worldwide live broadcast. His Composers Sonata – George Gershwin Alone; Monsieur Chopin; Beethoven, As I Knew Him; Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro; Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Rock Star – has been presented at dozens of theatres across the U.S. and around the world, including a command performance of Monsieur Chopin for the Polish Ambassador to the United States.
His compositions include *Aliyah*, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; *Fairytale*, a musical; *Les Anges de Paris, Suite for Violin and Piano*; *Song Settings*; *Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra*; *Etudes Thematiques for Piano*; *An American Story for Piano and Orchestra*. As director, he premiered Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* at the Geffen Playhouse in April 2012, and he will perform his world premiere of *Abe Lincoln’s Piano* at the Geffen in January 2015. Felder 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** (Director) directed *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, the highest-grossing romantic comedy of all time. Zwick is recognized as one of Hollywood’s most prolific directors of episodic television, having the direction of 525 episodes to his credit. These include having directed 21 pilots which have gone on to become regular series. He directed the Broadway production of *George Gershwin Alone* as well as all subsequent productions. Previous New York productions have included *Dance with Me* (Tony nomination), *Shenandoah* (Broadway national tour), *Oklahoma* (national tour), and *Cold Storage* (American Place Theater). He directed *Esther* (Promenade Theater, NY), *Merry-Go-Round* (Chicago, Las Vegas), *Last Chance Saloon*, and *Woyzeck* (West End, London). Zwick has taught drama at the Yale School of Drama, Brooklyn College, Queens College, Wheaton College, and University of Southern California. A graduate (BA, MA) of Brooklyn College, he is currently directing *Shake It Up* for the Disney Channel.

The producer of *Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro* is Eighty-Eight Entertainment. Created in 2001 by Hershey Felder, Eighty-Eight Entertainment is devoted to the creation of new works of musical theatre. Current projects include the new musicals *Abe Lincoln’s Piano* and *Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Rock Star*. Its recordings include *Love Songs of the Yiddish Theatre; Back from Broadway; George Gershwin Alone; Monsieur Chopin; Beethoven, As I Knew Him*; and *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*.

The 2013-14 season is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also proud to have the *San Francisco Chronicle/SFGate.com* as a second-year season sponsor and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family on board as season producer.

**Tickets 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.

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FACT SHEET

HERSHEY FELDER AS LEONARD BERNSTEIN IN MAESTRO

WHO:
Music and lyrics by Leonard Bernstein and others
Book by Hershey Felder
With Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein
Directed by Joel Zwick

Creative Team: François-Pierre Couture (scenic design, lighting co-design, and projection co-design), Christopher Rynne (lighting co-design), Erik Carstensen (sound design), and Andrew Wilder (projection co-design). The production stage managers for this show are Trevor Hay and Eric Carstensen.

WHAT:

Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro
The master entertainer and virtuoso pianist is back with his popular and critically acclaimed Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro, in which he brings one of America’s greatest musical legends to life.

WHERE:

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

WHEN:

EXTENDED THROUGH JULY 3
- Tuesdays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays @ 8:00 PM and @ 2:00 PM on 6/3
- Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM

Special Events:

Low-cost preview: Thursday 6/5 @ 8:00 PM
Opening night: Friday 6/6 @ 8:00 PM

HOW MUCH: $29 - $87 (subject to change)
Tix & Info: (510) 647-2949 berkeleyrep.org
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

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