FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP OPENS 47TH SEASON WITH WORLD PREMIERE OF

AN AUDIENCE WITH MEOW MEOW

International sensation teams up with Kneehigh’s Emma Rice for a thrilling musical play

August 11, 2014 – Berkeley Rep opens its 47th season this September with An Audience with Meow Meow, a new musical play of gargantuan proportions starring international superstar Meow Meow. This fall the singing sensation and über-award-winning comedienne — who’s wowed audiences from Paris to the Antipodes — brings her breathtaking vocals and ingenuity to the Bay Area. The captivating and glamourous Meow Meow has rendezvoused with Mikhail Baryshnikov, Pina Bausch, and David Bowie. Now she joins forces with the endlessly inventive Emma Rice (The Wild Bride, Tristan & Yseult, Broadway’s Brief Encounter), who adapts and directs this one-of-a-kind musical production featuring sizzling songs, sequins and satire, blow-torch wit, and divine mayhem! Expect beauty, expect hilarity, expect heart. And possibly the splits. Penned by Meow Meow herself, with music supervision by Lance Horne and choreography by Tiger Martina, the theatrical world premiere of An Audience with Meow Meow begins previews Friday, September 5, opens on Friday, September 12, and runs through Sunday, October 19. Press night for An Audience with Meow Meow will be held on Friday, September 12, 2014. Individual tickets start at $29 and can be purchased by phone at (510) 647-2949 or online at berkeleyrep.org.

“We’re thrilled to kick off the season with the deliciously outrageous Meow Meow,” says Tony Taccone, Berkeley Rep’s Michael Leibert Artistic Director. “Meow is a cross between Liza Minnelli and Lucille Ball — she’s funny, smart, and has the voice of a ferocious angel. She teams up with Emma Rice, the esteemed director of The Wild Bride and co-artistic director of Kneehigh Theatre, to bring us a larger-than-life musical production. Prepare for anything, as Ms. Meow is not one to take any prisoners.”

“Meow Meow knocks my socks off! She is everything — sexy, surprising, talented, and funny,” remarks Rice. “The moment I met her I was intoxicated, and it has been a thrill and a privilege to work with her on this piece. She is a force of nature. An Audience with Meow Meow promises to be a night at the theatre that won’t be forgotten easily. Fasten your seat belts!”

“I’m elated to work with the supremely talented Emma Rice to bring my story to the Bay Area,” adds Meow Meow. “Emma is all heart and joy. With her there’s such an affinity of our souls. We’ve assembled a wonderful show about lost souls and lost hearts and people who slipped between the cracks. There will be hilarity, mayhem, fabulous costume changes, dancing boys, sequins, and glorious love songs. I’m thrilled to share this new piece with Berkeley Rep’s audience.”

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Of Meow Meow’s critically lauded performances, *Time Out London* raves, “Meow Meow’s voice is a rare pleasure, rich in musicality, always present and expressive, turning on a dime from stomping razzle-dazzle to heartbreaking vulnerability. The dexterity at slipping between registers that Meow Meow brings to her singing is also key to her humour, which is now bawdy, now self-deprecating, now sly as a stiletto between the ribs.” Adds the *London Evening Standard*, “Devilish funny bones and heavenly vocal chords!” The *New York Times* writes, “The term ‘kamikaze cabaret’ has been applied to the charming, shape-shifting diva Meow Meow...Her act celebrated a far-reaching cosmopolitanism that erases boundaries between cultures and languages... If you think of her changeability as a series of surprise attacks, the term kamikaze may apply after all.”

Post-post-modern diva Meow Meow has hypnotized, inspired, and terrified audiences globally. Meow starred on London’s West End in Kneehigh Theatre and Michel Legrand’s *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and in her own solo concerts at the legendary Apollo Theatre. She had a sensational season of *Meow Meow’s Little Match Girl* at London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall and performed Cocteau’s piece for Piaf, *Le Bel Indifférent*, for the Greenwich Music Festival U.S. She has created original works for numerous international arts festivals and venues from Shanghai to Wroclaw as well as performing everything from Schubert and Schumann with orchestra to touring with punk outfit Amanda Palmer and The Dresden Dolls. She has won numerous Green Room Awards, Helpmann Theatre Awards, Sydney Theatre Critics Awards, the Edinburgh International Festival Fringe Prize, and the New York Franklin Furnace Performance Art Award, among others. She is a regular guest in the Olivier Award-winning La Clique and La Soirée on the West End, and she opened La Soirée’s award-winning season in New York.

In 2013 Meow had her London Philharmonic debut as Jenny in Brecht/Weill’s *Die Dreigroschenoper* in Paris’ Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and London’s Royal Festival Hall, and joined the London Philharmonic again for further UK performances. She has performed with the Weimar collective in New York City, sold out her Lincoln Center American Song Book Series concert, and toured the concert halls of Australia with Barry Humphries and the Australian Chamber Orchestra in a program of lost and re-found works from Weimar Germany in the 1920s. In 2014 Meow performed in the LA Philharmonic in Andriessen’s *De Materie* and for Pina Bausch Company with their *Fest für Pina 40* season in Germany, followed by an extended season of the award-winning *Feline Intimate* in London at the Southbank Centre. In December 2014 Meow returns to London’s Southbank Centre with *Apocalypse Meow: Crisis is Born*.

