FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KNEEHIGH RETURNS TO BERKELEY REP

FOR WEST COAST PREMIERE OF TRISTAN & YSEULT

Acclaimed creators of The Wild Bride and Brief Encounter reinvent ancient love story

November 4, 2013 – This holiday season Berkeley Repertory Theatre — the company behind such runaway hits as The Wild Bride and Brief Encounter — for the West Coast premiere of Tristan & Yseult. Award-winning director Emma Rice and designer Bill Mitchell reunite to create must-see theatre, blending gorgeous music and ingenious staging to bring the oldest and most passionate of love stories to the Bay Area. Tristan & Yseult is based on an ancient tale — a love triangle between warrior Tristan; his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall; and the beautiful Yseult. This is the original age-old story of forbidden desires, broken hearts, and the agony of choosing one human being over another. Kneehigh's Tristan & Yseult, which audiences around the world fell in love with and critics lauded as “a triumph” and “deliriously joyful,” begins previews in the Roda Theatre on November 22, opens November 26, and runs through January 6.

“We’re ecstatic to bring Kneehigh back to the Bay Area for the adaptation of this ancient Cornish love story,” says Tony Taccone, Berkeley Rep’s Michael Leibert artistic director. “Director Emma Rice has created a modern opera full of pageantry and spectacle replete with beautiful singing and music. Thanks to Kneehigh’s unique brand of theatre, this iconic love story has come alive again and we look forward to sharing this exuberant and visually stunning production with our audience this holiday season.”

“In many ways, Tristan & Yseult is the show of my life,” says Rice. “Creatively free and emotionally fierce, the show tramples roughshod over convention and cliché. I am hugely proud of the work, but my passion is not only about pride. This show is deeply personal, a hall of mirrors looking down the corridors of my life. It is a thrill to bring Tristan & Yseult to our dear friends at Berkeley Rep.”

Kneehigh’s adaptation of Tristan & Yseult has entranced audiences throughout its UK run and has been hailed a critical success.

“Wonderful!” declares The London Guardian. “Halfway through Kneehigh’s show, the band were playing, balloons were flying, hearts and minds were connecting and I suddenly realised how rare it is to have this much fun in the theatre…I loved it with a passion.”

The BBC proclaims, “It’s funny, moving, sexy, and a total delight!” “I left the theatre feeling absolutely elated…it embraces you so warmly that you feel as if you have been physically hugged.”

“A richly inventive triumph from start to finish!” hails the London Telegraph. “Their show is as cheeky as a kid and wild as the wind.”

(MORE)
“One of the best evenings in theatre you could hope to find!” claims The London Independent. “Terrific for those who long for theatre which takes the mind and heart into an altered state.”

Emma Rice (Adapter/Director) is the joint artistic director of Kneehigh and has directed The Red Shoes, The Wooden Frock, The Bacchae, Tristan & Yseult, Cymbeline (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company), A Matter of Life and Death (Royal National Theatre in association with Kneehigh), Rapunzel (in association with Battersea Arts Centre), Brief Encounter (a David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers production in association with Kneehigh), Don John (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Bristol Old Vic), Midnight’s Pumpkin, The Wild Bride, Wah! Wah! Girls (with Sadler’s Wells, Theatre Royal Stratford East for World Stages), and Steptoe and Son. Rice’s other work includes the West End production of The Umbrellas of Cherbourg, Oedipussy for Spymonkey, and The Empress for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Tristan & Yseult features an ensemble cast of eight talented performers: Carly Bawden (Whitehands), Gareth Charlton (Lovespotter/Brute/Animator) Andrew Durand (Tristan), Craig Johnson (Brangian/Morholt), Giles King (Frocin), Patrycja Kujawska (Yseult), Róbert Lučkay (Lovespotter/Brute/Animator), and Mike Shepherd (King Mark). Live music composed by Stu Barker is performed by Russ Gold, Pat Moran, Ian Ross, and Lizzy Westcott.

The creative team includes Bill Mitchell (designer), Malcolm Rippeth (lighting designer), and Gregory Clarke (sound designer) with Carl Grose and Anna Maria Murphy (writers). The stage managers for Tristan & Yseult are Aled Thomas for Kneehigh and Cynthia Cahill for Berkeley Rep.

This season Berkeley Rep has partnered with the Theatre Development Fund to offer 10 open-captioned performances. This state-of-the-art technology will allow Berkeley Rep to open its doors to a wider community by making performances accessible to patrons with hearing loss. An open-captioned performance for Tristan & Yseult will take place Sunday, January 5, 2014 at 2:00 PM.

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 Strauh Kulhanjian Family on board as a season producer. For the Berkeley Rep West Coast premiere of Tristan & Yseult, the lead producers are Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer and Mary and Nicholas Graves. The executive producers are Kerry Francis and John Jimerson and Pam and Mitch Nichter. Tristan & Yseult is also made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor in tribute to the Berkeley Holiday Fund. The production co-sponsor is Mechanics Bank Wealth Management.

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.

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FACT SHEET
TRISTAN & YSEULT

WHO: Adapted and Directed by Emma Rice
Writers: Carl Grose and Anna Maria Murphy / Music by Stu Barker

Featuring: Carly Bawden (Whitehands), Gareth Charlton (Lovespotter/Brute/Animator)
Andrew Durand (Tristan), Craig Johnson (Brangian/Morholt), Giles King (Frocin),
Patrycja Kujawska (Yseult), Róbert Lučkay (Lovespotter/Brute/Animator), and Mike Shepherd (King Mark).

Creative team: Bill Mitchell (designer), Malcolm Rippeth (lighting designer), and Gregory Clarke (sound designer).

WHAT: Kneehigh, the creators of The Wild Bride and Brief Encounter, return for the West Coast premiere of Tristan & Yseult, its best-loved and most critically acclaimed show.

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

- Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM except 11/27 @ 8:00 PM
- Thursdays @ 8:00 PM except 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM on 12/12 & 12/26
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM; no matinee on 11/23 & 12/14
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
- No performance on Thanksgiving 11/28, Christmas Eve 12/24, and Christmas Day 12/25
- No performance on Mondays except 1/6 @ 8:00 PM

Special Events:
Low-cost previews: Friday 11/22 & Saturday 11/23 @ 8:00 PM and Sunday 11/24 @ 2:00 & 7:00 PM
Opening night: Tuesday 11/26 @ 8:00 PM; pre-show dinner for donors @ Revival Bar + Kitchen and post-show party for audiences
Teen Night: Friday 11/22 @ 6:30 PM
Repartee: FREE docent talks before Tuesday and Thursday evening performances and free discussions after all matinees
Last Call: Friday, 11/29 following the evening performance
Post-play discussions: Thursday 12/12, Tuesday 12/17, and Friday 12/27 following the PM performance

HOW MUCH: $29 - $99 (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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