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BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES FINAL PRODUCTION FOR 2015–16 SEASON

Acclaimed collaborators Sarah Ruhl and Les Waters return with West Coast premiere of For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday

May 8, 2015 – Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre revealed that Sarah Ruhl’s For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday has been selected as the seventh and final show for its upcoming 2015-16 subscription season. Ruhl partners once more with esteemed director Les Waters to bring this brand-new production to the Roda Theatre next summer.

Adored by Bay Area audiences for Eurydice, In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), Three Sisters, and Dear Elizabeth, these celebrated collaborators bring us a tender new tale, For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday, a fanciful and moving look at growing up versus growing old within a family. In the wake of their father's death, five siblings are driven to reconnect with childhood dreams and confront the inevitability of the passage of time. This West Coast premiere of For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday will start its run May 2016.

"I'm delighted to bring back Sarah and Les to Berkeley Rep. They are frequent collaborators who have presented together on our stage many times and delivered powerful productions that have resonated profoundly with our audience," says Tony Taccone, Berkeley Rep's Michael Leibert Artistic Director. "For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday is a play that Sarah wrote as a gift for her mother who played Peter Pan in several productions when she was a child. It's a deeply personal story that promises to be an extraordinarily moving production."

For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday rounds out a vigorous and versatile subscription season at Berkeley Rep featuring critically acclaimed productions and exhilarating new works. The season opens with the world premiere musical Amélie, based on the Academy Award-nominated film and directed by Tony Award winner Pam MacKinnon. Then Chicago theatre rebels The Hypocrites make their Berkeley Rep debut with their delightful, high-energy staging of Pirates of Penzance. Then the Theatre presents the West Coast premiere of the recently Tony-nominated Disgraced — Ayad Akhtar's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama about an assimilated American Muslim and the complexities of racial and religious prejudice and identity, helmed by Kimberly Senior. The New Year begins with Aubergine, a lyrical and bittersweet new work from playwright Julia Cho and Berkeley Rep’s Associate Director Liesl Tommy. Next is a thrilling new production of Macbeth, helmed by Tony and Obie Award-winning director Daniel Sullivan. Then the Theatre brings back audience favorite and Tony Award-winning director Mary Zimmerman with her heart-pounding voyage to Treasure Island, a co-production with Lookingglass Theatre Company.

For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday was commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville and will receive its world premiere there during the 40th Humana Festival of New American Plays in March 2016.
Sarah Ruhl’s plays include *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* (Pulitzer Prize finalist, Tony Award nominee for Best New Play); *The Clean House* (Pulitzer Prize finalist, 2005, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, 2004); *Passion Play, a cycle* (PEN American Award, the Fourth Freedom Forum Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center); *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* (Helen Hayes Award); *Melancholy Play; Eurydice; Orlando, Demeter in the City* (NAACP nomination); *Late: a cowboy song; Three Sisters*; and, most recently, *Stage Kiss and Dear Elizabeth*. Her plays have been produced on Broadway at the Lyceum by Lincoln Center Theater, off Broadway at Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage, and at Lincoln Center’s Mitzi Newhouse Theater, and downtown at Clubbed Thumb and Classic Stage Company. Her plays have been produced regionally all over the country, with premieres at Yale Repertory Theatre, the Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Madison Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cornerstone Theater, and the Piven Theatre Workshop in Chicago. Ruhl’s plays have also been produced internationally in London, Germany, Australia, Canada, and Israel, and have been translated into Polish, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian, Korean, German, and Arabic. Originally from Chicago, Ruhl received her MFA from Brown University where she studied with Paula Vogel. In 2003, she was the recipient of the Helen Merril Emerging Playwrights Award and the Whiting Writers’ Award. She was a member of 13P and of New Dramatists and won the MacArthur Fellowship in 2006. She was recently the recipient of the PEN Center Award for a mid-career playwright, the Feminist Press’ Forty under Forty Award, and the 2010 Lilly Award. She is currently on the faculty at Yale School of Drama and lives in Brooklyn with her family.

Obie Award winner Les Waters currently serves as the artistic director at Actors Theatre of Louisville where he recently directed the world premiere of Charles L. Mee's *The Glory of the World*, Naomi Iizuka’s *At the Vanishing Point*, Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*, Will Eno’s *Gnit*, Todd Almond’s *Girlfriend*, and Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day's Journey into Night* at Actors Theatre. Waters also previously directed *Big Love* by Charles L. Mee at the Humana Festival in 2000, and the site-specific production of Naomi Iizuka’s *At the Vanishing Point* at the 2004 Humana Festival. From 2003 to 2011, he served as associate artistic director at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. In the last 10 years, his shows have ranked among the year’s best in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times, Time Out New York, Time Magazine*, and *USA Today*. His productions have been seen in New York at Playwrights Horizons, the Public Theater, Second Stage, Manhattan Theatre Club, Connelly Theater, and Clubbed Thumb, and regionally at theatres such as Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Goodman Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, and American Repertory Theater. In 2009, he made his Broadway debut with *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*. He led the MFA directing program at University of California, San Diego from 1995 to 2003 and is an associate artist of the Civilians.

The 2015-16 season is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is proud to have KPIX-TV (Channel 5) as a second-year season sponsor. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to have the Strauch Kulhanjian Family and Jack and Betty Schafer on board as a season sponsors.
Get the best seats for these shows at the consistently lowest prices by subscribing to Berkeley Rep. The seven-play Full Season package guarantees tickets for Amélie, The Hypocrites' Pirates of Penzance, Disgraced, Aubergine, Macbeth, Treasure Island, and For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday. Best of all, subscribers have guaranteed seats to sold-out plays and can renew their packages now; seven-play Full Season packages are available from $175 to $598, while five-play Main Season packages range from $125 to $426. 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. Additional discounts are available for senior citizens and pre-K–12 educators. Students and patrons under 30 receive 50 percent off most subscription packages.

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. 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 an illustrious city. A not-for-profit organization, the Theatre welcomes an annual audience of 200,000, serves 23,000 students, and hosts dozens of community groups every year, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 330 artists, artisans, and administrators. The Roda Theatre and the Thrust Stage are both located on Addison Street in downtown Berkeley, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots — and only half a block from BART. For more information, call (510) 647-2949 or visit: berkeleyrep.org.

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