The spectacular crowd-surfing queen of song drags the audience “kicking and screaming into the 21st century” (*Time Out New York*), with trail-blazing sell-out seasons from New York’s Lincoln Center and Berlin’s Bar Jeder Vernunft to London’s Apollo Theatre, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and the Sydney Opera House. Named One of the Top Performers of the Year by the *New Yorker*, Meow Meow’s unique brand of “kamikaze cabaret” and performance art exotica has been called “Sensational” (the *Times UK*), “cabaret diva of the highest order” (*New York Post*), “The Queen of Chanson” by the *Berliner Zeitung*, and “a phenomenon” by the Australian press. Multi-award winning Meow’s solo works have been curated by David Bowie, Pina Bausch, and Mikhail Baryshnikov, among others. With collaborator Pink Martini’s Thomas M Lauderdale she appeared with the Oregon Symphony and has written and recorded the album *Here Kitty Kitty …The lost sessions*, due for release in 2014. Meow’s albums *Vamp* and *Songs from a Little Match Girl* are available on iTunes.

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**Lance Horne** (music supervision and additional arrangements) is a composer-lyricist who has performed alongside, composed, and/or provided arrangements for Alan Cumming, Liza Minnelli, Carol Channing, Kristin Chenoweth, Pink Martini, the von Trapps, Jake Shears/Scissor Sisters, Justin Bond, Sandra Bernhard, Ben Folds, Neil Gaiman, Amanda Palmer/Dresden Dolls, Boston Pops, and toured the world with Meow Meow. He has performed for President Obama, the First Lady, and Queen Elizabeth. Horne has conducted return engagements at Sydney Opera House and international tours of *Handel’s Messiah Rocks* and *Jekyll & Hyde.* He co-music directed/co-arranged *Prometheus Bound* by Steven Sater and Serj Tankian and *Cabaret* starring Amanda Palmer, both at American Repertory Theatre. He contributed original material and arrangements to *Vegas! The Show* currently playing at Planet Hollywood Casino, music directed the Sater/Sheik *Alice by Heart* for the National Theater in London, and provided the vocal arrangements for the Broadway production of *Little Women.* His debut album *First Things Last* released on Yellow Sound Label with concurrent concerts at Lincoln Center and on the West End. Horne received a daytime Emmy for Best Original Song; the Jonathan Larson Award; a Bistro Award for producing Alan Cumming’s album, *I Bought a Blue Car Today;* the ASCAP Foundation Jamie DeRoy Award for Emerging Songwriter; and an Interlochen Ovation Award. Horne is a Steinway Artist with BM, MM in composition from the Juilliard School.

**Martin Lowe** (musical arrangements) won the Tony, Olivier, Grammy, Drama Desk, and Obie for his work as music supervisor and orchestrator on the musical *Once* in the West End and on Broadway. He was the original musical director for *Mamma Mia!* in the West End and has subsequently supervised productions in Japan, South Korea, China, and Sweden. He was also the musical director for the movie version starring Meryl Streep and won the Golden Reel Award. Lowe’s other theatre work includes *The Light Princess; War Horse; Caroline, Or Change; Jerry Springer The Opera; A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum; and Nation* all for the National Theatre in London. For the National Theatre of Scotland, he was the orchestrator and music supervisor for *The Wolves in the Walls* and *Appointment with the Wicker Man.* He has conducted other West End shows, including *The Full Monty, Once on This Island, Cats,* and *Les Misérables.* Martin’s composition work includes *The Misanthrope, The Secret Rapture,* and *The Blue Room* at Chichester Festival Theatre; *Lettice and Lovage* (national tour); and *Into Exile* and *Dear Exile,* both for BBC Radio 4.

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Tiger Martina’s (choreography) professional projects range from feature film and television to numerous Broadway, off-Broadway, and Las Vegas stage productions. He contributes his style and approach to the experience he gained as a dancer and assistant to some of the world’s greatest choreographers: on Broadway in Movin’ Out with Twyla Tharp, Liza’s at The Palace and Sex and the City 2 as dance captain to Ms. Minnelli, as dancer and assistant choreographer for “Cold Hearted Snake,” Paula Abdul’s Under My Spell tour, and the Academy Awards with Michael Kidd. His film credits include Across the Universe with Julie Taymor and Rock of Ages with Mia Michaels. Martina has also choreographed for Alan Cumming, Penn & Teller, French Stewart, Adam Lambert, Diana DeGarmo, the cast of Friends, Cheyenne Jackson, Jerry Springer, and large-scale nationally televised events such as multiple Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parades, NBC’s 4th of July special, and numerous production shows for cruise lines Cunard, Holland America, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian. He directed and choreographed two shows currently running on the Las Vegas strip: Vegas! The Show and the critically acclaimed Zombie Burlesque.

