FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HERSHEY FELDER STARS IN SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF
MONSIEUR CHOPIN AT BERKELEY REP

Piano virtuoso performs second movement of his critically acclaimed Composers Sonata

June 18, 2014 – Following the wildly enthusiastic reception for Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro, Berkeley Repertory Theatre invites audiences back this July for Hershey Felder’s Monsieur Chopin, a celebrated musical biography of legendary composer Fryderyk Chopin. You’ve seen Felder as George Gershwin on the hot streets of 1920s New York. You’ve seen him on the conductor’s podium revealing Maestro Leonard Bernstein’s heart. Now come back with Hershey to Paris in 1848…to a work of love and art and the place where his soul resides, in the depths of Chopin’s music. In his passionate portrayal of the “Poet of the Piano,” Hershey reveals the beloved and romantic composer’s secrets about his creations – and the secrets he carried to his grave – against a gorgeous, lush score of more than a dozen compositions. Come back with Hershey to meet the mysterious Monsieur Chopin. “[Felder] carries a rapt audience along on a wave of true, powerful, and wordless passion,” declares the Boston Globe. This special presentation plays only 13 performances on the intimate Thrust Stage. Monsieur Chopin previews July 25, opens July 27, and plays through August 3, 2014. Tickets start at only $29 and can be purchased by phone at (510) 647-2949 or online at berkeleyrep.org.

“Fryderyk Chopin, the diminutive Polish Poet of the Piano who died at the tender age of 39 and who spent much of his adult life as the prince of the Parisian salon, took an instrument of wood, felt, and metal and made it sing,” remarks Felder. “Chopin said, ‘If one wants to learn how to really play the piano, one must listen to the best opera singers – they will show you what you need to know.’ And for almost two centuries every pianist who has ever touched the instrument strives to bring it to life by making the piano human, by giving it ‘song’ just as Chopin did. He was the first, and the piano music he left us is the music of angels, the music of another world.”

The second installment in his Composers Sonata – George Gershwin Alone; Monsieur Chopin; Beethoven, As I Knew Him; Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro; and Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Rock Star – Felder’s performance as Chopin has garnered effusive praise. “Felder’s rapturous, emotionally charged playing of more than a dozen pieces by Chopin is the show’s most glorious element,” raves the Chicago Sun-Times. “Music was Chopin’s solace. And when Felder sits down to play the composer springs to life in a way that says more about the soul of this quintessential Romantic than any words can convey.” The Chicago Tribune adds, “Those who saw George Gershwin Alone are likely to show up for Monsieur Chopin. They will enjoy themselves, even if they’ve never sat and listened to someone playing Chopin…. Felder has two major assets. His lush, romantic playing style at the keyboard is a fine match with Chopin’s folkloric but rooted compositions. And the man, clearly, is a fanatic about detail. M. Chopin may be emotional and showy, but it is never inaccurate at neither script nor keyboard.” And the Boston Globe proclaims, “Hershey Felder, the show’s gifted creator and sole performer, clearly feels deeply attuned to the Romantic sensibility, not just the romantic. And, in his finest moments, he carries a rapt audience along on a wave of true, powerful, and wordless passion.”

(MORE)
Hershey Felder (Fryderyk Chopin/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 in a worldwide live broadcast. He’s currently performing in Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro at Berkeley Rep through July 3, 2014. His Composers Sonata – George Gershwin Alone; Monsieur Chopin; Beethoven, As I Knew Him; Hershey Felder as Leonard Bernstein in Maestro; and 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; and An American Story for Actor and Orchestra. As director, he premiered Mona Golabek in The Pianist of Willesden Lane at the Geffen Playhouse in April 2012 and at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in October 2013. The acclaimed production will make its off-Broadway debut at 59E59 Theaters this summer. 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 Monsieur Chopin 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.

Six designers will lend their talents to mount this musically infused production on the intimate Thrust Stage: Yael Pardess (scenic design), Richard Norwood (lighting design), Benjamin Furiga (original sound design), Eric Carstensen (sound co-design), and John Boesche and Andrew Wilder (projection design). Gigi Garcia, Erik Carstensen, and Trevor Hay and serve as stage managers.

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. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.

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FACT SHEET
MONSIEUR CHOPIN

WHO: The Music of Fryderyk Chopin
Book by Hershey Felder
With Hershey Felder as Chopin
Directed by Joel Zwick

Creative team: Yael Pardess (scenic design), Richard Norwood (lighting design), Benjamin Furiga (original sound design), Eric Carstensen (sound co-design), and John Boesche and Andrew Wilder (projection design). Gigi Garcia, Erik Carstensen, and Trevor Hay and serve as stage managers.

WHAT: Monsieur Chopin
You’ve seen Felder as George Gershwin on the hot streets of 1920s New York. You’ve seen him on the conductor’s podium revealing Maestro Leonard Bernstein’s heart. Now come back with Hershey to Paris in 1848…to a work of love and art and the place where his soul resides, in the depths of Chopin’s music. “[Felder] carries a rapt audience along on a wave of true, powerful, and wordless passion,” declares the Boston Globe.

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

WHEN: July 25 – August 3, 2014

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Special Events:
Low-cost previews: Friday 7/25 @ 8:00 PM, Saturday 7/26 @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM, and Sunday 7/27 @ 2:00 PM
Opening night: Sunday, July 27 @ 7:00 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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