The divine Meow Meow is joined on stage by a group of talented musicians and dancers, including:

- **Michael Balderrama (dancer)** is a director/choreographer, dancer, and producer. Some of his favorite Broadway credits include Ghost, In the Heights, Hot Feet, Movin’ Out, Urban Cowboy, and Saturday Night Fever. He’s been seen in the films Rock of Ages, Across the Universe, and Michael Jackson’s Ghost. He was resident director/choreographer of the second national tour of In the Heights, associate director and movement consultant for Zorro, and was the associate choreographer and creative consultant over the 2013 Broadway musical, Soul Doctor. He is currently producing the upcoming new musicals Whiskeyland and Boy vs. Girls through his production companies, Silver Towers Productions, LLC and Last Call Theatricals, LLC.

- **Bob Gaynor (dancer)** was most recently seen in The Sound of Music Live with Carrie Underwood on NBC. His original Broadway cast credits include Leap of Faith and Catch Me If You Can, Sweet Charity (Vittorio/understudy), Boy George’s Taboo (Leigh Bowery/understudy), and Elton John’s Aida (Radames/standby). At New York’s City Center, he performed in Bye Bye Birdie (Conrad), Applause, and Stairway to Paradise. Bob’s regional credits include Next to Normal (Dan, Broadway World nominee), Leap of Faith, First Wives Club, Smokey Joe’s Café (Michael), and A Chorus Line (Zach).

- **Russ Gold (drums/percussion/vibes)** last appeared at Berkeley Rep as a musician for Tristan & Yseult. His performing experience includes work with musicians as diverse as Gary Lyons (producer of Rolling Stones and the Grateful Dead), Johnny Colla of Huey Lewis and the News, Seth Justman of the J. Giles Band, and jazz greats Tom Scott, Sam Rivers, George Coleman, Dave Douglas, Vinx, and Howard Johnson.

- **Jessica Ivry (cellist)** plays and sings in Real Vocal String Quartet (rvsq.com). She performed in Pericles, Prince of Tyre and Figaro at Berkeley Rep, The Orphan of Zhao at American Conservatory Theater and La Jolla Playhouse, and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee at Post Street Theatre.

- **Pat Moran (guitar/bass)** is back at Berkeley Rep after performing last season in Kneehigh’s Tristan & Yseult and this past summer as music director and guitarist for FSM as part of The Ground Floor’s 2014 Summer Residency Lab. He has composed original music and lyrics for over a dozen professional theatre productions and has been resident composer/lyricist/music director for the San Francisco Mime Troupe since 2007.

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The creative team includes Neil Murray (scenic and costume designer), Alexander V. Nichols (lighting designer), and Simon Baker (sound designer). The stage manager for An Audience with Meow Meow is Michael Suenkel, Berkeley Rep’s production stage manager.

The 2014-15 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 KPIX-TV (Channel 5) as a first-year season sponsor. An Audience with Meow Meow is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Strauch Kulhanjian Family and Jack and Betty Schafer.

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 nearly 400 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

An Audience with Meow Meow

WHO: Written by and starring Meow Meow
Adapted and directed by Emma Rice
Music supervision and additional arrangements by Lance Horne
Musical arrangements by Martin Lowe
Choreography by Tiger Martina
Featuring: Michael Balderrama (dancer), Bob Gaynor (dancer), Russ Gold (drums/percussion/vibes), Lance Horne (piano), Jessica Ivry (cellist), and Pat Moran (guitar/bass).
Creative team: Neil Murray (scenic and costume designer), Alexander V. Nichols (lighting designer), and Simon Baker (sound designer)

WHAT: 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! “Devilish funny bones and heavenly vocal chords!” – London Evening Standard

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

WHEN: 51 PERFORMANCES: Friday, September 5 – Sunday, October 19, 2014
- Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays @ 8:00 PM and 2:00 & 8:00 PM on 9/18 & 10/16
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM; no matinee on 9/6 and 9/20
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM; no matinee on 9/7
- No performance on Tuesday 10/14

Special Events:
Low-cost previews: Friday 9/5, Saturday 9/6, Tuesday 9/9, and Thursday 9/11 @ 8:00 PM and Sunday 9/7 and Wednesday 9/10 @ 7:00 PM
Opening Night: Friday 9/12 @ 8:00 PM; includes a pre-show dinner for donors at the Theatre catered by Hugh Groman Catering and a post-show party for audiences.
Teen Night: Friday 9/5 @ 6:30 PM

FREE docent events: docent talks before Tuesday and Thursday evening performances and discussions after all matinees
Post-play discussions: Thursday 9/25, Tuesday 9/30, and Friday 10/10 following the performance
Last Call: Saturday 9/13 following the evening performance
Open Captioned Performance: Sunday, 10/19 @ 2:00 PM

HOW MUCH: $29 - $89 (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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